National Human Services Data Consortium

2016 Spring Conference
Los Angeles, CA
April 13-14, 2016

The Final Countdown:
PATH HMIS Integration

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Advancing a Technology Culture in Human Services

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the complicated nature of collecting data in a street outreach environment

- Provide common solutions for street outreach data collection including recording building protocols and data quality policies

- Clarify HUD and SAMHSA policy of street outreach data collection

- Provide community examples of street outreach data collection

The Countdown Begins…FIVE…

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Overview

- SAMHSA's Expectations: PATH Participation Policy
- PATH-required Data Elements in HMIS
- PATH Project Set-up in HMIS
- PATH Role in the Continuum of Care
- Street Outreach Data Collection in HMIS
- Opportunities to Use PATH Data from HMIS

Data Collection Challenges

- Collecting data during the outreach period
- Understanding definitions
- Finding time to record data
- Entering data into more than one system
- Protecting client confidentiality and understanding privacy policies
- Understanding how to use the data

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The Final Countdown: HUD & SAMHSA

- PATH Providers are required to use HMIS by the end of State Fiscal Year 2016

- For most states that is 7.1.2016

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SAMHSA Policy

- SAMHSA released formal HMIS participation guidance in 2015
  https://www.hudexchange.info/news/technical-assistance-plan-for-path-program-participation-in-hmis/

- SAMHSA HMIS Goals:
  - Clients access permanent or temporary housing more effectively, efficiently through HMIS & CES

  - Clients can access a variety of supportive services that address their particular needs

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SAMHSA Policy

- SAMHSA HMIS Considerations:

  - Sufficient number of data elements need to be entered into HMIS to facilitate PATH client referral to housing and services

  - PATH data elements must be entered to generate the PATH Annual Report*

  - Client data entry into HMIS in a timely manner (according to local HMIS policy)

  *The PATH Annual Report is currently being revised and SAMHSA recently closed the public comment period for the new report.

Slide 1

SAMHSA Policy

- Ideally, SAMHSA wants:
  - Each PATH staff member should be an active and qualified HMIS user, have HMIS access, and attend all required HMIS trainings
  - Real-time data entry in the field resulting in seamless client care coordination
  - At least one PATH provider staff member who coordinates with HMIS staff
  - At least one PATH provider staff member is an active member of any HMIS committee

Slide 2

Key Resources

- **2014 HMIS Data Standards Manual**

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3826/hmis-data-standards-manual/

- **2014 HMIS Data Dictionary**

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/

- **PATH Program HMIS Manual**

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4446/path-program-hmis-manual/

Slide 3

...FOUR...

HMIS Universal Data Elements

- Name
- Date of birth
- Social security number
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Veteran status
- Disabling condition
- Residence prior to project entry

- Project entry date
- Project exit date
- Destination
- Relationship to head of household
- Length of time on street, in an emergency shelter, or safe haven

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PATH Program Specific Data Elements

- Housing status
- Physical disability
- Developmental disability
- Chronic mental health condition
- Mental health problem
- Substance abuse
- Contact
- Date of engagement

- Services provided – PATH-funded
- Referrals provided – PATH-funded
- PATH status
- Connection to SOAR

PATH Project Set-up in HMIS

- PATH project types are determined based on the population of focus for the project:
  - Persons who generally reside in a place **not** meant for human habitation
  - Persons who generally reside in a place meant for human habitation, or who are at risk of homelessness

- A PATH project may serve two populations of focus
  - In this case, both project types are set up in HMIS

- **A client may move between staying on the street and in an emergency shelter but will remain in the same original project in HMIS**

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PATH Role in the CoC

- Outreach
- Portal to mental health resources and assistance (for consumers and planners)
- Advocates
  - Resources are directed to people with disabilities
  - Providers are using best practices
  - People experiencing homelessness access mainstream mental health resources

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PATH Participation in Coordinated Entry

- Prioritizing those who are most vulnerable
- Importance of outreach
- Benefits to clients
- Benefits to providers

