

Testimony of Nicholas Carrozza
House Judiciary 10/9/13

Growing up I can remember having dreams. Dreams I'd imagine most little boys have growing up. I wanted to be a firefighter, doctor, pro baseball player, or even a police officer. But somewhere along the way I traded in those dreams for a life of crime, pain and drug use. I hung out in some rough neighborhoods growing up where violence and drugs ruled the streets. My first mistake was wanting to grow up to quick so I tended to hang out with the older crowd which caused me to be introduced to certain things a lot quicker than the average teenager. By the time I was 13; I was already smoking marijuana on a daily basis, and drinking on the weekends. Needless to say this type of behavior was not condoned by my parents and we fought a lot. There were periods of time when I would move out and stay at friends' houses, most of the time with the older kids who had their own places. Through all the smoking, drinking, and fighting with my parents I managed to stay involved with school athletics, playing football, basketball, and volleyball. My role models at this time had changed from people with respectable professions to drug dealers, rappers, and gangsters. I was infatuated with the fast life of parting, hanging out all day with my friends and selling drugs to make money.

I eventually moved out of my parents' house into my own apartment and continued to drink, smoke, and sell marijuana. One day I decided that the money I was making from marijuana just wasn't enough, I wanted the kind of money that I saw guys in the neighborhood making, the money rappers like Gucci Mane and Yo Gotti rapped about, I wanted to sell Cocaine. I sold cocaine and had a full-time job, using my place of employment as a place to sell drugs. However I started to use cocaine myself and it quickly went from making money to selling cocaine just to support my own habit overnight. In 2010, Detective Tony Marcocci arrested me using a confidential informant to make three controlled buys. I was arrested and charged with manufacturing delivery and possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance. While awaiting court for these cases I went on the run and started to use heroin. I knew I messed up big time; I was scared, alone and didn't know what to do so I resorted to the only coping skill that I had and that was to use. I eventually got caught and taken to jail where I had all the time in the world to think about where my life had taken me.

That's where my process to recovery began by no help from the system at all. I asked for Intensive Out Patient (IOP) but was told that I wasn't sentenced to it so I couldn't participate in it which honestly would have been a waste of time anyway, it's not even IOP. IOP is 3 days a week 3 hours a day, in jail IOP is one day a week for one hour a day. Part of my sentence was that upon release I would have to get a drug and alcohol evaluation, so I went to gateway in Greensburg to get my evaluation. They told me that because it had been so long since I used that

they didn't have a program I could be in even though a huge factor as to why I didn't use was that I was incarcerated which gateway was aware of. So I left gateway and went on my way, reporting to my PO once a month and hanging out with the same people I did before I went to jail. It only took three months before I was selling and using Heroin, going to my PO office high and giving dirty urines. After a couple months of this I got a possession and paraphernalia charge and was sent to jail on a 72 hr. parole violation. When I went in front of the judge he released me with a court date and sentenced me to the Day Reporting Center (DRC) in Greensburg even though I was already in an outpatient program and had been clean for 2 months. The judge said he didn't like the program I was in and wanted me at the DRC. It took about one month at the DRC before I was using again. Everyone at the DRC was court ordered almost no one wanted to be there and a lot of people were using. Eventually went to rehab after confessing to my PO that I was still using. I did 28 days in Pyramid Rehab in Duncanville and wanted so badly to stay out there but my PO insisted that I come back to Westmoreland County, so I did.

Upon coming back to the DRC It was recommended that I be put on suboxone as a treatment recommendation, had I refused it would have been a violation of my parole which was to follow all treatment recommendations. So I took the suboxone and was getting high off it for the first day, then manipulating it to get high the whole time I was at the DRC. Eventually, I was successfully discharged from the DRC with a three suboxone strip a day habit and no doctor to see, so when I was withdrawing from the suboxone I used Heroin.

I wanted help, I didn't want to use, I was sick of being a junkie so I called the treatment program I was in before the DRC where I was clean and got back into it. There I was detoxed and received the Vivatrol shot. That's where I was told how important it would be for me to start attending a 12 step program. I took the suggestion and got involved in a 12 step program and since then I have been clean. I did what the people in my program suggested, I got a home-group, sponsor, did 90 meetings in 90 days and the changes I have seen in my life so far are incredible. I was lucky. I have seen way too many people die this year, something needs to change. Treatment needs to be more available, and not these little 12 day county funded stays because in reality when someone has been doing drugs for years 12 days in rehab doesn't even scratch the surface.