Rich histories merge: Meet the new Hazelden - Betty Ford Foundation

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In the addictions treatment field, both the Betty Ford Foundation and the Hazelden Foundation are well known. Less well-known, however, are the interactions of these two organizations over many years. Learn their differences; learn their similarities. Now, with their formal merger creating a new foundation, meet the new Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

SALIS has the most wonderful presentations, highlighting research, technology, and cutting edge ideas. But today I’m happy to talk about another aspect of the addiction field, namely, drug and alcohol treatment, helping the individual addict restore hope, health, and healing to their lives. Many invaluable treatment centers serve their communities and regions. However, I’ll focus today on two alcohol and drug centers in the US, each which has a national reach -- the Hazelden Foundation of Center City, MN and the Betty Ford Center of Rancho Mirage, CA. On February 10th of this year, these two organizations merged into one.

Setting the stage
Before the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, alcohol and drug treatment as we know it today did not exist. Addiction treatment as a specialized enterprise grew from a few dozen programs in the early-1960s to more than 16,000 programs in 2012—a number which does not include solo practitioners. This explosion in the number of treatment programs was brought about by changes in legislation, in economics, and a growing idea that alcohol and drug addiction was a disease, which could be helped by treatment.

A few statistics:
57% of treatment programs in the US are private non-profit organizations; 31% are private for-profit organizations, with the remaining programs operated by various government levels, or tribal governments.
Private non-profit addiction treatment programs treat approximately 2/3 of all persons treated for a substance use disorder in the United States. Both Hazelden, founded in 1949, and the Betty Ford Center, founded in 1982, are private non-profit foundations.

RICH HISTORIES MERGE:
SETTING THE STAGE

• 1935: Alcoholics Anonymous
• 1949: Hazelden Foundation
• 1960s (early): a few dozen programs
• 1982: Betty Ford Center
• 2012: more than 16,000 programs
• 2014 (Feb. 10th): Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
Today addiction treatment is a $35 billion industry. A 30-day residential stay can run from $30,000 to $100,000, with both the Betty Ford Center and Hazelden at the mid to lower end of this range. Intensive outpatient treatment at Hazelden is about 1/3 the cost of residential treatment, depending on individual needs. Nationally, 90% of patients seek treatment on an outpatient basis.

There was a lot of press this past February when Hazelden and the Betty Ford Center merged into one foundation. This presentation will provide a brief view of what led to this merger, and what the new foundation looks like.

Missions

Why did this merger take place? Why did both Boards give their approval for a merger?

First, the missions are almost identical. Hazelden is credited with spreading the abstinence-based, 12 Step-based, multidisciplinary professional care model that permeates the treatment industry. The Betty Ford Center was based on Mrs. Ford's mission to "help others live their best possible life" and is recognized around the globe for its commitment to patient care.

There are some differences. For example, Hazelden allows use of certain medications to reduce cravings during initial treatment, while the Betty Ford Center has resisted this approach. The Betty Ford Center offers a unique prevention program for children ages 7-12. Hazelden works with insurance companies, while the Betty Ford Center is self-pay. Finally, Hazelden, but not the Betty Ford Center, has a long-established research department for documenting patient follow up data to quantify treatment effectiveness.

Both organizations have a commitment to 12-step fellowships, an abstinence-based clinical model, and multidisciplinary professional care. They also have a long, rich history of collaboration dating back to the founding of the BFC.

Regarding the merger, as Susan Ford Bayles, Trustee of the Elizabeth B. Ford Charitable Trust, stated: "Mother would be pleased".

1980

This is one of my favorite photos, taken in 1980 when Betty Ford was visiting the Hazelden campus in Center City, Minnesota. It’s a beautiful summer day, with sunshine instead of snowflakes!

Mrs. Ford is in the center. To your left is Damian McElrath, former administrator, author, and official Hazelden historian. To your right is Dr. Dan Anderson, former president of Hazelden, and one of the founders of the Minnesota Model of treatment, who actually created the Hazelden Library in 1966.

From this photo in 1980 until the merger in 2014, both organizations have worked...
together in consultations, staff visits, policy initiatives, and shared projects. Here are just a few examples:

This is an excerpt from a Hazelden staff newsletter from 1980:

... staff members and concerned others from the Eisenhower Medical Center, Palm Desert, California, visited Hazelden, met with our staff, and toured the facilities. Eisenhower Medical Center is interested in developing their own chemical dependency treatment unit, as part of a large hospital complex, and came to Hazelden to observe our program.

