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Meridian Community Care announced a \$2 million, 12,000-square-foot expansion project to its Youngstown campus Wednesday. Pictured, from left, are Darla Gallagher, James Ford, and Dennis Krancevich, all of Meridian Services; Larry Moliterno, president and CEO of Meridian; Gregg Strollo of Strollo Architects; and Buzz Gubany of Murphy Contracting.

# CEO says Meridian is growing to fill a need

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## YOUNGSTOWN

Larry Moliterno says the need for alcohol and drug treatment and prevention in the Mahoning Valley is growing.

That made Wednesday's announcement of a 12,000-square-foot addition to Meridian Community Care's Youngstown campus, 527 N. Meridian Road, bittersweet.

"We don't want to celebrate the increased demand for services," said Moliterno, president and CEO of Meridian. "But this allows us to provide a better environment for what we do and will enable us to expand our

services."

The expansion will cost \$2 million and Moliterno expects it to be completed by next spring.

Moliterno said Meridian, which offers alcohol and drug treatment, prevention services, health care and housing, needed the extra space because of a growing number of people who need help battling addictions.

Meridian will add more counseling rooms and space for group sessions and will look to shift more of their resources to helping the teenage demographic.

"We're starting to see more and more adolescents and young adults get addicted to opiates and heroin," said

Mike Senchak, executive director of the Mahoning County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board.

Senchak said 17 percent of high-school juniors experiment with prescription pills, or opiates, which often lead to other addictions, such as heroin.

"Heroin is much cheaper than prescription opiates," he added.

Moliterno said Meridian's growing staff of 200 will continue to expand at its addition and in 11 other locations throughout the Valley.

"By treating addiction, not only are we working with individuals and changing their lives, but also the lives of their families," he said.