

# New approach with elderly addicts at nursing home

November 30 2014, by Jim Fitzgerald

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A surge in baby boomers is driving up the number of elderly people abusing drugs or alcohol, and a New York City nursing home is trying a new approach to addressing the problem.

Patients 60 and older who come in for medical rehab after heart surgery or a knee transplant are screened for addiction and offered a chance at recovery.

The program takes into consideration that the elderly often need powerful pain medications, which are easy to overuse. They also typically endure potential addiction triggers such as retirement or the death of a spouse. And dementia can mask or worsen the effects of drugs and alcohol.

The Bronx nursing home expects to eventually treat 480 patients a year.

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