

Wellesley Addiction Treatment Center Divides Community

By [Sean Woodard](#) - October 31, 2018



Exterior of Wellesley Town Hall

Residents have been debating the necessity of an upcoming addiction treatment center in [Wellesley, Massachusetts](#).

Upward of 100 community members attended a public town meeting on October 22 to discuss the facility.

When the news was announced in September that the Richmond-based [Coleman Institute](#) (TCI) was planning on opening its next outpatient addiction treatment center in the city, many neighborhood residents voiced their concerns.

While some were worried about neighborhood safety, a majority of people expressed particular interest on the center's location. Although the site is near other businesses, there is also a residential neighborhood close by and multiple schools and parks within a half mile.

A group of local parents drafted a petition that garnered approximately 1,400 signatures as of October 22. The petition called for CTI to relocate the center to another part of town that is out of the vicinity of schools and for city councilpersons to amend zoning bylaws to not allow [addiction treatment facilities](#) from operating near schools and parks. However, TCI officials had facilitated proper communication to obtain proper licensure from the Massachusetts Department of Health and its permit application satisfied zoning requirements for medical office use.

While parents are concerned that the facility will be a potential danger to children, other community members argued that [addiction treatment services](#) are desperately needed in the area.

Prior to the town hall meeting, TCI officials stated that the company chose the Wellesley location because of its centralized position to serve multiple people in the region.

According to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)'s treatment locator, there are no addiction treatment providers within a five-mile radius of Wellesley. The closest location is in Waltham.

The [Massachusetts Department of Health](#) reported that more than 1,909 opioid-related deaths occurred in the state in 2017. Fentanyl has been the most common substance involved in the fatalities since 2014. While the death rates due to other substances are decreasing, benzodiazepine and prescription opioid-related deaths appear to be rising again. Norfolk County, where Wellesley is located, experienced over 170 opioid fatalities.

At the meeting, company representatives answered questions presented by residents in order to clarify the center's purpose. Founder Dr. Peter Coleman stated that TCI representatives would do their best to address all safety concerns. However, many people who attended the meeting did not feel that their worries had been assuaged.

Officials clarified that after being approved through a screening process, patients must have a support person accompany them to appointments. They also reiterated that [medication-assisted treatment](#) will only be dispensed in the form of injectable Vivitrol or a naltrexone implant. The location will also be a private-pay facility.

TCI specializes in long-term recovery, including drug detox and naltrexone treatment for patients with substance use disorders. The institute, which is owned by BayMark Health Services in Texas, oversees 12 locations across the country.

Local police department officials noted that towns where other TCI clinics are located had made no official complaints against the facilities.

TCI's Wellesley outpatient location is slated to open in November.



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