

REDUCING RECIDIVISM WITH MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT IN JAILS

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

ALKERMES INSPIRATION GRANTS®

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INTRODUCTION

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) spearheaded a nationwide campaign to raise awareness among law enforcement of the alarming opioid epidemic. The project continues to educate Sheriffs and jail administrators about comprehensive Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) programs as an evidence-based practice to help those within a correctional setting recover from substance use disorder. NSA launched this project with the goal of reducing recidivism by preventing relapse through addiction recovery; reducing the stigma associated with substance use disorder; and facilitating reentry by linking community services through a MAT program approach.

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1940, has approximately 20,000 members, and represents the 3,086 elected Sheriffs across the United States. Headquartered in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, NSA advocates on behalf of public safety and provides a wide range of services, information, and trainings to prevent crime; appropriately respond to offenders and victims; and assist Sheriffs in the administration of our nation's 3,300 jails. NSA has a Board of Directors comprised of 38 Sheriffs and 15 Sheriff-chaired committees that address the full range of issues of importance to law enforcement.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The need for this project has been documented in a forthcoming U.S. Department of Justice funded report on MAT for justice involved populations:

The evidence is clear that the addition of medication increases the likelihood of successful treatment of individuals with opioid and alcohol use disorders....It is also becoming increasingly clear that the addition of MAT for the treatment of justice-involved individuals not only increases the likelihood of successful treatment but reduces recidivism. Notwithstanding this increasing evidence, substance use treatment providers, in and out of the criminal justice system, have been slow to add MAT to their treatment regimens. As of January 2017....Only 130 local and county jails in 21 states provide MAT, almost exclusively limited to the provision of injected

naltrexone immediately before individuals are released back to the community.¹

Furthermore, research findings from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on untreated OUD in correctional settings are particularly troubling:

A former inmate's risk of death within the first 2 weeks of release is more than 12 times that of other individuals, with the leading cause of death being a fatal overdose. Overdoses are more common when a person relapses to drug use after a period of abstinence due to a loss of tolerance to the drug. Untreated opioid use disorders also contribute to a return to criminal activity, re-incarceration, and risky behavior contributing to the spread of HIV and hepatitis B and C infections.²

In short, while Justice Department funded research indicates that "MAT may be especially indicated for high-need/high-risk populations, justice-involved populations, and, especially, incarcerated populations,"³ the reality is that "Notwithstanding their proven effectiveness, addiction medications are underused in the treatment of drug users within the criminal justice system."⁴

Insofar as Sheriffs operate over 85% of the jails in the United States, NSA was inspired by the extensive amount of Sheriffs expressing the issue of the overwhelming amount of people in jails with substance use disorder involving opioids. Although evidence proves Medication Assisted Treatment's effectiveness, few avenues exist for Sheriffs and jail administrators to obtain training and technical assistance on the implementation of MAT programs in jails. This project guides law enforcement personnel to access available resources, such as sheriff-led trainings and peer-to-peer mentoring programs.

¹ Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (2017), "Promising Practice Guidelines for Medication Assisted Treatment for Justice Involved Populations (draft)," pp. 3-4.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse (May 2017), "Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder in the Criminal Justice System," <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/treatment-opioid-use-disorder-in-criminal-justice-system>, p. 1.

³ Advocates for Human Potential, Inc., Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities, AdCare Criminal Justice Services, Inc. (2015), "Prison/Jail Medication Assisted Treatment Manual," http://www.rsat-tta.com/Files/RSAT_Prison_Med_Treat_FINAL.pdf, p. 2.

⁴ Ibid.

METHODS

NSA partnered with the National Institute of Corrections, the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office to enhance our reach and strengthen our voice to the 3,086 Sheriffs' offices across the country about the value of MAT programs.

This program was implemented by creating and disseminating a MAT in Jails informational tool in the form of an infographic poster to all Sheriffs' offices; presenting workshops at various conferences and committee meetings; publishing multiple articles in *Sheriff & Deputy* magazine; conducting a webinar; continually posting announcements via NSA's website, *All-Points Bulletin* e-newsletter, and all other social media platforms; and creating and disseminating a White Paper on the project's implementation and outcomes. The impact of the project is measured by the number of individuals who received information as a result of this campaign.

OUTCOME

This program made monumental strides in the improvement of law enforcement knowledge of substance use disorder as a disease as well as the understanding of Medication Assisted Treatment as an evidence-based practice to help those within a correctional setting recover from addiction. The extensive reach to law enforcement and allied professionals made allowable by this project provided NSA with ample opportunities to strengthen our Medication Assisted Treatment campaign and assist Sheriffs and jail administrators with implementation of these programs.

In furtherance of the above goals, this project facilitated NSA's newly established partnership with the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to provide sheriff-led trainings and technical assistance to local law enforcement.

IMPACT

Trainings and technical assistance to law enforcement were delivered via plenary presentations, workshops and exhibits at national and state conferences; peer-to-peer articles in *Sheriff & Deputy* magazine; webinars; presentations at law enforcement meetings of committees on Drug Enforcement and Jails, Detentions, &

Corrections; an infographic poster as a MAT educational tool; NSA's website, *All-Points Bulletin* e-newsletter, and all social media platforms; connecting law enforcement personnel with mentoring programs led by the National Institute of Corrections; and disseminating other available resources.

The impact of this project is measured by the number of individuals who received information, resources, and technical assistance as a result of this campaign. It is difficult to determine the exact number of individuals affected due to the extensive reach of this program in a variety of methods, but we can approximate the following: NSA's nearly 20,000 members are continually receiving information on Medication Assisted Treatment programs via our e-newsletter, website, social media, and *Sheriff & Deputy* magazine; 74 individuals participated in two workshops dedicated to this project at NSA's Annual Conference in Reno, Nevada; 89 individuals participated in the Jails, Detentions, & Corrections Committee and Drug Enforcement Committee Meetings at which project presentations took place; 46 of these individuals supported the passing of a resolution in support of Medication Assisted Treatment at NSA's Drug Enforcement Committee Meeting; 112 law enforcement personnel participated in events supported by this project in Franklin County, OH and St. John's County, FL; approximately 250 individuals will receive this information via a webinar that will then be archived on the NSA website; approximately 100 individuals received an infographic at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference; and 3,086 sheriffs received the MAT infographic that displays information and provides additional resources to assist with MAT implementation.

FUTURE PROGRAM PLANS

NSA continues to encourage Sheriffs and jail administrators to implement comprehensive Medication Assisted Treatment programs in their jails and utilize the resources, trainings, and technical assistance provided by our partners, ONDCP and NIC. Additional funding would allow NSA to offer extensive technical assistance to law enforcement and allied professionals by devoting time and resources to providing substantial education on MAT programs and encourage the implementation of such programs through peer-to-peer learning opportunities.