



CBHC

Colorado Behavioral
Healthcare Council

golden
light bulb

Program Title: Daily AQUA Huddles

Organization: Mind Springs Health

Program Abstract (50 words max, please):

The Daily AQUA Huddles created an opportunity for Mind Springs Health outpatient offices to significantly increase productivity and Relative Value Unit production (by 29.33%), while expanding access to care to those in need of behavioral health services.

Program Description (Include program development, program information, staffing requirements, pertinent data and start-up costs.): *Please limit to 2 pages, and remember to address all criteria specified.

Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) are facing a very real need to run a clinical business, with more focus than ever on the business of providing services to individuals. In order to maintain financial sustainability, it became clear in June of 2020 that our organization would need to find a way for our client-serving teams to produce 20% more Relative Value Units (RVUs) to Medicaid members than we had previously produced. We needed to achieve this jump in productivity/RVU and client services immediately and sustain this change for the year.

To accomplish this rather lofty goal, we used LEAN principles to direct managers, along with portions of their teams, to hold daily, 15-minute meetings or “huddles” that we refer to as AQUA Huddles.

AQUA is an acronym that focuses the manager and the team on the most important components of clinical operations: Access to Care (A); Quality of care (Q); Units of service (U); Accountability to access, quality, units and clients (A).

Each day, there is a 15 minute huddle in each of our outpatient clinics throughout Western Colorado. Each clinic has a unique goal for each of the following:

- Access to Care – New clients served/diagnostic evaluations;
- Quality Errors – Reducing missing CCAR/DACOD/treatment plan/incorrect place of service;
- Units- Productivity or hours of services.
 - The team has a focus on two days ahead and what is currently scheduled, which provides them the opportunity to do work and process experiments that will enable them to meet their target/goal.
 - They also look back at what actually occurred two days prior to the huddle, so that the entire team can see what they did or did not accomplish and if they met the goal or not.

This is an extremely data-driven approach, with each team having a “huddle board” with graphs that depict the goals and their expected and actual performance. They also decide on experiments in process improvement and then track each experiment with the desired/expected outcome in comparison to actual outcomes, helping to then decide if any experiment should become part of the standard work that is done in our agency.

Daily management of our clinical business, with a laser focus on the right data and allowing teams to try new things in order to provide services to more people in a way that works for them and their clients, provided great gains to our agency and clients we serve.

We increased our Medicaid RVUs by 29.33% from FY 20 to FY21, beating the goal we had set for our teams. This process to focus managers and teams on data and process for daily improvement is very transferable and can be done by any team.

There were no start-up costs and no new staff required. It did require that three of our senior managers attend daily huddles for about 3-6 months to coach leaders and teams on the art and performance of conducting a huddle and getting comfortable with data, experiments and tracking outcomes.

This is a new method in behavioral health that focuses teams on data; a common practice in most businesses, but a relatively new concept to many behavioral healthcare professionals. By spending a small amount of time each day concentrating on how we are fulfilling our mission and to continue operating a successful and viable clinical practice, we are also able to better serve our communities through greater access to quality care.