

2023 Performance Excellence Award Nominee

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT EXPANSION PROJECT: MAKING SUD TREATMENT A ROUTINE PART OF PRIMARY CARE

at Access Community Health Centers

Access Community Health Centers implemented a behavioral health program that integrates substance use disorder (SUD) treatment seamlessly into primary care. The program utilized an interdisciplinary approach where Behavioral Health Consultants (BHC) are an integral part of the primary care team, working alongside primary care providers (PCPs) to manage patients' mental health and substance use needs.

The project's impact is profound, achieving multiple outcomes, including:

- Through provider education and collaboration, 35 medical providers across three clinic locations now prescribe buprenorphine for SUD treatment, increasing from three providers in 2018.
- Development of pathways to for patients to access specialty addiction medicine consultation,
- Implementation a universal wellness screener for all patients annually, including screening for alcohol use, drug use, and depression,
- Increase in the number of patients served who received SUD treatment by over 80% between 2019
The development of clear workflows, enhanced care management systems, and collaboration with addiction medicine specialists contributed to improved care coordination and holistic treatment for patients with substance use disorders.
- The initiative also extended its impact through the creation of Behavioral Health Care Coordinators to support patients with SUD and Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) and expansion of the team to include another psychologist and social worker.
- Created access to naloxone, buprenorphine, and fentanyl test strips at UW/Access pharmacies, charging only \$1 per prescription.

This project aimed to reduce stigma associated with SUD treatment, address disparities in overdose fatalities among different racial groups, and provide access to life-saving medications. This initiative demonstrated a commitment to understanding and address the racial inequities in drug overdose deaths that show stark disparities in death rates among Black individuals. The project's emphasis on integrated care, universal screening, and improved access to treatment aimed to provide equitable care for a diverse patient population.

The initiative showcased Access Community Health Center's commitment to innovation, evidence-based care, and patient-centered approaches. The project team's dedication to making SUD treatment a routine part of primary care exemplified their resilience in tackling complex health challenges while striving for improved outcomes and patient well-being.