



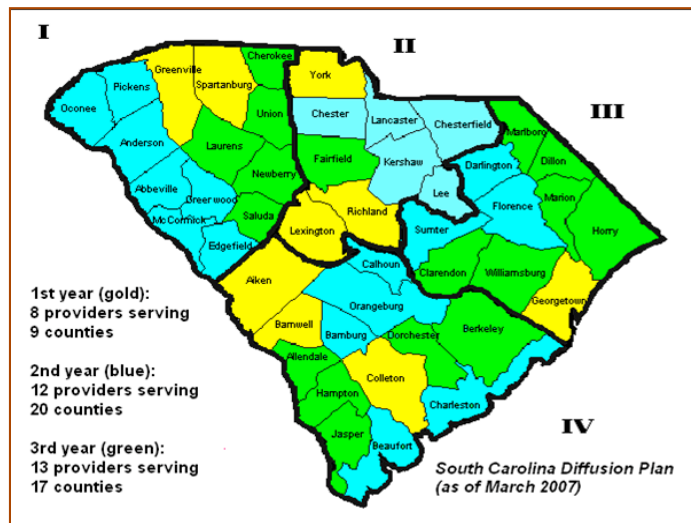
Process Improvement & Learning Collaborative Implementation Story

Success breeds success

South Carolina substance abuse system is a public one, composed of the Single State Authority (The S. C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services –DAODAS) and 33 county alcohol and drug abuse authorities. Before STAR-SI started, the system was characterized by:

- Maturity (in existence for over 35 years);
- High standards (each block grant sub-grantee is licensed by the state and nationally accredited by CARF);
- Interoperability (uniform clinical records, statewide database and Intranet computer system);
- Responsiveness to the policy makers (the SSA is a cabinet agency);
- Collaboration (SSA staff and the providers sit on three main joint committees on services, accountability, and training);
- Existing process improvement objectives; and
- Accountability (a robust performance management system and the start of a performance funding regime).

Given the above characteristics, DAODAS and its providers felt they could dare to implement STAR-SI at each of the 33 providers in three yearly phases (shown in the map below).



The providers that would lead the project in Cohort 1 were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Experience with performance management and CQI;
- Leadership and staff stability;
- Willingness to change; and
- Each of the four regions are represented on each cohort; and
- Providers of different sizes are represented at each cohort.

The hopeful principle here was “success breeds success,” as South Carolina

sought to start off with its best foot forward. Thus, the future of the project depended in large part on the success of Cohort 1. In a way, this is exactly what happened: In July 2008, two months ahead of schedule, South Carolina met its diffusion goal and became the only state to have all of its providers participate in STAR-SI.

“This is the way we should have been training all along”

Such was the feedback of Mr. Herb Mattock at the end of the first learning collaborative in January 2007. Mr. Mattock, Executive Director of the Aiken Center and the Co-chair of the South Carolina Joint Training Consortium, was impressed, as were all of the attendees, by the enormous amount of valuable information and opinions shared by all participants. Indeed, this may have been the first time where executive directors, treatment directors, and data coordinators freely shared in the exchange of information in a multi-agency forum. Several silos were brought down that day: boss vs. employee; counselor vs. administrator; provider vs. SSA; small agency vs. large agency; region vs. region.

Thus, South Carolina adopted learning collaboratives as a favorite vehicle to train and share information (aside the ubiquitous email). Other vehicles were NIATx coaching, peer mentoring, national meetings and conferences, the NIATX Change Leader and Coaching Academies, the NIATx Communities of Commitment; and the NIATx Interest Circle calls, as shown in the following table.

