



# BestSelf opens Hamburg methadone clinic

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BestSelf Behavioral Health will cut the ribbon Thursday afternoon in Hamburg at a new clinic providing opioid treatment.

The clinic is at an existing site on Abbott Road at Lake Street where the agency has provided mental health counseling and other services for a decade.

It is licensed to treat up to 99 patients, said **Howard Hitzel**, BestSelf CEO. Until now, many of those patients who live in the Southtowns have had to drive downtown to the City of Buffalo or out to Amherst for treatment.

“That’s really the impetus for this first location,” he said. “We’re asking people to pursue their recovery, be with their families and be employed but drive for some up to an hour and a half every day to get their medications,” he said.

The agency spent a year and a half working on the project, funded by a **\$380,000 grant** for capital and start-up funding from the state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services through the state’s Rapid Treatment Expansion Capital Funding Program.

Hitzel said the program has been well-received by the community, partly due to extensive education and outreach with Hamburg government and law enforcement officials as well as a nearby church. Patients will come to the BestSelf site from 6-9 a.m., entering through a secure entrance that meets all requirements of OASAS and the DEA.

“They recognized this was a problem in the community and this was the right thing to do,” he said. “We certainly had some trepidation going into it, given what’s happened in other communities, but we did our homework.”

Indeed, Catholic Health faced intense opposition to its initial preferred site in Amherst before **restarting the process** and opening its Star Clinic on John Glenn Drive in an industrial park setting. BestSelf’s location is in an office park owned by Benderson Development with no homes immediately adjacent.

“We really didn’t have any opposition. There’s been so much more knowledge and information about the opioid epidemic,” Hitzel said. “Who hasn’t been affected by it? People recognize we had to do better with it.”

With a budget of \$68 million and more than 800 employees, BestSelf was formed by the merger in 2017 of Child and Adolescent Treatment Services and Lake Shore Behavioral Health.