



Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Transformation (START) Initiative
Application to Participate as a Primary Care Provider

The State of Delaware, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) seeks primary care providers (PCPs) who will participate in Delaware's Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Transformation (START) Initiative to improve acute response, initiate medication-assisted treatment (MAT) to manage withdrawal, and rapidly engage individuals in treatment.

Delaware is in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis related to opioids. In 2017, Delaware lost 338 lives to overdose. According to the CDC, Delaware ranks 6th in the nation in drug overdose death rates, and most of these deaths can be linked to opioids including heroin, prescription opioids, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl. In response to this crisis, DSAMH seeks to transform the full continuum of care for substance abuse disorder through the START Initiative. The START Initiative will increase access to care and treatment for individuals living with substance use disorder by fostering system-wide improvement based on a framework that measures client outcomes.

People with opioid use disorder in Delaware experience significant challenges when seeking treatment. Treatment capacity is lacking: nearly 80% of Americans with opioid use disorder don't receive treatment (Saloner B. & Karthikeyan S., 2015). Although treatment of substance use disorders has long been the focus of specialty treatment centers, the current demand for treatment far exceeds the capacity of these centers. In addition, there is inadequate access to medication treatments for opioid use disorder across the state. To have any hope of stemming the overdose tide, we must to make it easier to obtain buprenorphine than to get heroin and fentanyl (Wakeman, S.E., & Barnett, M.L., 2018).

Through the START initiative, DSAMH will establish two pathways for primary care to join the initiative depending upon readiness of the primary care provider and the current array of services offered in the primary care environment.

Screening and Referral Pathway

As part of the START initiative, DSAMH provides support to systems to initiate buprenorphine treatment in the hospital Emergency Department (ED) and facilitate a warm handoff to treatment providers across the community. START will support this process by embedding peer recovery specialists at multiple treatment system entry points to work with those entering and maintaining their treatment, including within EDs, primary care offices, and the Bridge Clinics. Essential to

the success of the expansion of SUD treatment is a coordinated effort to screen and effectively refer patients for treatment via established pathways. Primary care is a significant access point for individuals and overall treatment success relies also on effective screening and referral processes at all access points.

DSAMH seeks to support PCP practices in becoming key engagement points by:

1. Developing evidence-based, standardized universal screening processes for substance use disorder;
2. Facilitate access to behavioral health interventions and other treatments and wrap around supports;
3. Implement effective referral pathways through consistent use of DSAMH's online referral network to make digital referrals in the State's SUD system;
4. Track and report to DSAMH aggregate outcomes, including screening results, referral rates and provide documentation of collaboration with SUD treatment provider in overall patient care.

As part of the screening and referral pathway, primary care providers will receive \$10,000 annually for 2 years from DSAMH to support the organizations' commitment of resources for implementation of the screening and referral pathway. Providers will also participate in a learning collaborative that includes support via webinars and in-person events. Tools and resources will be provided to ensure the success of screening and referral providers in the START initiative.

Treatment Pathway

As part of the START initiative, DSAMH provides support to systems to initiate buprenorphine treatment in the hospital Emergency Department (ED) and facilitate a warm handoff to primary care offices. START will support this process by embedding peer recovery specialists at multiple treatment system entry points to work with those entering and maintaining their treatment, including within EDs, primary care offices, and the Bridge Clinics.

DSAMH seeks to support PCP practices in enhancing existing SUD services and expanding capacity to:

1. Increase the number of buprenorphine prescribers in the State and provide office-based induction of buprenorphine;
2. Accept warm handoffs from hospital EDs of individuals who were initiated on buprenorphine treatment post overdose;
3. Implement ongoing MAT services and protocols in a culturally appropriate manner.
4. Facilitate access to behavioral health interventions and other treatments and wrap around supports;

5. Ensure consistent use of DSAMH's online referral network to make digital referrals in the State's SUD system;
6. Track and report to DSAMH aggregate outcomes, including assessments, clinical progress and receipt of supplementary services.

As part of the treatment pathway, primary care providers will receive \$49,999 annually for 2 years from DSAMH to support the organizations' commitment of resources for implementation. In addition, treatment pathway providers will also participate in a learning collaborative that includes support via webinars, in-person events and tailored coaching from subject matter experts to support the treatment implementation pathway. Support, tools and resources will be provided to ensure the success of providers in the START initiative.

All providers interested in participating in this innovative initiative are invited to submit the attached application by March 29, 2019, to Kristen Rego at kristen.rego@delaware.gov.

Thank you for your consideration to join the State's START Initiative to help us improve and foster seamless access and treatment to Delawareans living with a Substance Use Disorder.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Romero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth Romero, MS
Director