The Door is Open: Real Stories from Open Access Providers
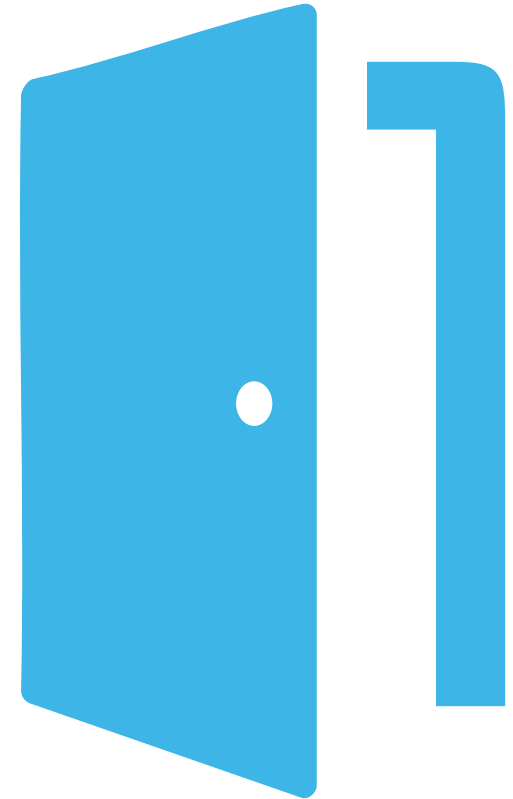
June 23, 2021

Outpatient Walk-In/Open Access (OA)

MBHP defines OA as follows:

- Same-day appointments, where an outpatient program holds a period of time open so a person can walk in or be seen via telehealth without an appointment

- OA may be used for intake, psychiatry appointments, group meetings, or individual therapy.

MBHP

Benefits of Open Access

- Decreases no-show rates for providers
- Increases flexibility for individuals seeking care
- Reduces time between when a client is ready and when they begin treatment to zero
- Meets needs faster

Who We Are: Casa Esperanza, Inc.

Programs:

- Men's Residential Programs (mensprogramintake@casaesperanza.org)

- Latinas y Niño's Residential Program (latinasintake@casaesperanza.org)

- Familias Unidas Outpatient Program
  Intake email: (fuopintake@casaesperanza.org)/)
  Telehealth email: (telehealth@casaesperanza.org)

- CSS Program (cssintake@casaesperanza.org)

- Supportive Housing

Demographics of population served at agency:

- Total patients: 2,032 (CY 2019)

  o Gender: Female-33.51%, Male-66.44%, Other-.05%

  o Age: <18-1.13%, 18 to 29-11.52%, 30 to 39-68%, 40 to 49- 28.74%, 50 to 59-20.67%, 60+-4.92%

  o Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latinx-43.85%, Not Hispanic/Latinx-17.67%, Unknown-51.08%

  o Race: White-22.4%, African American-6.45%, Native-.25%, Other-1.43%, not entered-30.12%

Number of sites delivering Open Access: 1 site, Roxbury

Length of time delivering Open Access: Since 2006, when Familias Unidas Outpatient Program was opened

Services delivered through Open Access:

- Initial intake

- Referrals to detox and other higher levels of care

- Comprehensive assessments by master's-level clinicians

- Insurance application assistance and enrollment

Agency contact:

Cecilia Plotkin: cplotkin@casaesperanza.org

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Casa Esperanza, Inc

302 Eustis Street, Roxbury, MA, 02119

(617)445-1123

Impact of Open Access – Casa Esperanza

- **No waitlist**
- Low-barrier treatment access supports **timely** and **effective integrated** care services for patients
- Streamlined referral process **strengthens connection** with partner organizations
- Support patients in a **bilingual capacity** to access the **right level of care**
- **Streamlined access** to MAT, case management, medical, and psychiatry services
- **Reduction in wait time** between initial contact and service delivery
- Self-referrals are sufficient and allow **patients** to **refer family members** and others in the **community** to also access our services

