



Center of Excellence in Addiction Newsletter – December 2024

Welcome to the South Carolina Center of Excellence in Addiction’s December 2024 newsletter!

We’re excited to share new resources and opportunities with you as the year comes to a close. In this issue, you can learn about data resources and tools developed by our Center of Excellence partners, meet one of our Advisory Board members, and catch up on upcoming events and recent news.

New Center of Excellence Resources

- A. **NEW Data Analytics reports:** [County Profiles](#) are now available! The Center of Excellence Data Analytics team has been hard at work developing county-level profiles that provide information regarding rates of opioid use disorder (OUD) diagnosis, treatment initiation, and treatment retention among Medicaid-enrolled South Carolina residents. These profiles, available [on our website](#), are tools to help local decision-makers identify where resources, including opioid abatement dollars, can be allocated to maximize treatment outcomes and achieve healthier communities.

The County Profiles follow a framework known as the [Opioid Cascade of Care](#), which helps track how many people are successfully engaging in treatment for OUD by breaking data into stages like diagnosis, engagement, and recovery. This helps to identify where we may have gaps in our systems in order to target resources where they are most needed. An accompanying statewide data dashboard will go live in early 2025.

Over the next year, the team is expanding these analyses beyond Medicaid enrollees by integrating uninsured data to create a broader understanding of our treatment systems and further target both policy and resources.

- B. **Featured resource:** The Center of Excellence website includes a long list of research, white papers, and helpful planning tools to support evidence-based decision making. We recently updated the [Data and Strategy resource list](#), which contains over 50 links to both data sources and information on specific strategies to support you and your partners with opioid and addiction community action planning and project implementation. The list provides a comprehensive, one-stop shop for data sources and evidence-based strategies for addressing OUD.

Featured News and Updates from the Center

- A. **Upcoming SC Community Opioid Response Initiatives (CORI) ECHO:** Local leaders and stakeholders are invited to join these interactive ECHO learning opportunities in which we explore different strategies, programs, and tools to address OUD at a community level. The next ECHO session is, “**Harm Reduction in SC: Why and How,**” and will be held from noon – 1 pm on Friday, December 13th. [Sign up with a one-time registration here](#) to receive meeting info, and check out the new [ECHO FAQs](#) on our website!

- B. **Save the Date:** We're so excited to announce that the South Carolina Governor's Summit on Addiction will be back in 2025. Mark your calendars to join us **November 13-14, 2025**, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center for next year's event. Speaker and registration info will be announced in early 2025. We can't wait to see you there!
- C. **New Technical Assistance opportunity coming in 2025:** The Center of Excellence will be hosting a brand new "Needs & Leads" meeting on the **first Tuesday of every month**, beginning **January 7, 2025**. This will be a regular meeting of folks receiving or applying for abatement funds, or those who want to receive technical assistance from the Center. This will be an opportunity to participate in informal peer-to-peer discussions, build advantageous partnerships, receive real-time personalized technical assistance, and more! Join by completing our very brief [technical assistance form](#) or contact camhr@clemsun.edu for more info.
- D. **Meet Advisory Board member Marc Burrows!** The Center of Excellence is fortunate to have the guidance of a 25-member external [Advisory Board](#) composed of some of South Carolina's leaders in addiction prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. Among those members is Marc Burrows, LMSW, MSW, CPSS, who leads Challenges, Inc, a non-profit harm reduction program in South Carolina's Upstate region.

Raised in both New Jersey and in South Carolina, Marc traveled around the county in his early twenties, playing drums in a band. Currently, he spends weekends and free time fly fishing in cold mountain streams or with his beautiful 20-month-old daughter. He holds multiple degrees – an Associate's in human services and both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in social work. Marc identifies as a person who has recovered from opioid use disorder, which led him to the work he does today. That work entails the administrative leadership of Challenges, Inc., as well as providing counseling to people on medications for opioid use disorder in a private practice setting. Marc highlights the intersection of those roles: "Since these services overlap, I am able to practice treatment from a harm reduction approach. What I enjoy most about my role is meeting the people I serve, free of judgement and stigma and finding creative ways to break down barriers to providing help to marginalized communities."



Asked about Challenges Inc's role in addressing addiction in South Carolina, Marc emphasized the importance of providing person-centered support along a continuum and how the organization focuses on meeting people where they are: "I address SUD/ODU in SC by providing drug user health resources for people who use drugs. This is the idea of focusing resources to people while they are still using drugs, instead of only once they begin treatment or the recovery phase. If you were to imagine substance use as a continuum, with prevention on one end and treatment on the other, there is left a huge gap of unaddressed issues, like overdose, infectious disease, housing, employment, mental health, etc. This is where harm reduction shines. In my work over the years, I have seen it positively impact thousands of people in SC. What I see as the greatest value in our state is the rise of evidence-based practices being implemented more widely and with greater acceptance by the professional community. Also, other people with harm reduction knowledge are moving to our state and are lifting up this intervention. It is refreshing and relieving to see this change happen during our careers."

- E. **COE 2024 Annual Report:** Speaking of our Advisory Board, we have completed the 2024 [Advisory Board Report](#), which details our progress in our first full year of operations. The report, available on our website, includes a breakdown of our work by the Center of Excellence Cores: Administration, Data Analytics, Technical Assistance, and Training. The report describes each Core's progress toward completing our year 1 objectives, as well as descriptions of our year 2 objectives. We further detail our required reporting to the [South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund \(SCORF\) Board](#) and provide the outcomes of our Needs Assessment survey.

Center of Excellence Resources – Connect with Us!

- **Clinician Warmline:** Practitioners can call **864-914-1301** between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, for free, confidential, clinician-to-clinician consultation on substance use evaluation and management. Expert South Carolina-based physicians and advanced practice nurses are available for consultations on a range of topics.
- **Technical Assistance:** Our technical assistance team is available to provide South Carolina-led support on how communities can address OUD/SUD. Our expertise covers a wide range of topics – data collection and management; prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives; and much more. As you are thinking through your local design and implementation efforts, let us know how we can help. Our free consultation and referral to technical experts is open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. [View the list of topics and connect with us here](#), or e-mail camhr@clemsun.edu with your request details!
- **Community Opioid Response Initiatives (CORI) ECHO:** To sign up, [this link](#) will take you through a one-time registration. You'll receive information on upcoming sessions and an invite with a Zoom link to join. Email papa@musc.edu with any questions.
- **Our website:** www.addictioncenterofexcellence.sc.gov
- **Socials:** Follow the South Carolina Center of Excellence in Addiction on LinkedIn for real-time updates, information, and resource announcements!
- **Contact:** Questions? Comments? Ideas? E-mail our Executive Director, Jodi Manz, at jmanz@daodas.sc.gov.

Look for this newsletter each quarter to stay up to date on the Center's work, find out about upcoming educational opportunities, and learn about new and developing opioid use disorder/substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) resources. Missed a newsletter? No problem – [archived versions](#) are available on our website. If you are not already on our subscription list, please subscribe here: <https://addictioncenterofexcellence.sc.gov/form/news-letter-sign-up>