**Initiation of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse or Dependence Treatment (IET) Performance Improvement Project**

This measure and this topic, Initiation of Alcohol and Other Drug Dependence Treatment, have been a high priority for Vermont Medicaid for years. Between 2013-2015 we worked on a grant funded Quality Improvement Project with the goal of increasing our substance use disorder treatment rates. We focused on opening the Medicaid provider network to Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADCs). We also offered a payment reform approach, by providing enhanced payment for quality outcomes.

Although this is clearly a multi-faceted and difficult issue to impact, we have chosen substance use treatment as a topic for a more formal Performance Improvement Project (PIP), results of which were submitted to CMS starting in 2017. Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) Quality Unit staff have partnered with staff in the Health Department's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (ADAP), the Blueprint for Health and OneCare Vermont on this project.

**The goal** is to increase access to treatment for Vermonters newly diagnosed with a substance use disorder.

**Activities we have engaged in thus far include:**

* attended Blueprint for Health/OneCare All Field Team meetings to present data and evidence-based interventions to community-level quality improvement leads. Community-level gap analyses have been recommended,
* assessed access to treatment appointments. The team administered a telephone survey to a state-wide sample of substance use treatment providers related to their appointment availability. The results of the survey were analyzed and led to our next intervention strategy, which is:
	+ promotion of telemedicine services for substance use disorder treatment, including:
		- banner messages for Medicaid providers;
		- articles for providers in our monthly Medicaid newsletter;
		- targeted in-person outreach at Medicaid provider offices;
		- creation of a state-wide telehealth stakeholder work group which hopes to offer a telehealth learning collaborative for providers in the spring/summer of 2020.