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## Officials seek answers on youth drug center

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BY [TOM WYATT](#) Post-Tribune

Everyone Porter County Board of Commissioners President Bob Harper has heard from locally had a positive experience with the Pathway Family Center.

But he and other county officials still have questions about the adolescent drug program proposed for Porter County.

The Community Action Drug Coalition hopes some of those questions will be answered Tuesday when the group hosts a 7 p.m. public forum at the Porter County Administration Building to discuss Pathway Family Center.

"There's been a lot said about this program," Harper said. "Right now, from the people I've talked to locally, I haven't had anyone tell me they've had a bad experience."

The CADC has committed \$100,000 to bring Pathway to Northwest Indiana. It would be the fourth Pathway program, joining programs in Southfield, Mich., Indianapolis and Milford, Ohio.

Pathway has told the county it needs an additional \$200,000 to get the program up and running.

"I have a few questions I need to get answered," Porter County Council President Dan Whitten said. "I haven't gotten them answered yet, but I will. It sounds like a good viable alternative to what we've had here in the past."

Dr. Mann Spitler III, president of the CADC, said the program is unique but proven.

Spitler's daughter Manda died in 2002 of a heroin overdose. She was 20.

Since his daughter's death, Spitler has been vocal about teen drug addiction issues.

Spitler said the program takes a long-term approach, between 12 and 18 months. It places the addicted teen in the home of another family facing the same issues. The adolescents are home-schooled and provided with professional counselors, Spitler said.

"It's one aspect of the families learning how to deal with this problem without having to wrestle through it with their own child," Spitler said.

Spitler said he has visited the Indianapolis Pathway program on three occasions in the last couple years.

The CADC board visited the Indianapolis program about two months ago, Spitler said.

The Tuesday forum will include Pathway CEO and President Terri Nissley, program director Dan Franz and director of marketing Barbara Towner.

Spitler said a couple Pathway clients and one or two parents involved in the program also will be on hand to answer questions.

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