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…THREE…

Street Outreach Data Collection

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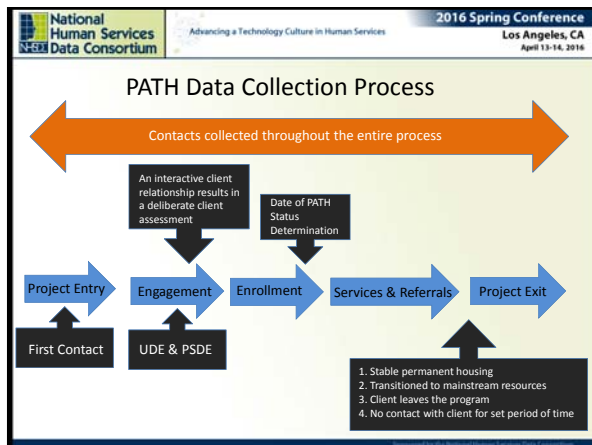- The Game Changer
  - Street Outreach data is not held to a data quality standard until the Date Of Engagement

- The Balancing Act
  - Need to balance the client relationship vs. data collection
  - Without the client relationship there is not data
  - Without the data the program may not be funded

PATH Data Collection Process

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Contacts collected throughout the entire process

An interactive client relationship results in a deliberate client assessment

Date of PATH Status Determination

Project Entry → Engagement → Enrollment → Services & Referrals → Project Exit

First Contact

UDE & PSDE

1. Stable permanent housing
2. Transitioned to mainstream resources
3. Client leaves the program
4. No contact with client for set period of time

Record Building Protocols

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- Allow outreach workers to enter data on clients as the relationship evolves

- Outreach is not conducive to timely, accurate and complete data collection

- Often there is never enough data to create a complete HMIS client record

- Adopt a consistent policy for street outreach data collection

Record Building Protocols

- Outreach programs need to collect client-level data over time

- Outreach programs may initially enter records that are non-identifiable

- Outreach programs shall continue to engage the client to obtain client-identifiable data

- Outreach data will not affect overall data quality until the Date of Engagement

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Record Building Protocols

- Non-identifiable Data
  - Outreach programs need to keep track of the non-identified client and alias information as not create a new record if one already exists

- Record building protocols allow outreach workers to enter data on clients as the relationship evolves

- HUD and SAMHSA set general parameters for outreach data collection policy in the PATH Program HMIS Manual

  - It is recommended that States adopt a consistent policy for PATH street outreach data collection

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Record Building Protocols

- Engagement & enrollment:
  - All client records should be accurate and complete, meaning that they are expected to contain all UDE and applicable PSDE

  - Data quality will be monitored for all clients for whom a date of engagement has been entered

Record Building Protocols

- Project exit:
  - Clients should be exited from the project when:
    - They achieve stable permanent housing
    - They are enrolled in another appropriate housing project and/or mainstream services that does not require continued provision of outreach
    - They leave the project

Record Building Protocols

- Project exit:
  - Auto exit date:
    - Set an exit date for clients that have not been seen for a specified period of time
    - PATH programs are encouraged to standardize this time frame statewide to ensure consistent data across providers
    - These exits should be configured to produce an exit date equal to the date of the last encounter

Data Quality Policies

- Data Quality
  - Though data quality does not count until Date of Engagement, it is still critical

- Policies:
  - How long does the client remain in the project without any contact?

  - When will un-identifiable data be considered inactive/exited/purged?

HMIS System Administration Roles

- Assure PATH provider have access to HMIS
  - Provide clear guidance on HMIS costs

- Assure PATH providers enter data according to establish data quality policies
  - Timeliness, accuracy, completeness

- Assure the HMIS is complaint with the 2014 Data Standards
  - ALL PATH data elements, PATH Annual Report

- PATH programs are set up properly in HMIS

HMIS System Administration Roles

- Assure HMIS Solution has been programmed appropriately
  - PATH Annual Report, PATH Data Elements
  - Supports the recording building protocols
  - Supports data quality at Date of Engagement

- Resist local customization for compliance with PATH data collection and reporting
  - If your HMIS Solution is not complaint seek HUD TA

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Down the Road: Using Data from HMIS

- Generating PATH data reports from HMIS
- Opportunities for custom reports
- Using data for program evaluation and improvement
- System-wide performance

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Updated Documentation

- The PATH Program HMIS Manual
- HMIS Data Standards
  - Minor changes for the new PATH Annual Report
- PATH Annual Report HMIS Specification
  - Major changes for the new PATH Annual Report
- PATH Annual Report Guidance
  - Major changes for the new PATH Annual Report
  - Forthcoming webinar (sign up for HHRN Listserv)

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…ONE…

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Questions

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