

Program Evaluation for SaVida Health

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The agency that I have decided to evaluate is SaVida Health. SaVida Health is a private organization that specializes in addiction medicine and takes pride in delivering evidence-based medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and provides patient support through counseling. This facility offers mostly intensive outpatient counseling, but they also offer family and group therapy if needed. SaVida's mission is, "to improve the lives of people with opioid or alcohol addiction through respectful, compassionate, and effective treatment." (SaVida Health, 2022). For the program evaluation, I obtained information by interviewing a counselor and two secretaries/medical assistants that work at the facility. I was also able to observe/interview a client and obtain surveys from clients that attend the program.

Results

There seemed to be a common theme when it came to asking stakeholders the question, "How effective is Medication-Assisted Treatment in meeting the client's needs at this facility?" According to the surveys that I gathered, 13 out of 20 clients said that they felt that MAT was effective in meeting their needs at the facility. When I spoke with a client, they said that they think it works especially well at this facility because therapy is a part of your recovery process, which they provide to clients at every appointment (or more if needed).

I had the pleasure of interviewing the two medical assistants that act as secretaries as well, so they see everything and everyone that comes to the facility every day. One of the girls explained opiate addiction/MAT in one of the most cohesive ways that I have ever heard. She said that people need to be willing to "reprogram" their minds to beat their addictions and she has seen where MAT (with adequate counseling) can provide that opportunity to people in addiction by allowing the clients an easier transition into sobriety.

I got some mixed signals when it came to my second question “How effective is the program in identifying and addressing potential barriers to the client's success in this program?” Most clients (13 out of 20) said that they do a respectable job of being flexible and helpful when it is necessary but there were some (7) clients who felt that the facility could be doing more to help them in their recovery. When I asked them what they felt like the facility could do differently, the most common answer was that they did not want to do therapy/appointments in general and did not understand why it was mandatory.

When I spoke with a counselor, she informed me that they provide transportation, if necessary, family therapy, child/parent therapy, and couples therapy, to make sure that they are helping their clients to the best of their ability with the resources that they have. She also gave the last recorded retention rate of around 70 percent of clients for this facility, meaning they completed the program.

Conclusions

I learned way more than I imagined I would during this program evaluation. The MAT program received positive feedback from patients and providers, which I was pleasantly surprised about. From what I observed, it seemed like the clients that were putting their all into their recovery were the clients that were successful with MAT at this facility. I also gathered from the clients that they had to find a counselor that they felt comfortable with before they were able to take therapy seriously during their recovery. The program was perceived as effective in helping patients manage their substance use disorder, improving their mental health, and reducing the risk of overdose. However, the retention rate could be improved as 30% of patients did not complete the full course of treatment.

Implications of Findings

I think that the positive feedback from patients and providers may increase demand for the program, leading to more individuals seeking treatment if they see that the program is working for others. The finding that patients experienced improvements in mental health may encourage the program to collaborate with more mental health professionals to provide more comprehensive care. The low retention rate could prompt the program to offer additional support and resources for patients to help them complete the full course of treatment.

The positive feedback from patients and providers may encourage the program to expand its reach and provide services to more individuals in need of substance use disorder treatment. The finding that patients experienced improvements in mental health may lead the program to integrate more mental health services into its treatment approach. The low retention rate could prompt the program to implement additional support and resources for patients to help them complete the full course of treatment, such as more frequent counseling, peer support, or financial assistance.

The influence of the evaluation findings on the program can be both positive and negative, depending on how the program responds to the findings. On the one hand, positive feedback from patients, providers, and students can motivate the program to continue providing high-quality services and attract more individuals who are interested in the program. Additionally, findings that highlight areas for improvement can help the program identify ways to enhance its effectiveness, address gaps in services, and better meet the needs of its stakeholders. On the other hand, negative findings, such as low retention rates or areas for improvement, may initially be perceived as negative influences on the program. However, if the

program takes these findings as improvements and implements changes to address these issues, the ultimate influence can still be positive in improving the program's quality and effectiveness.

Recommendations

The evaluation found a low retention rate among patients in the MAT program. To address this issue, the program could offer additional support and resources for patients, such as different forms of counseling, peer support, or financial assistance. By doing so, the program can increase retention rates, leading to improved patient outcomes and program effectiveness. Additionally, increased retention rates can lead to cost savings for the program, as patients who complete the full course of treatment are less likely to require additional treatment or hospitalization.

Therefore, stakeholders, including patients, providers, and funders, should consider this recommendation to improve the program's effectiveness and maximize the benefits of the MAT program.

The evaluation found that patients in the MAT program experienced improvements in mental health. To build on this success, the program could collaborate with mental health professionals to provide more comprehensive care for patients with co-occurring mental health disorders.

Collaboration with mental health professionals can lead to improved patient outcomes by addressing both substance use and mental health concerns simultaneously. Patients who receive comprehensive care are more likely to achieve long-term recovery and improved quality of life.

Goals and Objectives

One goal that I would set for SaVida would be to increase patient engagement in the MAT program by 30% within a reasonable amount of time. The first objective would be to develop a patient engagement program that includes incentives for attendance, such as gift cards or waived fees for missed appointments. A second objective would be to Provide educational materials on

the benefits of MAT and the risks of substance use to increase patient understanding and engagement. The last objective would be to offer telemedicine services for patients who have difficulty attending appointments in person.

Another goal that I think the program should implement is to improve the cultural competency of MAT program staff to better serve diverse patient populations. The first objective for this goal would be to provide cultural competency training for all MAT program staff on the unique needs and experiences of diverse patient populations. A second objective would be to hire bilingual staff to improve communication with non-English speaking patients. The last objective for this goal would be to develop outreach strategies that target diverse patient populations to increase access to the MAT program they provide.

Research Articles

I would say that the research articles that I picked for research for the program evaluation support what I found out about this program in many ways. In a study by Oesterle et al. (2019) individuals randomly assigned to either methadone, buprenorphine, or naloxone showed that 33.2% had achieved 5-year abstinence from heroin, which was better than the “no treatment” group. It is suggested that even though MAT is proven to help, it is being underused in our society and we should be using any tool at our disposal to help fight this epidemic. This shows the importance for more of these programs to be implemented in our communities as it has been proven to be effective in fighting opioid addiction.

Ma et al. (2019) explained a recent meta-analysis estimated the mortality rate of periods during and after opioid substitution treatment and found that receiving methadone and buprenorphine treatment was associated with substantial reductions in the mortality of those with opioid use disorder (OUD). The results of this study were that individuals with OUDs

had higher risks of all-cause death and overdose death after terminating MAT than that while receiving MAT. I think that this information is relevant to my evaluation and my findings because it supports that MAT can be successful if people use the program correctly, the program is implemented correctly, and it is readily available to the community.

References

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