

***Division of Services Improvement, Clinical Technical Assistance Project***  
**Technology-Assisted Care**  
**Boston University**  
**Call Summary**  
**December 6, 2013 • 3:00 p.m. ET**

**Submitted to:** Kate Wetherby, Jordana Muroff, and Deborah Chassler

**Date of Submission:** December 9, 2013

**Attendees**

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services' Administration (SAMHSA):** Kate Wetherby

**Boston University (BU):** Jordana Muroff and Deborah Chassler

**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 SAMHSA Government Project Officer (GPO), Kate Wetherby, members of BU's Technology-Assisted Care (TAC) grant project, and the technical assistance contractors at JBS International. SAMHSA and JBS are committed to BU's success and would like to assess how they can assist BU with its program implementation needs. The call is a collaborative opportunity to learn about BU's progress and to discuss their plans for the future.
- Kate affirmed the roles of SAMHSA and JBS in supporting BU throughout the life of their grant. BU should feel free to contact Kate, the JBS team, and review the Ideas Exchange (IE) whenever questions arise.

**Discussion**

Program Implementation

- BU has partnered with the University of Wisconsin (developers of the Addiction Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System (A-CHESS)) and Casa Esperanza (a residential treatment facility) to serve Latino clients who have successfully completed treatment, primarily for co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues.
- BU's primary task has been to translate the A-CHESS mobile application into Spanish for use by Casa Esperanza clients. In addition, they developed a medication adherence component for A-CHESS and adapted features to enhance its cultural competency.
- BU is nearly complete with translating and other modifications. Staff are in the process of testing content. They also ordered Android phones (Motorola Razr and Droid 4) to determine compatibility/functionality with the A-CHESS system. Staff anticipate that all steps will be finalized by December 13.

- BU's implementation timeline has shifted slightly due in part to the effort required to translate A-CHESS content and also because of the dynamics of working with a community partner, like Casa Esperanza. Casa does not graduate clients from their program until after the holidays, so BU will begin recruiting clients in January (e.g., graduates who are returning to their communities of origin).
- Jordana Muroff (BU) has served as a conduit between A-CHESS and Casa Esperanza. Jordana participates in monthly A-CHESS consortium meetings and has weekly contact with staff from Casa Esperanza. Casa has identified a case manager and project coordinator to oversee A-CHESS implementation. Issues like phone coverage policies, connectivity considerations, responsiveness/availability, client expectations, etc. have been addressed in trainings.
- Jordana and Deborah Chassler (BU) plan to use the IE more extensively to learn how others are implementing A-CHESS. Deborah has been participating on the biweekly TAC grantee calls in Jordana's absence (due to a teaching obligation). Dave Wanser (JBS) emphasized the utility of participating in the A-CHESS user group as helpful way to learn more about the application.
- Dave emphasized the importance of developing an overall organizational approach to client engagement. Such protocols are essential to effecting an organization-wide culture change. This has been a central focus for BU.
- Dave recommended including other mobile applications on their smartphone. Jordana said there are some limitations associated with adapting an existing system; however, they plan to add other content where possible. The IE has a number of resources available about mobile applications that others have found to be effective.
- Staff willingness, readiness, and workflow will contribute to long-term program success and sustainability. These will be topics of consideration during the implementation site visit (tentatively planned for April 2014) and areas in which JBS may be able to assist should challenges arise.

### Evaluation

- BU utilizes Qualtrics software to assist with GPRA data collection. They have found that extracting data from Qualtrics and uploading it to the SAIS system is challenging; requiring sophisticated programming knowledge. Staff would like to reduce redundancy and use technology in an efficient and effective way. JBS will connect BU with another grantee who may have found a way to successfully accomplish the transfer of data to SAIS.
- Kate confirmed that GPRA target intake numbers start to appear at the 4-month mark; however she can provide a justification for delayed enrollment if there is a reasonable explanation. Dave stated that if intake problems arise, they may be attributed to patient flow, staff resistance, or other issues. BU should have a contingency plan in place to consider alternate referral sources if it appears that intake numbers cannot be met using existing partners. BU should not hesitate to contact Kate or JBS to ask for assistance to explore what might be impacting GPRA collection efforts. Technical assistance is not punitive, but rather a way to help BU and Casa Esperanza develop alternatives.
- Dave commented that BU's goal of completing 40 client intakes each year is very reasonable. BU is confident that they will meet their GPRA target numbers as planned.

- SAMHSA plans to update the GPRA platform; however it is a large data system, and it will take time to complete the process.
- SAIS is moving toward an electronic platform. This is part of SAMHSA's Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSCQ) 5-year strategy plan.
- Dave reported that SAMHSA created a draft [Stage 2 Meaningful Use compliant Continuity of Care](#) document. Aligning data collection strategies via established standards will be simplified moving forward.
- 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 are available on the Ideas Exchange](#), and the pilot phase will begin in early January 2014.

#### Other Items

- The 2014 TCE-TAC Grantee Meeting is scheduled for March 20-21, 2014 at SAMHSA headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. This is an opportunity for the TAC portfolio to demonstrate the ways in which technology impacts patient care. The goal is to expand technology into other program areas.
- JBS would like to complete an informal site visit in April. The site visit is an opportunity to review BU's implementation accomplishments and identify potential areas where technical assistance may enhance achievement of program goals. Leslie McElligott (JBS) provided a sample draft agenda so that BU could get a sense of the topics JBS would like to cover and the individuals they would like to meet with.
- BU is free to collaborate with other TAC grantee projects. They can also request technical assistance through the SAIS system. Details on [how to submit a TA request](#) are available on the IE. For more information on Technical Assistance, please refer to the resources on the Ideas Exchange:
  - <https://www.ideas-exchange.net/about/about-technical-assistance-and-journey-partners>
  - <https://www.ideas-exchange.net/learn/resources/making-the-best-use-of-technical-assistance>

#### **Action Steps**

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