



CHESS HEALTH
Real Evidence. Real Recovery.

HOW OKLAHOMA IS WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

*Using key partnerships and innovative technology
to create a collaborative continuum of care*

WHITE PAPER— APRIL 2021



The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control reports there were 67,367 drug overdose deaths in the US in 2018. Of those, nearly 70% were related to opioids. But that was before COVID-19. In the early months of the pandemic, the number of overdoses increased by 18%. As of December 2020, 40 of the 50 states reported increases in opioid-related deaths. Just as states were beginning to win the war on drugs, the battle has taken on a new urgency.

One state—Oklahoma—understands the problem all too well.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a public health crisis in Oklahoma, one that's been steadily growing for more than a decade. Nearly 1,000 Oklahomans die each year from a drug-related overdose. According to an article published by the Oklahoma Policy Institute, 300,000 people in the state struggle with substance abuse but only one in three get the care they need. Teresa Stephenson, Director of Opioid and Women Specific Treatment Services/State Opioid Treatment Authority at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), says "One of the problems plaguing Oklahoma has been a lack of connectivity, coordination, and SUD recovery resources across our state." Stephenson added, "We've had multiple entities trying to tackle the issue on their own, but with the rural nature of our state, many lacked the resources with which to expand access and get people the care they need in a timely manner." That, however, is changing.

The tide, according to Stephenson, is finally turning thanks in large part to a strategic effort to bring better partnerships and SUD technology to every community, which began a few years ago with the Women in Recovery (WIR) program at Family & Children's Services in Tulsa. WIR is an intensive outpatient alternative for eligible women facing long prison sentences for non-violent drug-related offenses. Operated in partnership with the George Kaiser Family Foundation, WIR works closely with the criminal justice system and various community partners to ensure program participants receive supervision, substance abuse and mental health treatment, education, workforce readiness training and family reunification services. After exploring creating their own app, WIR began the relationship with CHESS by implementing its eRecovery solution, which includes the evidence-based Connections app. The app was a hit with the women in the WIR program, contributing to the recovery strength they amassed in the program and providing valuable data back to the program leaders. This success offered Stephenson and others proof that technology could be applied statewide.

"We recognized the progress WIR had made using CHESS Health's eRecovery solution and Connections app and began exploring how we could use the technology for our statewide SUD initiatives too," says Stephenson. CHESS Health is an evidence-based, comprehensive relapse-prevention platform for managing populations with substance abuse disorders. "We began with eRecovery and eTherapy, which we made available to fifteen providers starting in late 2018." Today, ODMHSAS has 40 state-contracted SUD providers using eRecovery with 120 additional providers currently in implementation.

In 2019, the program expanded to include eIntervention, CHESS Health's solution for streamlining and tracking the SUD referral process by connecting all relevant entities and stakeholders in communities to get patients into treatment faster. This includes emergency rooms, detox facilities, SUD providers, crisis centers, department of correction clinics, and the state's 82 department of health clinics—one in every county. "eIntervention is the innovative tool that has enabled us to create a truly connected, collaborative, and strategic state-wide SUD program. By beginning with our providers we created a hub from which organizations across many agencies can now connect digitally."



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

The impact of the state-wide initiative, according to Stephenson, depends on adoption by key organizations across all communities. Several have stepped up. For example, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services is currently in the process of moving out of a pilot and into full implementation of eIntervention for one of its five regions in the state. Brett Hayes, Director of Behavioral Health Integration with the Department of Human Services, is optimistic about the initiative. He says, “[my] hope is to launch it to all APS staff across the state, to ensure that we are streamlined, to get this worked out, and to give it to all child welfare workers.”

They are now working to push the program out to those other areas. The DHS program includes screening and referring adults and children in need of SUD assistance to appropriate treatment.

The eIntervention solution has also recently been implemented in the Family Treatment Court in Oklahoma County and the drug court in Sequoyah County. Stephenson states that in Oklahoma, “[we] are #1 in incarceration, female incarceration and teen pregnancy”. Stephenson and Hayes along with other innovative leaders want to use this platform to bring these numbers down by disrupting the cycle of trauma and destruction brought on by SUD: “we want to prevent [mothers with SUD] from having to touch child-welfare, now we are moving upstream to get the app to them prior to being



pregnant, or when pregnant, or at delivery -- and get them to treatment services, so we can keep families together with help from a family care plan.”

