How To: Implementation Guides

Purpose:

Implementation guides help specify roles, improve data collection, and ensure that a new project or program is efficient and beneficial to the participants. During development of the implementation guides, the PA Opioid Overdose Reduction Technical Assistance Center (TAC) works closely with the collaborating county to identify all aspects required for the desired program or service.

In order for the TAC to assist counties with implementation of county specific programs to, the TAC facilitates the development tailored Implementation Guides. Implementation guides can, and have been created for various county interventions including SBIRT, warm hand-offs, treatment in jail, and community paramedicine. The implementation guides include a summary of the program, initiative champions, the program’s vision, evaluation, literature, and implementation specification.

Overview:

The implementation guides include a summary of the program, initiative champions, the project or program’s vision, evaluation, literature and implementation specification.

The first component of the implementation specification section is the A3. The A3 is a visual model of the patient pathway that walks an individual through each step of the program or project. The ideal indicates that each step of the process is on demand, immediate, one on one, defect free, no waste and safe. A3 models help identify problems, countermeasures to problems, and tests to identify if the countermeasure is effective in resolving the problems.

The Evaluation Goals and Objections portion identifies the overall objective of the project, specific goals to achieve during the project, what information needs to be collected to determine if the project is successful, and the resources that are needed to determine if the project is successful.

The implementation protocol consists of three components: Pre-implementation, program implementation protocol, and evaluation. Pre-implementation consists of all tasks that require completion, as well as who is responsible for each task, in order for the program or project to begin. The program implementation component is what happens each time the program is implemented. This can be per person, referral, training, screening, etc. The implementation protocol is broken down into daily, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly time frames to ensure that every stakeholder knows when they are responsible for their role in the program or service.

The evaluation portion of the implementation guide is broken down by inputs and identifies who is responsible for the designated data. The evaluation scheme consists of the evaluation item (e.g. data to be collected), activity time frame (e.g. weekly, monthly, etc.) when the evaluation item is reported (e.g. three days after the month), and to whom the evaluation item is reported (i.e. SCA, project director, etc.).

The last, and optional, component of the implementation specification section is the impact model. The impact model does not need to be completed unless there is difficulty completing the patient pathway, applying for funding, or the implementation team feels it is necessary to the program. The impact model consists of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. Inputs are the resources needed to operate the overdose reduction activity and may include training, staff and protocols. Activities are actions that will use the resources to accomplish the designated program and include items such as training participation, assessments and referrals. Outputs are the results of accomplishing the planned activities that will lead to delivery of the intended product or service. Outputs include physical care of a patient and opportunities for participants to receive treatment and support. Outcomes are how the participants of the program will benefit and can include improvement in quality of life and well-being. Lastly, impact is the system changes that can be expected to occur as a result of program implementation. Impacts may include a decrease in overdoses, a decrease in criminal justice system involvement, an improvement in EMS system operations, and safer communities.

The Implementation guides also provide principles of performance measurement, which identify the idealistic qualities of a good performance measurement such as real-time collection and analysis and adaptiveness. Project stakeholders can follow a performance measure quality checklist. Principles of internal and external learning are also included.

Who fills out the implementation guides?

Implementation guides will be completed by the implementation team for the proposed program or project. The County Coordinator for the TAC will facilitate the completion of the implementation guides by the implementation team. It is pertinent that all members of the implementation team participate in the completion of the implementation guides.

How often are implementation guides completed and/or updated?

Best practice is to update the implementation guide as changes occur with the program or project. At a minimum, implementation guides will be reviewed quarterly and any additional changes will be updated.