



Promising Practice

Become the Preferred Provider for Selected Referrers

Problem

Funding from current payer sources is saturated.

Solution

If your agency has excess capacity and can accommodate more clients or you want your agency to expand or change the payer mix, build your relationship to become a preferred provider for selected referrers. This should be done after you have improved the process so that more referrals can be admitted in a timely fashion.

Featured Stories

St. Christopher's Inn in Garrison, New York generated an additional \$1,400,000 in revenue by attracting additional referral sources. The Administrative Director of Counseling and Shelter Services, who was also the Change Leader developed relationships with labor assistance professionals to facilitate the process of making referrals through labor union employee assistance programs and to meet their specific needs. He also worked with private insurance companies to be "in-network" and negotiated a better payment rate. The payer mix for private insurance increased from 7 percent to 15 percent. St. Christopher's Inn also tracked trends in referrals from existing referral sources to identify additional referral sources to work with, resulting in an additional \$100,000 per year. They secured an additional contract with the New York State Division of Parole, adding \$110,000 per year. They also identified a halfway house as an additional referral source, which is likely to generate an additional \$50,000 per year. See St. Christopher's Inn [case study](#). For further information about the combination of changes that St. Christopher's Inn made and a [sample brochure](#).

Lessons Learned

- When considering which referral sources to attract, make sure plans are consistent with your agency's strategic plan for growth.
- Follow the [Ten Steps to Increasing Targeted Admissions](#).
- Keep your agency's name in front of referrers and remind them how wonderful you are.
- Acknowledge all referrals.
- Keep the referrer informed about "their" clients to the extent that confidentiality is not broken.
- Visit referrers periodically and ask, "What's it like to refer a client to us?"

NIATx Aims

- Reduce waiting time
- Reduce no-shows
- Increase continuation
- ✓ Increase admissions

Financial Impact

- ✓ Increase revenue
- ✓ Increase staff retention
- Reduce costs



Promising Practice

Tracking Measures

Cycle Measure

Percentage of referred clients who were admitted

Data Collection Forms

- [Referred Clients Admitted Tracking Form \(Starting Clients\)](#)
- [Referred Clients Admitted Tracking Form \(Transition Clients\)](#)

Action Steps

See the [Ten Steps to Increasing Targeted Admissions](#).

Related Promising Practices

- [Improve the Payer Mix](#)
- [Tailor Brochures for Each Referral Source](#)
- [Assign Each Referrer a Single Contact Person](#)
- [Streamline Paperwork between Levels of Care](#)

More Stories

Vanguard Services in Arlington, Virginia increased monthly outpatient admissions by 112 percent by establishing relationships with various referral sources, such as Employee Assistance Professionals, and by conducting site visits.

Kentucky River Community Care, Inc. in Hazard, Kentucky arranged for a staff member to sit outside of Drug Court so that they could easily attract clients to their agency.

Acadia Hospital in Bangor, Maine increased the show rate for referrals from the Emergency Department by 15 percent by creating an assessment tool that the emergency department now uses to determine if patients need addiction treatment. It also includes instructions about where clients should go at 7:30 a.m. on weekdays to begin treatment. After working with the emergency department, the substance abuse unit used the same approach with local physicians' offices and other referral sources. They found that training the nurses to use the tool was more effective than training doctors. See the [Acadia Direct Admissions Checklist](#) for referrals to Acadia Hospital's intensive outpatient substance abuse program.

Boston Public Health Commission in Mattapan, Massachusetts increased admissions by 49 percent to 8.4 admissions per month by training staff on outreach strategies and assigning them to specific agencies to do outpatient outreach.