

Behavioral Health

Altarum Institute is a nonprofit health systems research and consulting organization. Altarum integrates independent research and client-centered consulting to create comprehensive, systems-based solutions that improve health.

Over the past 4 years, Altarum has been at the forefront of efforts to address behavioral health issues in the United States, especially those related to the continuing integration of mental health and addiction service systems and the concurrent integration of behavioral health with physical health systems under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Altarum works with federal, state, and local governments, as well as national and community organizations, to help build a national system of care that focuses on prevention, treatment, and recovery, actively involves the individuals in need of services and their families, and provides multiple services to meet specific needs.

Altarum's Behavioral Health Coordinating Center advances systems of care that promote empowerment and choice, foster resilience, and facilitate mental health and addiction recovery for individuals, families, and communities. It specializes in behavioral health policy analysis, health services research, evaluation, and technical assistance (TA) and ensures that these efforts are based on promising, recovery-oriented, and culturally competent practices.

Altarum works with community boards, managed care organizations, community mental health centers, and state directors to address the changes that the ACA will require. These discussions provide Altarum with a unique understanding of essential health benefits, how they affect behavioral health services, and the importance of having clients and their families involved in these conversations.

What Altarum Offers

Behavioral Health Systems Improvement

- ▲ Preparing providers for an integrated mental health and addiction services system of care
- ▲ Helping states develop recovery-oriented systems of care
- ▲ Supporting efforts to expand care coordination



- ▲ Providing TA for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Access to Recovery (ATR) grantees

Health Finance Reform

- ▲ Managing voucher-based financial systems
- ▲ Braiding and leveraging funding streams

Peer-Led Recovery Support Services and Infrastructure

- ▲ Providing a TA center for the SAMHSA Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP)
- ▲ Planning and implementing culturally responsive peer services
- ▲ Offering organizational and leadership capacity building
- ▲ Providing peer training, implementation of trauma-informed approaches, sustainability planning, and conducting evaluation

Community-Specific TA and Training

- ▲ Tribal communities
- ▲ Peers and families involved with the criminal justice system
- ▲ Veterans
- ▲ Youth

A sample of current and recent projects that illustrate the range of Altarum's relevant technical and substantive expertise is presented below and includes projects with SAMHSA and other federal agencies.



Establish and Maintain a TA and Training Program

Access to Recovery TA Projects (SAMHSA)

Since 2007, Altarum has managed the ATR TA contract to help state and tribal grantees with provider outreach and recruitment; creation of electronic voucher management systems; client engagement; and monitoring of fraud, waste, abuse, and voucher burn rate. Altarum supported the development of 24 ATR programs awarded in the grant's second round and the 30 ATR programs awarded in the third.

Recovery Community Services Program (SAMHSA). Since 2003, Altarum has helped the RCSP build capacity within recovery communities around the country to provide peer-to-peer services promoting relapse prevention and long-term recovery from alcohol and drug addiction.

Substance Abuse and Infectious Disease: Cross-Training for Collaborative Systems of Prevention, Treatment, and Care (SAMHSA). Altarum helped foster integration and systems change by increasing the knowledge, awareness, and skills among providers and trainers within public health, substance use disorder, criminal justice, mental health, homelessness, and other service systems for at-risk populations.

Homeless Policy Academy Initiative (SAMHSA). Altarum provided a forum for senior state-level officials, community providers, and individuals to develop and implement state-specific action plans to address homelessness.

Provide TA and Training

Health Care Reform TA and Knowledge Synthesis and Dissemination Project (SAMHSA). Altarum provided all 60 state substance abuse agencies with the knowledge and skills needed to develop and respond to health care reform, including the implementation of managed care technologies.

Training and TA to State Maternal and Child Health Agencies and Their Partners in Support of Efforts to Build Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (Health Resources and Services Administration). Altarum assisted 49 states and five jurisdictions in their efforts to strengthen existing or develop new comprehensive systems of care for young children, including those with special needs, and helped them develop comprehensive strategic plans for their systems of care.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Participant-Centered Services. Altarum is helping more than 30 state WIC agencies assess state and local readiness to implement participant-centered nutrition

education for underserved communities and has developed the tailored implementation plans.

Center for Mental Health Services Consumer Scholarship Program (SAMHSA). Altarum managed and supported a program that offered scholarships to individuals receiving mental health services so that the recipients could participate in national and international mental health conferences, offer ideas and feedback, and help shape future recovery efforts.

Maternal and Child Health Training and Research Resource Center (Health Resources and Services Administration). Since 2005, Altarum has provided strategic planning and partnerships development, communication and information dissemination, performance-measure reporting, and data analysis and information management. Altarum creates and implements communication strategies and products for the research program, including webinars and other electronic information, and facilitates strategic improvement workgroups between stakeholders.

Opioid-Specific TA and Training

Assessment for Functional Requirements for the Opioid Data Tracking System (SAMHSA). Altarum evaluated a centralized data system that provides real-time access to minimal methadone dosing information to ensure that patients in treatment for opioid dependence continue to receive safe and appropriate treatment in the event of a disaster. Altarum's work on this study showed the variation in capacity among opioid treatment programs (OTPs) capacity to manage the technical aspects of their information management systems, record accurate data efficiently, and respond to emergency or disaster scenarios.

Louisiana Opioid Treatment Expansion (State of Louisiana). Altarum provided recommendations for establishing a Facility Need Review process for the development and opening of new opioid treatment services in the state, including needs assessments and required reports for state governmental committees.

Opioid Treatment Program Accreditation Evaluation. Altarum evaluated the implementation and policy implications for the opioid accreditation initiative, which requires all opioid OTPs (e.g., methadone providers) to achieve and maintain accreditation by nationally certified organizations. The evaluation examined the processes, barriers, and costs associated with achieving and maintaining program changes in clinical and administrative practices, as well as the impact of accreditation on patients, staff, and costs.

For more information, contact:

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