

Advancing Recovery..... Looking Forward

As the Advancing Recovery (AR) / Robert Wood Johnson project draws to a close this month, it is important to reflect on the great strides afforded to the State, the treatment providers and, most especially, to clients as a result of this ground-breaking initiative. Three treatment providers, Operation PAR in Pinellas Park, River Region Human Services in Jacksonville and Spectrum Programs in Miami participated in the two-year grant to implement two evidence-based practices: the use of medication-assisted treatment (Vivitrol) and the use of case management to increase retention as clients move across program areas.

As a result of AR in Florida over 70 clients received medication-assisted treatment (MAT) with Vivitrol and over 500 staff received training in the use of Vivitrol. Clients on the Vivitrol protocol stayed in outpatient treatment an average of 20 days longer than those clients not receiving Vivitrol. Preliminary results show that clients who successfully completed outpatient treatment with the Vivitrol protocol had significantly reduced readmissions following treatment as compared to their previous treatment history. Other positive outcomes include increased employment rates for clients and increased overall client satisfaction.

When MAT was coupled with the implementation of case management, all three provider agencies demonstrated an increase in client retention in treatment. Sheila Barbee, Department of Children and Families Performance Management & Improvement Director and AR Project Director, said a formal project evaluation will be completed by the end of year. She added, “We will continue to follow all clients who were part of the AR project and received Vivitrol.” According to Ms. Barbee, “The Advancing Recovery Project has enabled the state to identify and implement medication assisted treatment as an effective component of substance abuse treatment throughout the state.”

Ms. Barbee reports that some funding has been identified by the State to use for MAT and a legislative budget request will be submitted to assist in funding. She said the State will continue to buy Vivitrol through the State pharmacy at the Florida State Hospital. The agencies participating in AR will continue to receive Vivitrol and two new agencies have been identified to begin MAT with Vivitrol. Southwest Florida Addiction Services in Ft. Myers and Meridian Behavioral Healthcare in Gainesville received on-site training in the use of Vivitrol in October. Gail Kempf, RN, representing Alkermes, (the manufacturer of Vivitrol), provided the training to medical directors and clinical staff at both agencies.

The infrastructure is in place and guidelines have been established by the State to obtain Vivitrol through the State pharmacy at a reduced price. Ms. Barbee said, “The State will continue to collect data on the effectiveness of MAT by tracking outcomes of clients receiving MAT through the State pharmacy.”

Agencies that are interested in obtaining medications through DCF can contact Sheila Barbee at Sheila_Barbee@dcf.state.fl.us.

The Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse Program Office is sponsoring Process Improvement web-based trainings to lay the groundwork for the continued move forward on the use of MAT. For information on these training opportunities or to be added to the list-serve, notify the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association at fadaa@fadaa.org.