Gándara Interprofessional Population Health Clerkship

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The PURCH track strategically aligns medical education experiences with the priority health needs of low resourced communities of Western Massachusetts.

This PHC on Recovery Support Services builds on the MS1 Greenfield Rural Immersion Day on substance use disorders and aligns with the community health priority of mental health and substance use disorder services.
Gándara Center works to “promote the wellbeing of Hispanics, African Americans and other culturally diverse populations through innovative, culturally competent behavioral health, prevention and educational services.”
Gándara Center Client Demographics

Number of Clients
4,195 active clients with 2,700 or 65% from the Springfield or Holyoke area

Gender
56% male
43% female

Age
Newborn to ≥ 65 years; most clients are between 31-49

Race
~87% unknown
~9% White
~3% Black
~0.4% Asian

Ethnicity
~65% unknown
~35% Hispanic

Disorders
96% serious mental illness
-depression, anxiety, PTSD, ADHD, adjustment disorder
4% substance use disorder
-opioid, alcohol, cannabis, and/or cocaine use
Experience

We shadowed recovery support navigators at Gándara in Springfield for 1 week to learn about the role they play in supporting people in recovery.

Impact of Recovery Coaches and Navigators

- Improved relationship with treatment providers (Sanders et al., 1998; Andreas et al., 2010)
- Increased treatment retention (Mangrum, 2008; Deering et al., 2011; Tracy et al., 2011)
- Increased satisfaction with the overall treatment experience (Armitage et al., 2010)
- Improved access to social supports (O'Connell, ND; Boosvert et al., 2008; Andreas et al., 2010)
- Decreased emergency service utilization (Kamon & Turner, 2013)
- Reduced re-hospitalization rates (Minn et al., 2007)
- Reduced substance use (Bernstein et al., 2005; Boyd et al., 2005; Kamon & Turner, 2013; Mangrum, 2008; O'Connell, ND; Rowe et al., 2007; Armitage et al., 2010)
- Reduced relapse rates (Boosvert et al., 2008)
- Greater housing stability (Li et al., 2006)
Experience

● Through shadowing, we visited many Western MA organizations including:
  ○ Way Finders
  ○ Hope for Holyoke
  ○ Gándara Residential Services for Women
  ○ Gándara Addiction Recovery Program
  ○ Coles Place
  ○ Springfield Rescue Mission
  ○ Social Security Offices
  ○ Access to Recovery
  ○ Department of Transitional Assistance
The Gándara RSN Team was interested in better understanding:
- What resources they had connected their clients with
- What perception their clients had of the RSN services

We created a survey tool based on conversations with the RSN team and validated survey tools as identified in a literature review.
Reflection

The most important conversations between RSNs and clients occur in the car as they drive to appointments and connect with different resources in the area.

We feel that the RSN services are invaluable.
In 2018, there was a 73% increase in Western Massachusetts opioid overdose deaths.

Opioid-related deaths have increased 450% over the last 16 years in Massachusetts.

Those in Western Massachusetts report commuting 5+ hours to access treatment.
Demographics and Disparities in MA SUD Treatment Admissions in Springfield (2017):

- 73% male
- 33% 31 to 40 years old
- 75.1% high school or less
- 62.6% unemployed
- 41.7% experiencing homelessness
- 52.7% had received prior mental health treatment
- Polysubstance use over the year prior to admission

Vulnerable Populations:

- Black non-Hispanics and Hispanics
- People with a serious mental illness
- People who have been incarcerated
- People experiencing homelessness
- Postpartum women
Needs of People in Recovery

Only 40% of people enrolled in treatment for SUD (across OP, IOP, residential, hospital, detox) completed treatment

12.2% of adults who need treatment for a SUD receive some type of specialty treatment

When asked what would have kept them engaged:
- 54.2% reported social services including job training, stable housing, childcare
- Supportive staff, schedule flexibility of appointments
Experience: Barriers Faced by Clients

- Transportation
- Incarceration
- No Show Policies
- Credit
- History of Eviction
- Language
- Literacy
- Housing Insecurity
- Stigma
- Guilt & Shame
- Sober Community
- Legal Involvement
- Health Issues
- Insurance
- Housing Insecurity
- Housing Insecurity
BSAS oversees the statewide system of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services for individuals, families, and communities affected by gambling and substance addiction.
Advocacy Pitch

We are medical and pharmacy students working at a community-based organization studying the impact of substance use disorders (SUD) on health and social well-being and how support services might help to improve outcomes during recovery. People with SUD often have to negotiate complex systems and encounter many barriers. At the same time, clients must prioritize their recovery activities and attend to related and unrelated health comorbidities. Recovery Support Navigators help to navigate these complex systems, provide transportation, and connect clients with a recovery network, supports which are critical to clients’ well-being and recovery. We believe that funding and support for the Gándara RSN and Recovery Coach program to increase RSN staff would be the most valuable addition to people with SUD in the greater Springfield community at this time. Currently, there are 6 staff members, each with 16 clients, and 35 clients on the waiting list. Considering the gap in time between being referred for services and receiving services can potentially be a vulnerable period in a client’s recovery, allocation of funding to the RSN and recovery coach program will allow RSNs and recovery coaches to support more clients, helping people in recovery to find stability and independence in their daily lives and connecting them to the social and medical support necessary to maintain recovery.
We would like to thank the Gándara RSN Team including Lara, Yami, Rafa, Kat, Zuleika, Jill, and Jenisa. We felt incredibly welcomed and are so appreciative of your willingness to explain your work, show us around Springfield, and give us insight into your relationships with your clients.

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References