The group of visitors included former First Lady, Mrs. Betty Ford. Mrs. Ford took a couple of minutes out of a busy schedule to talk with our patients at the afternoon lecture. She encouraged them in their sobriety and also encouraged them to try to help others maintain sobriety. The patients were most appreciative of Mrs. Ford’s brief message of hope. And all of the Hazelden staff who worked with the Eisenhower visitors during their stay enjoyed the visit, and were especially impressed with Mrs. Ford, who was an inspiration to us all.

And another Hazelden staff newsletter from 1996 states:

... a joint fund-raising event for Hazelden and the Betty Ford Center, held ... in New York, raised more than $1 million to benefit treatment recipients. The first-time collaborative event featured a performance of “Victor/Victoria,...” A number of dignitaries ... were among the 750 people on hand to show their support for the missions of both nonprofit chemical dependency centers. President Ford and Betty Ford were honorary chairs of the event...

The Betty Ford Center and Hazelden have collaborated on several projects ...The benefit was another example of Hazelden’s partnership with the Betty Ford Center.

Collaboration

These two books are unique to their organizations. *Betty: A Glad Awakening* is the autobiography of Mrs. Ford, and in it she recounts her personal struggle with addiction, and her journey to sobriety and recovery. *Hazelden: Spiritual Odyssey*, is written by Damian McElrath, and is the official history of Hazelden’s first 20 years.

![Betty: A Glad Awakening](image1)

![Hazelden: Spiritual Odyssey](image2)

One more quote from a Hazelden staff newsletter of 1999, the year of Hazelden’s 50th anniversary. A personal letter from Betty Ford to Hazelden was included:

*Congratulations to Hazelden on 50 years of assisting men, women, and their loved ones to begin the process of recovery. In the last decade, as many programs have been forced to close or cut back, how reassuring it is that Hazelden and the Betty Ford Center continue to be “Beacons of Hope.”*

*In 1980, Leonard Firestone and I turned to Hazelden and Dan Anderson for counsel on the first steps in developing our treatment center. Hazelden advised us on our campus and buildings, but more important guided us on our treatment program. Dan Anderson and Gordon Grimm offered us their years of experience and wisdom and then helped us hire John Schwarzlose, who had been trained at Hazelden.*

*Over the 16-plus years of the Betty Ford Center, we have enjoyed many exchanges of staff and Board with Hazelden. We share the mantle of leadership and the duty to*
offer a chance at a new life to the thousands of deserving patients who reach out to us. I trust that we will always be partners in this endeavor.

—Former First Lady Betty Ford, Chair, Betty Ford Center, Rancho Mirage, Calif.

Why merge?

Why merge? There is a long list of reasons put forth, but I’ll highlight these:

- The missions and values aligned
- The ability to reach and help more people, being stronger together than apart
- Greater accessibility with an expanded geographic presence
- Improved outcomes through research.
- The merged foundation will:
- Lead treatment innovations and standards of excellence
- Offer a continuum of services to help whenever help is needed during a person’s life
- Strengthen the ability to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing economic and social market.

HBBF by the numbers

Here are some numbers from the past year of the newly merged foundation:

- Patients served: 15,000
- Students/professionals educated: 600
- Publishing: 44,000 orders filled
- Residential beds: 800
- Geographic locations: 16
- Annual revenue: $182,000,000
- Employees: 1500 (1200 Hazelden; 300 Betty Ford Center)

What is the HBBF?

What is the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation? Its official name is the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, with the acronym of HBFF. It is described as the world’s leading organization singularly dedicated to combating addiction to alcohol and drugs through a full continuum of services:

First a brief overview of the HBFF’s clinical model of treatment. It:

- Is abstinence-based and twelve-step based
- Is outcomes-based and evidence-based
- Includes interdisciplinary teams of professionals
- Is gender specific, that is, male patients and female patients experience treatment separately
- Includes specialty tracks:
  - Health Care Professionals
  - Lawyers
  - Professionals
  - LGBT

Recovery services

Each campus is clinically comprehensive, with services appropriate for that center and the populations treated there. The services of each campus, may or may not:

- Include detoxification, pain management, and trauma care
• Include extended care, family programs, and mental health therapy
• Offer lifelong recovery support
• Include residential treatment and/or outpatient treatment

As we look at a photo of each of the geographic campuses, I'll not repeat all these services found on each site, but simply mention the number of beds, so that you get a feeling for the size of each campus.

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Aerial photo of the main campus in Center City, MN

RICH HISTORIES MERGE:
RS: Center City, MN (adult)

The main campus offers residential treatment for adults, and there are 260 beds.

The photo on your left is the women’s center, which has been renamed in honor of Betty Ford. The Cork Center houses the Hazelden Library, and is the building I walk into each morning when arriving at work.
Youth continuum treatment is located in Plymouth, MN. It has a capacity of 110 beds for residential care, and treats youth ages 14-25.

