



THE PLAIN DEALER

Treatment Online to open downtown Cleveland office

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

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Plain Dealer Reporter

A company that provides online information and consultation to people who have behavioral disorders plans to open an office in downtown Cleveland in the first half of the year, employing up to 20 people by year's end.

Treatment Online, launched in late 2006 in New York by psychiatrist Dr. William Hapworth, provides self-help information and consultations from professional therapists at its Web site, www.treatmentonline.com. Typical site users are people who suffer from depression, stress, anxiety and other disorders.

Treatment Online plans to hire between 12 and 17 provider relations, client services and marketing sales people in Cleveland, said Jim Piper, the Hudson resident and health-care insurance veteran who signed on as the company's chief operating officer in May. Its clinical staff of 17 would remain in New York.

"Cleveland's been recognized as an innovator in health care," said Piper, one of three Treatment Online workers already in Northeast Ohio.

Piper most recently was a senior vice president for the Cleveland office of Marsh USA, the insurance broker and risk manager. He also was previously president of Association Plan Administrators Inc. of Akron and The Chandler Group of Companies in Stow.

A majority of the company's investors also are in the region, he said. Treatment Online recently closed a financing round during which it raised \$750,000 from several "angel" investors, who are wealthy individuals.

The company plans to use the money to open its Cleveland office and continue to develop its Web site. Treatment Online uses the power and the anonymity of the Internet to offer mental health care to people who don't seek it because they feel stigmatized by their behavioral disorders, Piper said.

People can use Treatment Online as individuals for an annual access fee of \$150, or as part of an employer group, Piper said. For employers, this access would cost between \$3 and \$4 per employee each month, he said.

New users create a comprehensive mental health profile by answering a series of questions. Treatment Online assigns the person to one of its licensed social workers or clinical counselors, Piper said.

Health care companies moving to Cleveland "is a trend that you'll hear more about over the course of the next couple of years," said Baiju Shah, president of BioEnterprise, the region's bioscience business developer.

"Cleveland is clearly on everyone's radar in the health-care community as a great place to be developing a business," Shah said. BioEnterprise is helping Treatment Online open its Cleveland office.

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