Substance Use Treatment Protocol Development and Organization: Creating Flowcharts to Standardize Care at The University of Colorado School of Medicine's Addiction Research and Treatment Services Adult Outpatient Program

By Andrew Isaac

With the ever-growing opioid epidemic affecting millions of Americans, it is not surprising that the demand for substance use treatment programs is outpacing the supply. Such facilities frequently treat a number of addiction medicine complaints, including alcohol, stimulant, benzodiazepine and cannabis use disorders, among others. Such facilities often have staff turnover that requires highly specialized and time-consuming onboarding processes. The aims of this project were to update existing and create new protocols for the University of Colorado School of Medicine's Addiction Research and Treatment Services and to organize all protocols into digital, printable, easy-to-use flowcharts for onboarding staff members. Prior studies have shown that standardization of evidence-based care improves patient outcomes, and the process of creating these flowcharts was standardized and catalogued. This project has many potential future directions, namely studying the implementation of the flowcharts at the clinic to determine the effect on clinic metrics and patient outcomes. Additionally, these flowcharts were made to be universal and can be disseminated to other treatment programs across institutions in the future.