

# Prevention, Early Detection, Treatment and Recovery for Substance Use Disorders: Reducing Avoidable Readmissions for Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment

Authors: Jocelyn Maddox, Director, Heather Morian, and Mary Alleman; Division of Quality Management



In Pennsylvania, the number of fatal drug overdoses has steadily increased since 2012. The disparity between deaths for black and white individuals is increasing; black Pennsylvanians died from an overdose at a rate nearly two times higher than whites in 2021.<sup>1</sup>



## Pennsylvania's Performance Improvement Project (PIP)

To address the impact of this epidemic, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) partnered with the Medicaid Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations (BH-MCOs) to implement its PIP. OMHSAS aims to significantly slow the growth of substance use (SU) prevalence while improving outcomes and addressing racial and ethnic health disparities through a systematic and person-centered approach.

## Looking Ahead

OMHSAS will continue to partner with BH-MCOs to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and outcomes. The PIP will extend through 2023, with a final report produced in 2024.

## Addressing Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

Each BH-MCO is required to identify and address SU-related racial or ethnic disparities. BH-MCOs objectives include:

- Reduce racial disparities in rates of members receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use and alcohol use.
- Increase the rate of black and Hispanic members receiving Certified Recovery Specialist Services.
- Increase the rate of black members receiving MAT and SUD services 30 days following SU Residential.

## Innovative Interventions

Each of Pennsylvania's BH-MCOs have implemented creative interventions, some of which include:

**Warm Hand-Off:** Members who present to the Emergency Department or Physical Health Provider for an SU event are linked to an SU provider for MAT.

**Anti-Stigma Campaign:** Builds on education efforts while working with local barbers and hair stylists to expand anti-stigma programs with a focus on racial disparities.

**Prevention of Against Medical Advice (AMA) Discharges:** Monitoring rates of AMA discharges from high-intensity SU treatment and assisting providers in developing interventions and establishing standards for discharge planning.

<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Office of Drug Surveillance and Misuse Prevention, February 2023

## Interim Outcomes

Pennsylvania has seen improvements in the rates for Follow-up after High-Intensity Care for Substance Use Disorder (FUI) and readmissions for Mental Health treatment.

