Division of Services Improvement, Clinical Technical Assistance Project
Technology-Assisted Care
East Carolina University
Call Summary
November 26, 2013 • 11:00 a.m. ET

Submitted to: Kate Wetherby, Bethany Applebaum, and Paul Toriello
Date of Submission: December 2, 2013

Attendees
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services' Administration (SAMHSA): Bethany Applebaum
East Carolina University (ECU): Paul Toriello
JBS International (JBS): Dave Wanser, Iris Chai, and Leslie McElligott

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Meeting Purpose

- The purpose of the call is to make general introductions between members of the ECU's Technology-Assisted Care grant project and the technical assistance contractors at JBS International. SAMHSA and JBS are committed to ECU's success and would like to assess how they can assist ECU with its program implementation needs.

Discussion

Program Implementation

- As outlined in their grant application, ECU will use a van (on loan from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill) to provide mobile outreach services to homeless veterans. The van has been outfitted with the appropriate technology – including satellite connectivity – to meet the needs of their clients.

- It has been challenging to navigate through the university's approval channels. It can take considerable time to move things forward. Such protocols have delayed ECU's launch date slightly. Paul Toriello (ECU program director) planned to begin providing services in December; however, ECU revised their timeline and anticipate being fully functional in January 2014. In the meantime, ECU will conduct basic outreach with veteran specific-programs to begin branding the project within the community.

- The A-CHESS mobile application presentation delivered by Arapahoe House during the October 24, 2013 biweekly TAC grantee call caught Paul's attention. Paul worked with Dave Gustafson (University of Wisconsin) in the past and is looking forward to offering A-CHESS to ECU clients. ECU must, however, provide a donation to the University of Wisconsin to use the technology, and there are institutional rules that bar universities from donating to one another.

- Limited access to mobile technology may inhibit client's use of the A-CHESS application, although Paul noted that cell phones may be the only point of contact among homeless veterans. His team

visited a stand-down event to assess client's access to and familiarity with using technology. He noted that there were age differences related to use; veterans from Operation's Desert Storm and Enduring Freedom were more technology savvy than those who fought in Vietnam.

- Dave Wanser (JBS) mentioned that the other TAC grantees have compiled lessons learned on how to work with clients with limited data plans and other challenges using technology.

Relationship Building Capacity

- Because of the homeless veteran's transient nature, they often have access to temporary cell phones, and their numbers change frequently. ECU has connected with a philanthropic organization that donates phones to veterans.

- There is a heavy military presence in North Carolina. Paul is trying to collaborate with service providers at Veterans Affairs (VA) sites in Fayetteville (Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune) and Durham (C. Moore Johnson Air Force Base) to demonstrate how ECU's program services can complement their own. The Fayetteville office is receptive to working with non-VA entities like ECU. Durham has slightly more administrative obstacles to overcome. Many community-based providers are beginning to accept Tri-Care because the VA does not have the capacity to deliver services.

- Dave stated that ECU is doing a great job of forging relationships. Paul views these partnerships as opportunities to enhance service provision capacity; a way to connect the dots to get veterans into service. He believes that politics and technology are moving in the right direction.

Evaluation

- Paul is serving as the program evaluator. ECU is currently completing an IRB request to move forward with evaluation plans.

- Paul is interested in being able to show how technology is shaping client outcomes. He would also like to explore how to complete GPRA data in more innovative ways (like over the phone).

- ECU partnered with Chestnut to offer the CSAT-adapted version of Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) screening tool.

- ECU is using the evaluation model from a previous SAMHSA grant – the Strengthening Treatment Access and Retention (STAR) Project. They plan to put weekly and monthly monitors in place to track progress and make changes to operations as needed.

- Paul is interested in collecting process and outcome-related variables. He also anticipates completing focus groups to get stakeholder perspectives.

- The TAC Evaluation Workgroup has developed a basic set of questions that can be built into existing evaluation processes to address technology's impact on client outcomes across program sites. The questions target three areas: client satisfaction/efficacy, dosage, and impact. The final questions will be shared during the next biweekly TAC grantee call (scheduled for December 5, 2013 at 1:00 pm), at which point JBS will also recruit for programs interested in piloting the questions.

Opportunities for Technical Assistance

- JBS is in the process of scheduling implementation site visits to Cohort 3 grant programs. The team anticipates visiting ECU in January. This would coincide nicely with when ECU's mobile van is ready to launch. Paul said it would be helpful to conduct a walk-through and gain an outsider's perspective on how things are working.

- The Ideas Exchange is a great resource for TAC grantees to collaborate and share information. Paul finds the Ideas Exchange to be helpful and cited the recent discussion board post on innovative ways to capture GPRA information.

- The TAC Grantee Meeting (March 2014) will be another opportunity to learn from and share with fellow grantees. Additional details on the meeting will be shared shortly.

Action Steps

- JBS will follow up with dates to conduct an implementation site visit.