



MA DSRIP
TA marketplace

CASE STUDY

Building Out Cambridge Health Alliance's Continuum of Substance Use Disorder Partners

ACO: Cambridge Health Alliance in Partnership with Tufts Health Public Plans

Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) is a health system in Boston's metro-north region. CHA, in Partnership with Tufts Health Public Plans, is a MassHealth ACO.

TA Vendor: Bailit Health

Bailit Health (Bailit) is a health care consulting firm dedicated to assisting states, health plans, employer purchasers, providers and others with the design and implementation of strategies to improve health care quality and reduce cost growth.

Project Description:

Bailit assisted CHA with building out a substance use disorder preferred provider network and referral system. CHA refined their referral processes used in inpatient, emergency, and primary care departments to ensure members were referred to the appropriate substance use disorder treatment partner. Bailit offered project management support, helped to identify and select the substance use disorder preferred providers to include in CHA's network of treatment partners, and supported drafting and implementing provider agreements and referral resources.

TA Project Timeline: April - December 2019



Identified Challenge

CHA sought support from Bailit to build out its network of substance use disorder treatment partners and improve care coordination and referral processes for individuals with a substance use disorder. Providers in CHA's emergency departments lacked information about referral options and found referral processes inefficient. CHA developed a TA project to improve these processes and workflows to ensure appropriate member referrals to substance use disorder treatment services.

Background

At the start of the MA DSRIP TA Program, a team at CHA developed a comprehensive list of potential TA projects they wanted to undertake, considering both the impact TA would have on the organization and the population CHA serves. Addressing the cost and quality of care for individuals with substance use disorders, and better coordinating care and referrals to treatment for these individuals, emerged as a top priority. Once the team at CHA determined the general focus of the project, they interviewed six organizations in the MA DSRIP TA Vendor Catalog and determined Bailit had the expertise needed to execute the project.

TA Project Objectives

CHA partnered with Bailit to build out a referral network of substance use disorder treatment partners that integrates previously missing services into CHA's continuum of care. The main goals of the TA project were to 1) establish preferred provider relationships with substance use disorder treatment organizations to which CHA could refer patients with a substance use disorder and 2) improve the communication and workflows between these services and the emergency department, inpatient hospital, and outpatient clinics at CHA.

TA Project Development

Prior to the TA engagement, CHA released a request for information to potential substance use disorder treatment organizations with



which they would consider establishing a preferred provider referral relationship. They reviewed the results with the team at Bailit as part of the TA project. Together, CHA and Bailit evaluated the potential partners, which included organizations that offered medically monitored detoxification, residential services, and outpatient substance use disorder treatment, via site visits to acquire more in-depth knowledge of their available services. Based on these data collection activities, Bailit recommended six organizations with which CHA should establish preferred provider referral relationships. CHA and Bailit also developed workflows for referrals and navigation to these new substance use disorder treatment services for CHA providers.

It helped to have Bailit as an independent evaluator of these [organizations'] services so it wasn't someone internal to CHA making a recommendation, but the TA Vendor with expertise.

— CHA TA project team member

TA Activities

Bailit completed three main TA activities with CHA as part of this TA project:

1

Identified and conducted site visits to potential substance use disorder preferred provider treatment partners. Bailit helped CHA identify potential substance use disorder treatment partners to include in its referral network and accompanied the CHA team on site visits. Through these visits, CHA and Bailit learned more about each organization's staff team, philosophy of care, and breadth of services offered to patients. Bailit supported the CHA team in developing a comprehensive set of interview questions for the potential substance use disorder treatment partners and patients on the site visits. The interviews gave CHA a thorough understanding of each organization and its providers, allowing them to make an informed decision about executing a referral partnership.

2

Developed workflows and navigation to services for CHA providers to follow. Bailit worked with CHA to develop and refine workflows for making referrals to specific substance use disorder treatment partners in their preferred provider network. CHA reported that the TA vendor team brought a fresh perspective to this process and kept the patient needs at the forefront.

3

Created a substance use disorder tip sheet for CHA providers. Bailit helped CHA draft a substance use disorder tip sheet to serve as a reference for CHA providers in inpatient, outpatient, and emergency departments. The tip sheet explains the treatment services available to patients and outlines specific next steps CHA providers can take to help their patients efficiently access these services. The tip sheet is accessible on CHA's intranet, and the CHA team has also conducted provider education sessions on how to use this resource.

Outcomes and Global Impact:

As a result of this TA project, CHA established six new contractual relationships with substance use disorder treatment organizations across Massachusetts to which they can refer patients. The CHA team gives daily updates to its providers, sharing information about available services at the substance use disorder treatment partners. The tip sheet they created through the project is supporting CHA providers in making these referrals and decisions about care for their patients. CHA providers are referring individuals to the substance use disorder treatment partners directly instead of having to discharge someone without a referral. Data from claims analysis has demonstrated that patients are going to the substance use disorder treatment partners and the referrals are happening as intended at the outset of the TA project. Because of this

TA project, CHA patients get into treatment more efficiently with better outcomes in their treatment and recovery. Additionally, because the range of referral options is clearer, CHA providers have become more actively engaged in exploring treatment options and strategies to engage patients with a substance use disorder.

When a referral needs to be made the referral is made. The people making referrals do not have to dig through a lot of things. We've developed a good, streamlined process... We can get our clients into good substance use treatment without a lot of the hassle.

— CHA TA project team member

Finally, this TA project led CHA to establish the “Addictions Hub”; a group co-led by the referral specialist and the associate chief of care management at CHA. Providers from departments across the hospital bring substance use disorder cases that are both high risk and high cost, to discuss in a regular meeting. CHA invites Behavioral Health CPs to these meetings because of their unique on-the-ground perspective with clients. The

CHA provider teams leave with a series of concrete action steps and strategies for how to engage patients. In sum, CHA has been able to leverage their relationships with the substance use disorder treatment partners from this TA engagement to support individuals with a substance use disorder and other complex medical needs more holistically.