

Using Enhanced Outreach to Increase Access to Mainstream Benefits: SSI/SSDI and Medicaid

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SOAR...

- Stands for **SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery**
- Increases access to SSI/SSDI for people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) are the two disability programs of the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- The SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in collaboration with SSA
- All 50 states currently participate in SOAR



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SSI and Medicaid

- SSI is accompanied by access to Medicaid in most states (N=32), making SOAR a natural link for ACA enrollment
- But SOAR case managers are likely already addressing the need for separate Medicaid applications in these 11 states:
 - Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Virginia



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SOAR and Services for People who are Homeless

- SAMHSA's Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) and HRSA's Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) programs are actively involved in SOAR
- SOAR meets one of the four primary goals of PATH outreach – increasing access to income/benefits
- Many PATH and HCH programs have dedicated benefits or SOAR specialists on their teams



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Benefits Are Essential

- SSI/SSDI = basic income support
- Medicaid/Medicare = health insurance
- Together, income and health ins. can help end homelessness, improve health outcomes and support recovery



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SOAR Has Been Changing Lives Since 2005

- 26,000 approvals on initial applications
- 65% approval rate overall; compares to 10-15% for unassisted applications
- Decisions in an average of 102 days
- 72% literally homeless average of 2 years



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States with Highest Approval Rates for 100+ Decisions

State	Total Decisions	Approval Rate
Pennsylvania	1,015	99%
Washington	116	93%
Tennessee	718	87%
Arkansas	287	81%
Maryland	210	81%
North Carolina	553	80%
Kansas	369	80%
Rhode Island	171	77%
Oregon	883	75%



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How Is This Model Different?

- Trained benefits specialists actively assist applicants
- Step-by-step explanation of SSI application and disability determination process
- Focuses on the initial application – “Get it right the first time!”
- Focuses on documenting the disability
- Recovery-oriented, comprehensive
- SOAR is a community collaborative initiative that involves federal, state and local agencies



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Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Signed into law by President Obama in March 2010

- Health Insurance Marketplace
 - Qualified Health Plans
- Medicaid
- Medicare benefits
 - Preventive care coverage at no-cost
 - Addressing the prescription drug “donut-hole”



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How Can SOAR Providers Help with ACA Enrollment?

- Affordable Care Act brings Medicaid to low income childless adults for the first time
- All individuals will not automatically be enrolled – they will still have to apply for Medicaid
- SOAR case managers are especially poised to help individuals who are homeless to enroll
- The health care reform law only provides access to Medicaid; income supports, such as SSI and SSDI are critical for safe and stable housing, which in turn lead to better health outcomes



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Opportunities for SOAR and ACA

- SOAR providers have...
 - Already been doing benefits-related outreach with some of the most vulnerable and difficult to engage persons
 - Partnerships in place with appropriate sites
 - Built trust in the community and with the population
 - Used peer to peer networks to assist in the engagement process



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Why Enroll Consumers?

- Improved access to mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Provides preventative health care
- Builds relationships with physicians
- Avoids emergency room usage
- Supports people to stay healthy
- Improves health of overall community
- Enrollment while working on an SSI/SSDI application can strengthen the application by providing access to physicians and medical documentation to support the application



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Application and Enrollment

- Federal standards for applications and processing procedures
- Multiple ways to apply:
 - Online: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>
 - Telephone: 1-800-318-2596
 - Mail: Paper application
 - In-person: Local Medicaid office
- Renewal required no more than every 12 months
 - Prepopulated renewal forms



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Potential Enrollment Challenges

- Consumers may be unfamiliar with health insurance and its value
- Many are unaware of eligibility
- Cost concerns (premiums, co-pays)
- Distrust of government programs
- Difficulty making or reluctance to make decisions



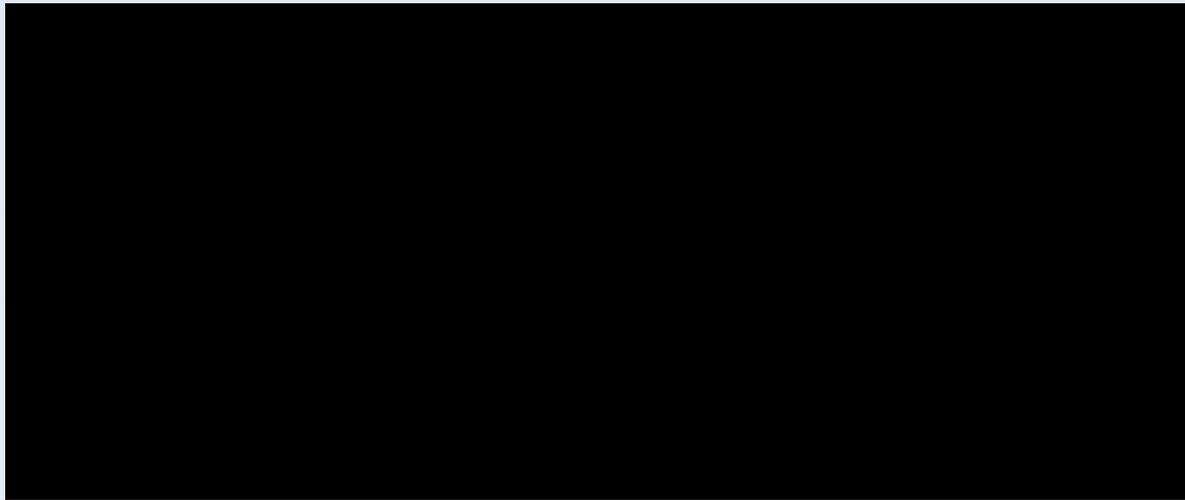
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Video “Engaging with Bones”

- Watch as outreach worker Will reaches out to assist “Bones” through the enrollment process and to explore his health care marketplace options



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Engagement Strategies

- Engage consumers using trusted sources
 - Outreach workers, case managers, peers, community providers
- Deliver positive messages
 - Stay independent and in control
 - Be more financially secure
 - Improve/maintain your health and well-being
- Emphasize availability, ease of enrollment and affordability



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Get Involved

- Every State is in a different place – find out what your State Medicaid agency is doing on ACA implementation
- Talk to your State Medicaid agency staff about how SOAR can be a partner in health care reform efforts
- Talk to your local community mental health clinics, FQHCs and hospitals about their plans for care coordination - SOAR should be a part of it
- Learn the ABCs of Medicaid enrollment in your community and share what you know with others!



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How Is the SOAR TA Center Supporting SAMHSA's Work in ACA?

- The SOAR Technical Assistance Center participates in SAMHSA's Enrollment Coalition for Homeless and Housing Support
- Integrated information on ACA enrollment into the SOAR training curriculum
- Included a video clip highlighting engagement and enrollment in ACA for outreach workers
- Piloted this new training module in August; part of all SOAR training since October



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Summary

- ACA is historic and unprecedented – very exciting...
- SOAR providers are experienced in benefits outreach and engagement
- Check with your state to learn what health insurance plans are available
- Encourage enrollment
- Provide assistance when able



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For More Information on SOAR

Visit the SOAR website at www.prainc.com/soar

Or contact:

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