

Georgia Department of Community Supervision

Telehealth Services to Support Addiction Recovery During the Pandemic

COVID-19 and Addiction

The COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges for those struggling with addiction. Justice-involved patients with opioid use disorder (OUD) are particularly at-risk, and COVID-19 presented further challenges and disruptions in care. The continuous stress, changes to program and recovery support availability, and isolation during the pandemic resulted in increases in relapses and overdoses nationwide.

Pilot Overview

111 Participants



95 individuals accessed recovery services and programs



55 participants accessed digital therapeutics

36

Average Age

90%

Previously participated in treatment



55% Male
45% Female

White 78%

African American 16%

Latino 6%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

GEORGIA PILOT



To provide safety net support and services during the pandemic, the Georgia Department of Community Supervision, in partnership with the Addiction Policy Forum and Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE), expanded telehealth support to justice-involved substance use disorder (SUD) patients during the pandemic.

The Georgia pilot served 111 individuals with substance use disorder during the pandemic, providing an evidence-based smartphone app for recovery support; CBT4CBT, a digital therapeutics platform that delivers cognitive behavioral therapy; proactive engagement of highest-risk clients; and recovery support services from Addiction Policy Forum that included weekly forum, support groups, and peer/social worker sessions.



Digital
Therapeutics



Recovery
Services



Cognitive
Behavioral
Therapy

OUTCOMES



GDSCS participants reported significant improved sleep and confidence in recovery/abstinence, as well as reductions in urges/cravings, feelings of depression and anxiety, and relationship troubles. Four participants reported relapse and were connected with recovery support.

Improved Protective Factors

Improved Sleep	24.54%
Improved Participation in Work, School, Volunteering	3.66%
Increased Participation in Support Groups	3.09%
Increased Confidence in Recovery/Abstinence	4.58%

Reduced Risk Factors

Reductions in Relationship Troubles	16.75%
Reductions in Depression/Anxiety	27.88%
Reductions in Urges/Cravings	36.36%
Reductions in Risky Situations	7.38%



"This app is the best thing that's helped me throughout my road to recovery."
- Program Participant

Connections App

To support individuals in recovery from substance use disorder, CHES Health created Connections, a smartphone app that is scientifically proven to support patients in recovery by reducing relapse and promoting pro-social engagement. The pilot provided the Connections App to 230 participants.

The digital therapeutics platform allows participants to:

- Track sobriety,
- Connect with trained counselors and peers through messaging,
- Track treatment plan and set reminders,
- Add medication and appointment reminders,
- Journal daily, and
- Access videos, testimonials and more through the resource library.

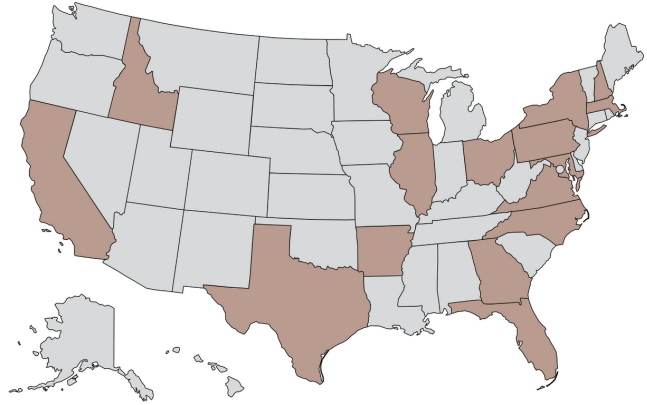
CBT4CBT

CBT4CBT teaches cognitive and behavioral skills that can help people gain control over their use of drugs or alcohol. Developed by a team of researchers and clinicians at Yale University led by Kathleen Carroll, CBT4CBT has been tested and validated in randomized clinical trials.

Skills taught to participants include:

- Recognizing and changing patterns of use
- Coping with craving and urges to use drugs or drink
- Challenging and changing negative thoughts
- Improving decision making skills
- Learning how to say NO effectively
- Improving problem-solving skills

A NATIONWIDE PILOT



The Georgia Department of Community Supervision (GDCS) was one of 21 criminal justice agencies selected for the pilot project across 16 states. The project provided services to a total of 634 justice-involved individuals with a substance use disorder, including 111 individuals referred by GDCS.

RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES



Addiction Policy Forum (APF) provided recovery services to participants that included 1) peer support sessions; 2) online support groups; 3) weekly forums; and 4) case coordination with criminal justice agencies.



Peer Support Sessions

APF conducted 61 peer support one-on-one sessions led by social workers and peer navigators.



Online Support Groups

46 online support groups meetings were held, led by APF social workers and peer navigators.



Weekly Forums

Weekly forums of resources included support connecting to vaccines, gratitude modules, self care, and how to access support groups.



Case Coordination

Case coordination sessions with criminal justice agency staff helped with client matters ranging from housing needs to mental health services.

TESTIMONIALS

"There was no place to go because of COVID restrictions and lockdowns and after being on the app for a while I learned there was a recovery meeting on Thursday night, which was great. I met a lot of really cool, genuine and honest people and hey helped me open up about my alcoholism...and I wasn't alone anymore."
- Program Participant

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Addiction Policy Forum and the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) partnered to expand telehealth support to justice-involved substance use disorder (SUD) patients during the pandemic in 16 states nationwide. For more information, visit addictionpolicy.org.

