

Ascension Recovery Services CEO Doug Leech to Address Delayed SUD Development at SUD Business Summit

Panel will examine financial, regulatory, operational and workforce barriers that cause addiction treatment projects to stall

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Doug Leech, founder and CEO of Ascension Recovery Services, will join a panel of behavioral health executives at the SUD Business Summit Thursday, July 16, to discuss why new substance use disorder treatment facilities and expansion projects frequently experience costly delays. The session, "Development Download: Why SUD De Novos, Expansion Projects Stall," will take place from 11:30am and feature Leech alongside Abigail Stoll, owner and founder of Restaura Behavioral Health, and Anthony Kilgore, chief executive officer of BHG Recovery.



As demand for addiction treatment services continues to grow, the panel will examine the operational, regulatory, financial and workforce challenges that can prevent well-funded projects from progressing from concept to patient care. Speakers will also discuss strategies for aligning financing, accreditation, licensing, construction and staffing timelines with the needs of the communities these facilities are intended to serve.

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it open.”

Leech’s presentation builds on the themes of his recent bylined article, “From Capital to Care: The Real Barriers Behind Delayed SUD Developments.” In the article, he explains that treatment developments often stall when site selection, financing, clinical programming, regulatory approvals, workforce planning, payer contracting and operational readiness are treated as separate workstreams rather than components of one coordinated development strategy. According to Leech, selecting a site or beginning construction before fully evaluating licensing requirements, workforce availability and reimbursement conditions can create expensive

problems later in the development process. Even projects with significant initial investment may struggle if their financial plans do not account for startup expenses, delayed payer revenue, pre-opening staffing costs and the operational runway required for a new program to reach stability.

The panel will provide practical guidance for organizations seeking to anticipate these dependencies earlier, develop more realistic timelines and align capital deployment with regulatory and operational milestones.

Leech brings both personal and professional experience to the discussion. Inspired by his own recovery journey, he founded Ascension Recovery Services to expand access to substance use disorder treatment in West Virginia and across the country. Under his leadership, Ascension Recovery Services has helped open more than 80 SUD treatment centers across 35 states and has developed and managed integrated behavioral health systems serving people with substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health conditions.

The SUD Business Summit brings together executives and leaders from addiction treatment and substance use disorder organizations to examine operational best practices, sustainable growth strategies and emerging market trends. Attendees have opportunities to connect with peers, learn from industry experts and gain actionable insights to strengthen their programs and expand their impact.

About Ascension Recovery Services

Ascension Recovery Services (ARS) is a national leader in behavioral health program development and management, partnering investors, hospitals, health systems, government entities, non-profit treatment organizations and tribal lands to accelerate the creation and operation of high-impact substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health treatment programs. As the nation's first Substance Use Disorder Management Services Organization (SUD-MSO), ARS integrates capital planning, facility design, licensure and accreditation, staffing, payer contracting, marketing, and long-term management into a single, scalable model. With more than a decade of experience and projects spanning 80 organizations across 35 states, ARS supports every level of care—including Residential Treatment Centers, Intensive Outpatient Programs, Partial Hospitalization Programs, Sober Living Homes, and hospital-based treatment lines—delivering measurable clinical and financial results for its partners. Headquartered in Orlando, Florida and backed by RCap Equity Partners, ARS combines financial expertise, clinical excellence, and compassionate leadership to expand access to sustainable recovery nationwide. For more information, visit www.ascensionrs.com.

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