The facility has just doubled in size. Much needed space now includes, for the first time, a gymnasium, with a climbing wall, an art room, and a music room.

This is a clinically comprehensive sober living environment with 55 beds, located in St. Paul, MN. Once called “aftercare”, originally it was just this beautiful Victorian home, but now in back of that are very practical buildings for offices, therapy, and living space.

The beautiful campus of the Betty Ford Center of Rancho Mirage, CA has residential treatment, day treatment, outpatient, and extended care. Their capacity is 190 beds.
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Springbrook, OR is a primary residential treatment center, with a health care professionals focus, and trauma focus. Their capacity is 90 beds.

Naples, FL has residential treatment with 47 beds, as well as day treatment and outpatient. It has a unique feature called “Hazel's Cup”, a coffee shop within the facility, which has become a gathering place for the recovering community of the area.

The Chicago campus is a sober residence of 20 beds, also offering day treatment and outpatient treatment.
That was a brief tour of the Recovery Services, or treatment side of the HBFF, which is the largest division by far. There are four other geographic campuses which are free-standing clinics focusing specifically on outpatient services.

Let’s also glance at the other services:

**Prevention and education**

**BFC Children’s Program**
The Betty Ford Center Children’s Program is a four-day program for children ages 7 to 12. It is open to the public, the child does not need to have a parent in primary treatment, and no child is turned away for financial reasons. Sessions are held in Rancho Mirage, Dallas, and Denver.

For the child whose family is impacted by drug or alcohol addiction, this program presents the “seven Cs”:

“I didn't Cause it, I can't Cure it, I can't Control it, but I can take Care of myself by Communicating feelings, making healthy Choices, and Celebrating myself.

**FCD (Freedom from Chemical Dependence)**
Hazelden recently purchased the Freedom from Chemical Dependency (FCD) Educational Services. Based out of Boston, it has been in existence for 35 years, with clients in over 50 countries and in almost every US state. The focus is on private high schools. The core product is a four day, intensive, on-site engagement with a high school, facilitated by FCD Prevention Specialists.

**My Student Body**
MyStudentBody is a comprehensive approach to reducing the risk of drug and alcohol abuse and sexual violence among college students.

My Student Body is an online subscription service, is purchased by 100 colleges and universities, and is made available to about 500,000 students.

You can see that Prevention services move from children, to high school students, and to college age students.
Publishing

The Publishing arm of HBFF started in 1954 with the publication of Richmond Walker's “24 Hours a Day”, a book second only the AA Big Book for those in recovery.

Publishing offers comprehensive resources on addiction, recovery, spirituality, and related topics. Their client groups include the individual consumer, treatment professionals, schools, correctional facilities, and others. HBFF publishing is considered the largest publisher for addiction-related content. Last year it sold over 3 million product units (which does include electronic items), to customers in 57 different countries.

Higher education

Both Hazelden and the Betty Ford Center have active professionals in residence programs, offering hands-on addiction education to medical and other professionals.

The Graduate School at Center City offers three separate fully accredited Master's Degree programs. There are about 110 students at any one time. This fall it is also launching a fourth, fully on-line Master’s Degree.

Research

By 1969, Hazelden had been operating for 20 years and both patients and staff observed lives changes. However, it was time to document treatment results.

Hazelden’s applied research department was started to create company metrics, to coordinate all research projects, and especially to study the effectiveness of Hazelden’s treatment program, measured in terms of how people function following treatment. Patient follow-up started in 1969 and still continues. It utilizes the most stringent standards in collecting and analyzing data.

Today the research department is called the Butler Center for Research, and the Hazelden Library is organizationally part of the research department.

A common question: what is the success rate of Hazelden? Data show that 88% are clean and sober one year after treatment. Does this mean that all these people had a “perfect” year? No. 53% were totally abstinent from all drugs and alcohol for the entire year; while 35% had a relapse, but regained control, and were again clean and sober one year after treatment.

Public advocacy

The Center for Public Advocacy is a small but vital department actively involved in advocacy, insurance parity laws, consumer education, and federal healthcare reform.

The Center has a tagline that I like: “Fighting stigma, speaking out, promoting recovery”.

Envisioning the future

Will the merger of Hazelden and the Betty Ford Center be a successful endeavor? Only time will tell. The issues of financial stability, insurance coverage, stigma and discrimination toward the addict, lack of standards within the treatment field, and barriers to treatment access all remain as challenges.
As a humble Hazelden employee of 30 years, how do I envision the HBFF future?

- I see a great increase in outpatient care,
- I see even more thorough continuum of care services along the lifecourse,
- I see reduction of the stigma and discrimination toward the addict through better education throughout society, and
- I see the HBFF a leader in creating nationwide standards for treatment services and outcome data.

References


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