Casa Esperanza Tips for Success

- Having **bilingual** and **bicultural** staff available to screen and complete all aspects of the open access model for the target population
- Internal **collaboration** and **communication** as well as **coverage** prioritization
- Managing staff's **schedule** in an efficient way to protect certain times and **ensure service delivery**
- **Prioritizing** of open access model by accommodating clients presenting with **urgent** needs and **residential** clients versus outpatient ones
- Completing **quarterly chart reviews** allows for an updated caseload and helps create more openings among clinicians completing comprehensive assessments
- Weekly multidisciplinary **case conferencing** to ensure new and established patients have successfully connected to services needed internally and externally
- Increased **expertise** in how to effectively engage and outreach the population served
- Having a 30-, 60-, and 90-day **follow-up procedure** to help patients remain **engaged** in treatment
- Having **written** open access guidelines of the **workflow** and quality assurance process for training and **sustainability/maintenance** purposes

Who We Are: Advocates

Locations: Marlborough, Framingham, Harvard, and Waltham

Demographics of population served at agency:

- Ages three throughout the lifespan

- People who identify along the gender spectrum. Recently, a relationship with the MGH Transgendered Health Program was developed.

- Communities with large Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking populations. Advocates has a long standing Latino Team, recently started a specialized team for our Portuguese-speaking staff, and strives to be a welcoming place for everyone from every race and ethnicity.

Number of sites delivering Same-Day Access (SDA): All four sites deliver SDA - has been down since April 2021; we are slowly re-opening

Length of time delivering Same-Day Access: Advocates has been delivering open access since 2012.

Services delivered through Same-Day Access: Once an outpatient intake is complete, the clinician can refer to ongoing staff for individual, group, couples, or family therapy

Agency contact name and email address: Lauren Mazzola, lmazzola@advocates.org

Impact of Open Access – Advocates

- Open Access initial evaluations result in **high kept appointment rates:**
    - Persons offered a **same-day** appointment show up **91 percent** of the time.
    - Those scheduled **one day later** show up **75 percent** of the time.
- If scheduled within 7 days, **second appointments** are **kept 71 percent** of the time, **10 percent higher** than non-open access second appointments.
- The **volume** of initial evaluations has **increased** each year since 2017:
    - 2017 - averaged **175** initial evaluations per month
    - 2019 - averaged **190** initial evaluations per month
- **Online** open access initial evaluations **further increased**, ranging between 210 and 232 per month.

Advocates Tips for Success

- Staff buy-in from all members of the team - from administrative assistants to directors
- Strong and flexible intake staff
- Monitoring when intakes are coming in and adjusting based on data
- Centralized scheduling
- Clear expectations of scheduling- " What does a full schedule mean?"
- Monitoring of case lists, taking data on no-shows, attendance contracts
- Clear data on how many people are scheduled weekly in each staff's list and how much each clinic and staff should be billing

Who We Are: Clinical & Support Options

CSO has 18 locations throughout Western Mass. and the North Quabbin region.

Demographic of Population Served:

- Race: 5% African American, >1% Asian/Other Pacific Islander, 11% Hispani /Latinx, >1% Native American, 53% Other (Multiracial, Undisclosed, Other)

- Gender: 44% Male, 49% Female, 7% Other

- Age: 76% Adults, 24% Youth

Number of sites delivering Open Access: 18 with a "One Door" policy - Clients can access same-day intake for services at any location.

Length of time delivering Open Access: Implementation was August of 2014, so nearly 7 years! Time flies when you're having fun!

Services delivered through Open Access: Clients can access **all** CSO services ranging from Family Support Programs, Community-Based Programs, Mental Health and Addiction Recovery programs, and even be connected with Crisis and Housing and Homelessness Programs if warranted.

