

NIATx: Changing Systems, Changing Lives

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Lean on NIATx, It Works

One of the themes of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Transformation Initiative is to engage with partners to improve the quality of services for Oregonians. Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) is working to make OHA a more responsive, effective partner and to increase the consistency and quality of services provided by partners across the state.

AMH is focusing on improving outcomes on the Intensive Treatment and Recovery Services (ITRS) working with Oregon Community Mental Programs (CMHP) and alcohol and other drug (A&D) treatment providers. These entities share responsibilities with AMH for delivering substance abuse and addiction services using two improvement practices that focuses on the customer: Lean and NIATx.

Why Use Two Practices?

After evaluating the needs of the transformation project, the team decided to use Lean for its governance structure to manage the project. They decided to use NIATx, a nationally recognized, proven approach, to improve processes applied at the addiction treatment provider level that directly improve retention and continuation of care.

What is Lean?

Lean is a quality improvement strategy that focuses on what the customer needs or wants while measuring the work being completed. It involves the line staff in improving the process delivery system to be more efficient and effective through recognizing and eliminating duplication and waste.

What is NIATx

NIATx helps behavioral health providers improve access to and retention in treatment for individuals seeking alcohol and drug services. The objective is primarily achieved by helping providers use process improvement methods to achieve four NIATx aims:

- reduce waiting times;
- reduce no-shows;
- increase admissions; and
- increase continuation in treatment.

AMH is focusing a transformation initiative on the Intensive Treatment and Recovery Services (ITRS) project for addicted families funded by the Legislature in 2007. The initiative is a collaborative effort between AMH and Children, Adults and Families (CAF). Funds were provided to increase the following services:

- residential treatment for parents and dependent children who go to treatment with an addicted parent;
- intensive outpatient treatment;
- regular outpatient treatment;
- case management; and
- clean and sober housing options for addicted families.

What Does This Initiative Do?

This initiative aims to expand the principles of NIATx to eighteen ITRS programs in Oregon. Nine ITRS programs (for the 2009/2011 biennium) were selected as early adopters to use NIATx as a process improvement tool with an emphasis on:

- increase client retention in outpatient services for 90 days or longer; and
- continuation of services from residential to outpatient treatment within 7 days of discharge.

For more information on NIATx and tools, visit the AMH NIATx webpage at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/niatx/main.shtml>.