

# Community Health Initiatives Tool

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## GREAT LAKES HEALTH SYSTEM

### MATTERS

#### INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The MATTERS program was designed to prevent and mitigate substance use disorders. The program's focus is on implementing a path for patients to be efficiently assessed, considered for medication initiation and referred to treatment in an effective manner regardless of geography, co-morbidities and other factors. The program's mission, vision and values highlight inclusivity for all patients, regardless of the complexity of their situation.

As the MATTERS program has grown, Great Lakes Health System has continued to hold those principles at the forefront and has applied them as the health system developed its voucher and telemedicine programs. The volume of patients using telemedicine has surpassed the physical referral environments. This fact further demonstrates the importance of flexibility and meeting patients where they are.

#### PARTNERS

MATTERS has 1,500+ community partners. Key funders and community stakeholders include: UBMD Emergency Medicine, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biological Sciences, University at Buffalo, DOH, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports, Erie County Department of Health, National Institutes of Health HEALing Communities Study, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS, Highmark of Western New York, U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance, John R. Oshei Foundation and Catholic Charities Care Coordination Services.

#### OUTCOMES

- MATTERS has facilitated more than 2,000 referrals since its electronic referral platform launched in 2019.
- MATTERS has distributed nearly one million drug testing (fentanyl and xylazine) strips to individuals and organizations across the state. Emergency telemedicine services have been the source of nearly half of all MATTERS referrals in 2023.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

- Patients needing access to SUD care may not be able to physically get to a treatment location. Integrating emergency and ongoing tele-addiction care has helped these patients access care.
- Medication cost for underinsured or uninsured patients presents a barrier to treatment. Developing a robust medication voucher program has helped mitigate this barrier.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

MATTERS constantly pursues various funding mechanisms for continued program enhancement. Partnering with state and federal agencies, along with state legislators, has provided sustainability for many years. Billing for services in a limited capacity will also contribute to sustainability.

#### CONTACT

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