Agency Contacts:

Karen Poisson, senior vice president of programs: karen.poisson@csoinc.org

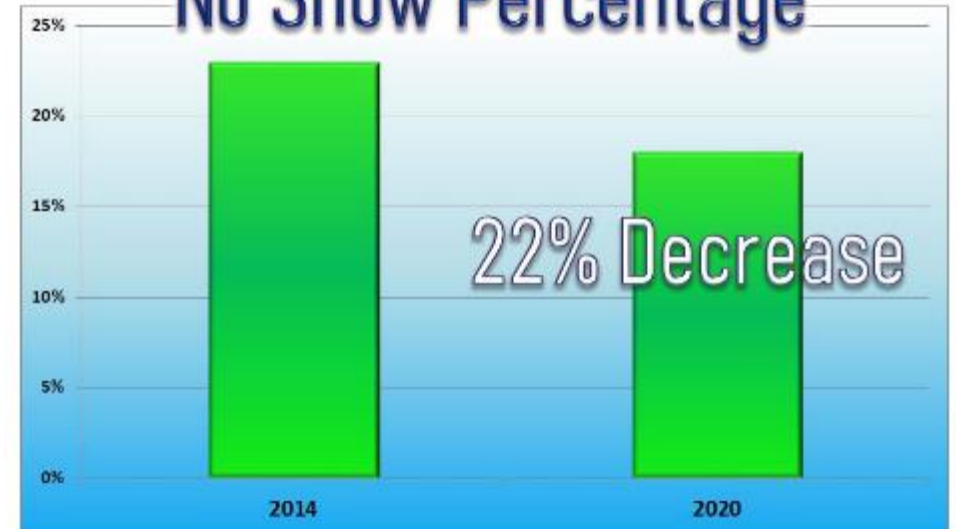Jes Charette Fallon, director of business systems and integration: jcharette@csoinc.org