One of the most significant partnerships is with the Oklahoma neonatal abstinence program, which received a grant to help implement eIntervention within the Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative and its OMNO (Oklahoma Mothers and Newborns Affected by Opioids) birthing hospitals. When women show up at one of these hospitals, they are referred via the eIntervention solution to an appropriate treatment center for each mother’s specific needs.

ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY

CHESS Health is an evidence-based, comprehensive platform for managing populations with substance use disorders. The platform includes a Connections app to connect patients and caregivers through a user interface that is simple, responsive and easy to use. The app is available 24/7 right in the patient’s pocket, providing a personalized recovery resource in a secure environment that promotes trust, compassion and success. This is of critical importance because, for many patients, a few hours of treatment a week just isn’t enough, especially for those in early recovery who may experience doubt or weakness in their ability to succeed.

When the need for treatment is identified, such as in the emergency room or detox center, patients too often leave with a few phone numbers to call, but with no scheduled follow-up. In other cases, access to care is limited by geography or resources. Without appropriate referral to a treatment program, relapse is more likely. eIntervention gets more patients into treatment faster with streamlined electronic referrals, which removes barriers and expands access, ensuring those who need treatment can find it quickly.

CREATING VALUE ACROSS THE CARE CONTINUUM



EMERGENCY ROOMS

- Reduction in ED over-utilization by SUD patients
- Demonstrates community leadership in addressing addiction crisis
- Insight into referral patterns and follow-through rates



SUD & MAT PROVIDERS

- Increased referral volume through new partnerships with EDs and PCPs
- Better patient engagement with secure HIPAA compliant messaging
- Increased motivational support for greater patient follow-through on referrals



GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

- More individuals in treatment is major government goal; positive societal impact
- Helps to solve access to care challenges SUD/BH treatment
- Insights into referral patterns and follow-through rates, alignment with HEDIS measures

For too many patients, conventional SUD treatment doesn't work. To achieve long-term recovery success, patients need to develop critical cognitive and behavioral control skills, which can be learned using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). However, access to trained CBT counselors may not always be available. eTherapy enables SUD patients to reinforce key recovery coping skills when and where they need it through the Connections smartphone app. This includes highly engaging videos, interactive exercises and quizzes, and education around developing skills needed to overcome addiction.

eTherapy is the CHESS Health solution for more affordable, effective, and durable digital CBT delivery

In partnership with the late Dr. Kathleen Carroll of Yale, CHESS Health's eTherapy is comprised of three CBT4CBT



CBT4CBT for SUD



CBT4CBT for Alcohol



CBT4CBT for Buprenorphine

These programs are available via web delivery and as a smartphone app, enabling a patient to complete the program in a clinic, at home, or whenever they are comfortable.

Individuals living with a SUD who are newly released from a treatment program often return to their previous environment where the same temptations and negative influences are waiting for them, putting them at a significant risk of relapse. The Connections app provides patients with the tools, skills, and ongoing support they need to successfully transition back into their everyday lives. eRecovery also includes a provider care management platform that provides predictive relapse risk analytics to help reduce relapse and ensure ongoing engagement. eRecovery also delivers provider outcome comparisons and trend analysis for identifying populations.

CHESS OFFERS CLINICALLY VALIDATED RESULTS NOTED IN PUBLICATIONS LIKE JAMA PSYCHIATRY, AND JOURNAL OF DUAL DIAGNOSIS.



fewer patients relapsed
(surveyed at 4, 8, and 12 months)



reduction in severity of relapse



reduction in re-hospitalizations



more likely to complete treatment

A PATH FORWARD

There is no easy fix in the battle against drug abuse. Communities across the country continue to struggle to find a model that works. Oklahoma serves as a great example of what's possible when entities work together and leverage technology to connect and scale to collectively address the problems and find shared solutions. Through strategic state-wide partnerships and advanced SUD technology, Oklahoma is winning the battle against drug abuse, helping individuals put their lives back together.

SOURCES

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>

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³ <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-12/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>

⁴ <https://okpolicy.org/substance-use-disorders-are-a-public-health-crisis-in-oklahoma-expanding-health-care-coverage-will-help/>