

DR. RICHARD M. DiMONTE

My name is Dr. Richard DiMonte, I have a private practice in Media PA specializing in addiction treatment.

The majority of my addiction patients have been, criminally charged, incarcerated and are or were on probation or parole.

According to the National Commission on Correctional Health Care: "Current policy has generated for drug and alcohol offenders a revolving door of arrest, incarceration, release to the streets untreated or undertreated, and then rearrest and return to incarceration, resulting in a costly, futile cycle."

A 2011 article printed in the New England Journal of Medicine notes the following:

- 50% of inmates are alcohol or drug dependent or abusers
- About 200,000 heroin users are in the correctional system annually

The statistics show that our correctional system is filled with offenders suffering from the disease of addiction and at present, the system isn't doing a good job of ensuring that offenders receive proper treatment.

Untreated or improperly treated addiction fuels crime because generally, an addict steals to get money to buy drugs until a period of sobriety is achieved.

To properly treat opiate addiction I prefer to use Vivitrol which is a non-narcotic, non-addictive medication. When used in combination with psychosocial counseling and 12 step programs, Vivitrol is an effective tool against recidivism because it promotes longer periods of sobriety.

Vivitrol is an antagonist medication and is not a maintenance treatment because it is non-narcotic. Patients do not have to be on Vivitrol forever to get better. A few quick facts about Vivitrol:

- It is not a narcotic
- It cannot be abused
- Any physician can prescribe Vivitrol
- It is not an opioid replacement - it is an opioid blocker.

Patients on Vivitrol have longer, more successful periods of sobriety than patients who do not use it. As with any other recovery program, the patient has to want help – faced with a moment of weakness, Vivitrol is more likely to ensure that a patient does not relapse because the patient knows he/she will not be able to get high with Vivitrol in his/her system and is more likely not to use.