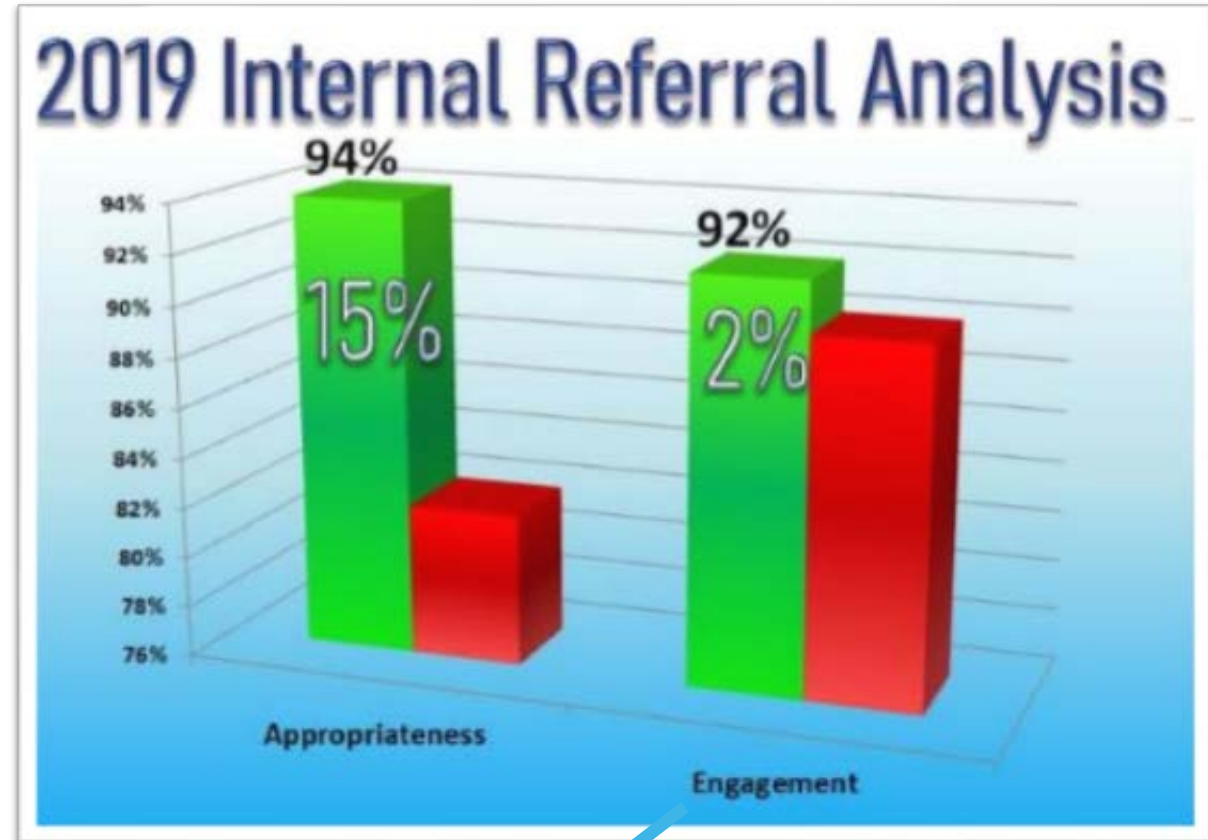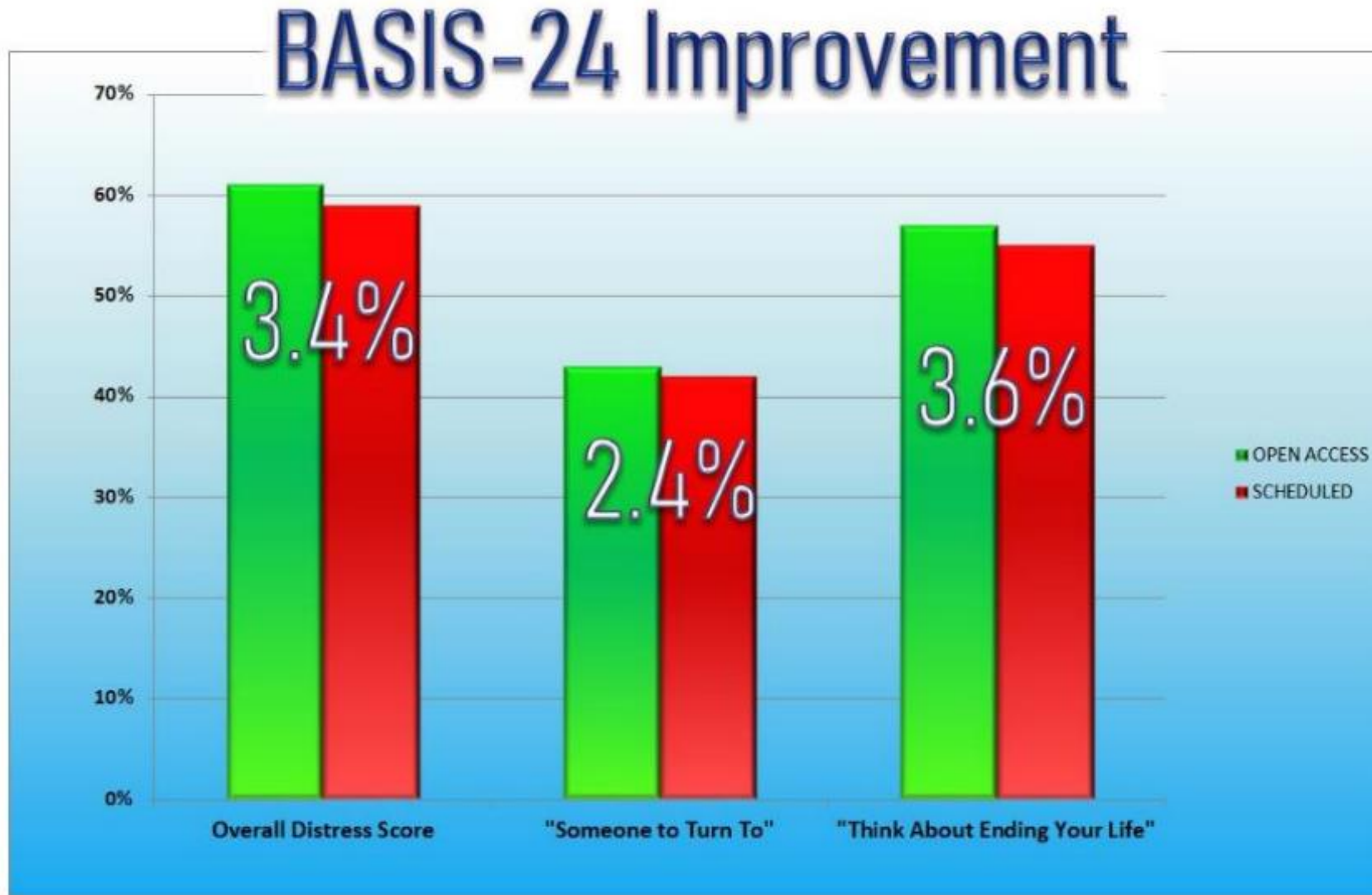# Clinical & Support Options (CSO) Open Access Data