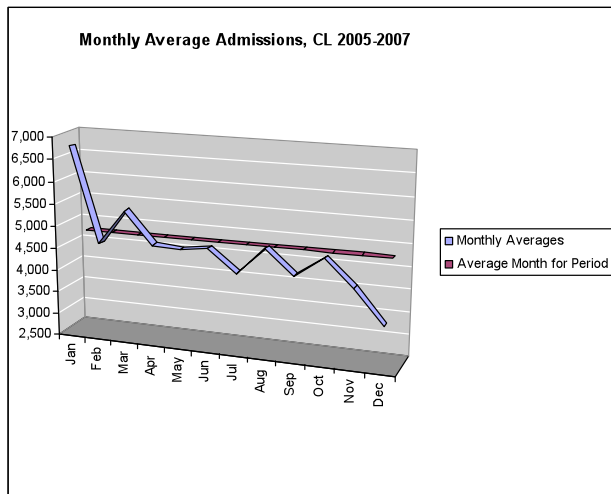
Training Type	Date(s)	Location	Event	Total # of Attendees	Primary Audience Targeted
Kick-off Orientations	Oct 2006	Columbia, SC	State offering	30	SSA and Cohort 1
	Sep 2007	Columbia, SC	State offering	75	Cohort 2
	Jul 2008	Columbia, SC	State offering	35	Cohort 3
Change Leader Academy-National	Mar 2007	Madison, WI	Regular NIATx offering	8	SSA and Cohort 1
	Mar 2009	Madison, WI	Regular NIATx offering	3	Cohorts 2-3
Change Leader Academy-Local	Mar 2008	Columbia, SC	Special NIATx offering	44	SSA and Cohorts 1, 2, 3
Learning Collaboratives	Jan 2007	Columbia, SC	State offering	47	Cohort 1
	Jun 2007	Columbia, SC	State offering	48	Cohort 1
	Sep 2007	Columbia, SC	State offering	49	Cohort 1
	Jan 2008	Columbia, SC	State offering	55	Cohorts 1 and 2
	May 2008	Columbia, SC	State offering	61	Cohorts 1 and 2
	Oct 2008	Columbia, SC	State offering	83	Cohorts 1, 2, 3
	Sep 2009	Columbia, SC	State offering	Est. 85	Cohorts 1, 2, 3
COC – Leadership	Nov 2007-Jun 2008	Tucson, AZ	Special NIATx offering	2	SSA
COC -- Whole Systems Change	Dec 2008-Jul 2009	Madison, WI	Special NIATx offering	2	SSA
	May 2009	Columbia, SC	Special NIATx offering	32	SSA and Cohorts 1, 2, 3
COC-- Business Case	Nov 2008-Jun 2009	Madison, WI	Special NIATx offering	2	Providers
National Grantor Annual Meetings	Nov 2006	Bethesda, MD	Regular CSAT offering	5	SSA and Cohort 1
	Feb 2008	Bethesda, MD	Regular CSAT offering	12	SSA and Cohorts 1 and 2
	Jul 2009	Tucson, AZ	Regular CSAT offering	5	SSA
National Summits	Apr 2007	San Antonio, TX	Special NIATx offering	12	SSA and Cohort 1
	Jun 2008	Orlando, FL	Special NIATx offering	17	SSA and Cohorts 1, 2, 3
	Aug 2009	Tucson, AZ	Special NIATx offering	Est. 8	SSA and Cohorts 1, 2, 3
Coach Academy	Jul 2008	Madison, WI	Special NIATx offering	2	Provider Region I
	Sept 2008	Madison, WI	Special NIATx offering	2	Provider Regions 3 & 4

Hard to follow First Act

The first reported results were quite promising. Based on a three month baseline (October–December 2006), Cohort I had done quite well indeed in its first seven months of operations (January–July 2007):

- Admissions: Monthly average increased by 8.33 percent
- Access: Wait time from first contact to first service was reduced by 5.37 percent
- Retention: The average number of services provided within 30 days of admission remained essentially flat.

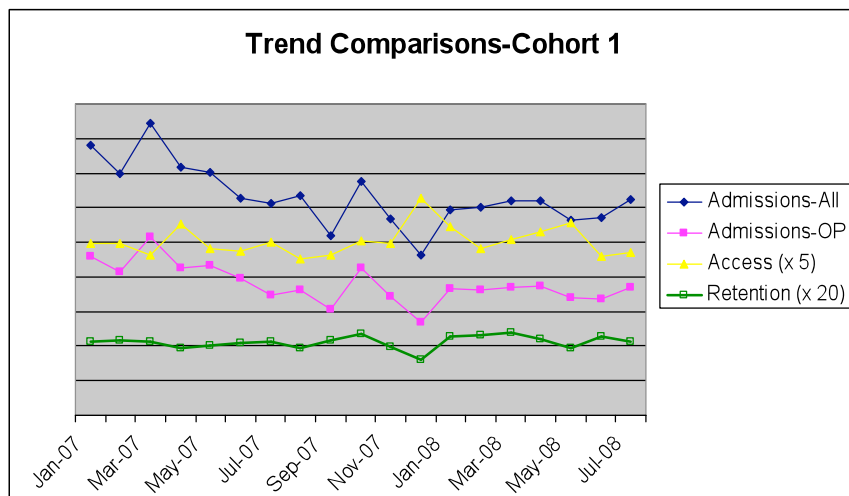
At this point, South Carolina had a number of additional objectives but DAODAS proposed, and CSAT and NIATx accepted, to condensing all of the statewide objectives to just the three listed above as the best indicators of the three NIATX aims that they address.



However, the positive results did not hold up when the Cohort's progress was measured over the first full twelve months (Jan-Dec 2007). The main reason appeared to be statewide seasonal variations that were most pronounced in the last quarter of the year (see the chart to the left). A reason for the initial appearance of early success may have been the favorable (or low) baseline of the last quarter of the year. Therefore, with the concurrence of NIATx and CSAT, DAODAS re-established its baseline as the entire calendar year of 2006.

As shown in the larger chart below, there appeared to be a strong correlation between the seasonal admissions variations and the trend lines of the South Carolina STAR-SI access and retention goals. This is especially evident in December 2007 when all of the measures trend negatively (The access objective is to reduce wait time, thus the December upward movement is the opposite of the desired downward trend).

Another worrisome trend in the chart at right was the lack of the usual January bounce in 2008, perhaps forecasting continuing problems with admissions, as well as the other two goals. DAODAS Change Team (including our coaches Lynn Madden and Scott Farnum) decided to continue to stress the access goal to see if South Carolina would have a nice Second Act





South Carolina
Smiling Faces Beautiful Places

