



# Considerations for integrating peers into hospital care

Substance Use Disorders in Hospital Care ECHO

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October 23, 2019  
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# Disclosures

- **Speaker:** Sean Mahoney and Honora Englander has nothing to disclose

# Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this didactic, participants will be able to:

- Recognize SUD from the perspective of peers with lived experience
- Describe how peers can support patients in the hospital
- Discuss considerations for integrating peers into the hospital setting

# Context

- Peers' lived experience of addiction and its consequences, combined with their distance from medical culture and hierarchy, is at the core of their power – and creates inherent challenges in integrating peers into hospital settings.
- Successful integration of peers in hospitals has unique challenges for individual providers, health systems, and the peers themselves.

# Challenges

- Rigid professional hierarchy of hospitals which contrasts with peers' role, which is built on shared life experience and relationship
- Different expectations regarding professional boundaries and sharing personal information
- Intensity of the hospital environment
- Illness severity of hospitalized people which can be emotionally draining and increase peers' own risk for return to use.

# Recommendations

## **Create a home base within the hospital setting.**

- Identify an anchor or clinical champion.
- Embed peers within a team.
  - Include peers in team huddles or rounds, and in regular program development and quality improvement meetings.
- Provide clear channels of communication between peer supervisor and program leadership.

# Recommendations

## **Create a collaborative, structured process for hiring and retaining peers**

- Engage hospital leadership.
- Identify and partner with others experienced working with peers.
- Identify standard process for background checks.
- Create processes to identify and support peers who are struggling with the position.

# Recommendations

- **Identify and recruit peers who are likely to succeed in the role.**
- **Provide initial and ongoing training to peers, including opportunities to:**
  - Shadow interprofessional hospital staff
  - Learn occupational health policies and procedures
  - Learn confidentiality requirements, hospital rules for patients
  - Learn basics of medical treatment for conditions common in hospitalized patients with SUD



# Recommendations

## **Provide regular, meaningful supervision.**

- Arrange time for regular supervision (e.g. biweekly).
- Ensure supervision incorporates a space to process emotional responses to work; discuss peers' own recovery; and support to maintain the fidelity of the peer role.
- Support opportunities for self-care and communicate its value.

# Likely coming soon...

- Peer ECHO to support peers working in Oregon Hospitals and Emergency Departments



# Thank You

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