CSO - Open Access and Integration

Internal Referral Volume

+ 370%

2017   2019

2019 Internal Referral Analysis

94%   15%   92%   2%

Appropriateness   Engagement

OPEN ACCESS Clients also engaged on average 10.3% longer!

CSO - Outcome Data

CSO Tips For Success

- **Living, Breathing, Evolving:** Plan accordingly around continued need to assess and adapt schedules, staffing, systems, etc., and commitment to continuous improvement

- **Designate Resources:** Integrated Services manager (ISM) role and structure to support the agency

- **DATA!/Systems Management:** Know volume, days, times, payer mix, language, or other population needs to plan accordingly and identify creative solutions to anticipated challenges

- **Triage List Management:** One list concept; Provide immediate opportunities for engagement that meet the varying needs of clients, from a "light touch" like text groups or phone check-ins, to therapeutic group supports, to bridge and urgent care sessions

- **Stay Connected:** Immediate access and continued engagement reduces likelihood of no-shows and the list will be more accurate/real-time info; Transition from mail merge to text reminders/phone check-ins

- **Integration:** Having ISMs allows us to ensure team of staff are knowledgeable about all services and are making appropriate referrals at first point of contact; Use of "SMART" forms and prompts to identify and make internal referrals quickly and easily and efficient workflows for management and assignment

Who We Are: SSTAR

- Two sites, located in north and south ends of Fall River
- **Demographic of population served at agency:**
  - 18+
  - All-inclusive
  - CLAS capable
- **Conducting Open Access since** 2013
- **Services delivered through Open Access:**
  - Assessment and referral to MAT, ATS, E-ATS CSS, IOP, EPHP, Psych Services
  - Individual and group counseling and substance use disorder evaluations

Agency contact name and email address:

