



# **SMA's and Housing Coordination for People with Opioid Use Disorder Experiencing Homelessness**



# Health and Housing

Housing is an important social determinant of health (SDOH), impacting health and well-being outcomes for people experiencing any medical condition.

# SMA's and Housing Coordination

SMA's for People Experiencing Homelessness and OUD combine a multidisciplinary clinical team that provides medications for OUD along with bundled interventions that include mental health counseling, client education, peer supports, and housing assistance.

This combination of interventions has been shown to increase treatment adherence and mitigate the comorbidities of addiction, providing evidence for the need to address homelessness to improve health outcomes for this population.<sup>1 2</sup>



1. Simpson SA, Hordes M, Blum J, Rinehart D, Al-Tayyib A. Barriers to engagement in opioid use disorder treatment after buprenorphine induction. *J Addict Med.* 2022;16:479-482

2. Marina Gaeta Gazzola, Iain D. Carmichael, Lynn M. Madden, Nabarun Dasgupta, Mark Beitel, Xiaoying Zheng, Kathryn F. Eggert, Scott O. Farnum, Declan T. Barry, A cohort study examining the relationship among housing status, patient characteristics, and retention among individuals enrolled in low-barrier-to-treatment-access methadone maintenance treatment, *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, Volume 138, 2022.

## A National Study of Homelessness, SDOH, & Treatment Engagement

“Patients reporting homelessness at treatment entry in outpatient MOUD in the U.S. represent a clinically distinct and socially vulnerable population from those not reporting homelessness. Homelessness independently predicts poorer engagement in MOUD confirming that homelessness may be an independent predictor for MOUD treatment discontinuation nationally.”<sup>1</sup>



1. Gaeta Gazzola M, Carmichael ID, Christian NJ, Zheng X, Madden LM, Barry DT. A National Study of Homelessness, Social Determinants of Health, and Treatment Engagement Among Outpatient Medication for Opioid Use Disorder-Seeking Individuals in the United States. *Substance Abuse*. 2023;44(1-2):62-72.

# SMA and Housing Coordination

Care coordination between housing providers and the SMA clinical teams takes on many forms. In most health and housing service systems, there are few standardized approaches to coordinate and collaborate care beyond referrals to each separate system.

Established channels of communication between housing and medical teams allow for housing placements to be a part of the prescribed health plan for SMAs and MOUD patients.

## Various SMA and Housing Coordination Models

Housing and SMA clinic coordination can take place for SMA patients can take place onsite at the Health Center, with the on-site housing specialist supporting the housing coordination of SMA patients.

Other SMA models can embed a Housing Outreach Coordinator or housing liaison directly on the SMA team.

Example: [Pathways to Housing PA – Philadelphia, PA](#)

Example: [Daily Planet Healthcare for the Homeless Clinic – Richmond, VA](#)

Some SMAs develop an informal referral connection across the housing and clinical service systems, with SMA providers referring patients to homeless service systems for housing linkages.

Example: [Valley Healthcare for the Homeless Program – San Jose, CA](#)

# Common System Barriers to Housing and Health Coordination

“Treatment First”  
vs Housing First  
philosophies

Substance use  
patterns of PEH and  
recurrence of  
housing loss

Differences in  
healthcare culture  
and housing service  
culture

HIPAA

No access to  
housing assistance  
funding in clinics

Experimental and non-experimental research on SMAs in the context of treatment for opioid dependence have shown that participants in group-based treatments had higher treatment retention, and lower alcohol and opioid use than patients who were assigned to usual medical care. These results were also observed in studies with patients experiencing housing instability or homelessness in addition to opioid use disorder.

Combined with literature findings that safe and stable housing for homeless population can reduce health care utilization and costs, and increase treatment adherence, it is recommended for SMAs to explicitly plan for housing coordination services.



# Thank You



# Shared Housing Institute





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