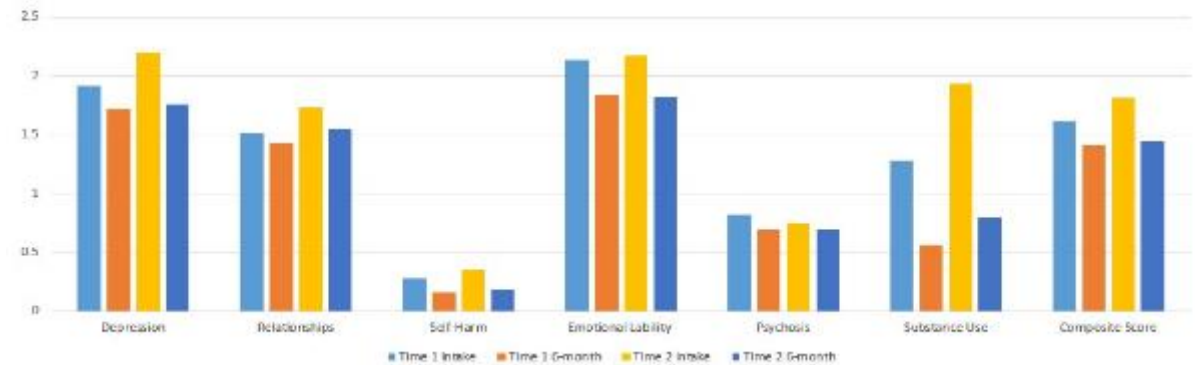Robin Quinterno, PhD, LICSW: rquinterno@sstar.org

SSTAR Open Access Outcome Data
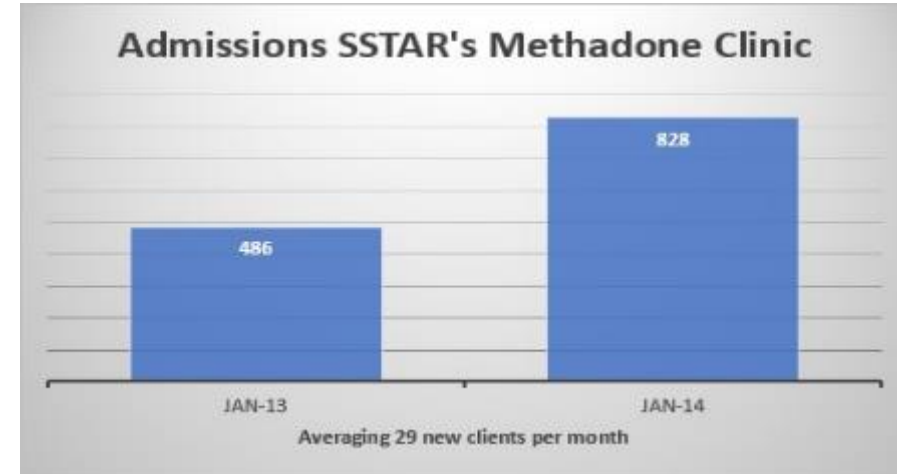
SSTAR Tips for Success

- **G**ather Measurements: Develop a change team to review the organization's census, wait times, retention, and financial sustainability. The change team should be multi-disciplinary and include at least one consumer.
- **I**nvite staff to learn about the change and explain the rationale for why changes are necessary.
- **V**alidate concerns that staff may express; encourage them to brainstorm potential solutions in real time.
- **E**valuate staffing patterns, determine the hours of operation, and the workflow that is most effective for a reformed program.
- **T**ake the important step of doing a walkthrough at your site and learn about the client experience.
- **R**ollout the first impactful change.
- **E**valuate the impact that the change had on the process, particularly against the initial measurements.
- **A**ssess and identify small changes to the system that would continue to improve access.
- **T**alk with clients and help them understand the change.
- **M**aintain the boundaries of the change.
- **E**ducate staff on the benefits of the change using the data collected before the change.
- **N**otify and educate other departments within your organization of the change.
- **T**ell community agencies about the new way services are being delivered.
- **N**ame champions within the organization who believe in the change.
- **O**perate with an open mind to change.
- **W**elcome new ideas from both clients and staff on how to continually improve while meeting the needs of the clients.

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Access (MABHA) website

- The MABHA website, *www.mabhaccess.com*, allows anyone to locate openings at behavioral health providers who specialize in youth and family, substance use disorder, and/or mental health services.

- Your agency can register as a provider on MABHA:
  - List availability and hours of operation
  - Showcase specialties, including language capacity, ages served, and other specifics
  - Generate an increase in referrals and support timely access to care for Members

⬤MBHP

Thank You

Contact Us

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