SOAR

SSI/SSDI OUTREACH, ACCESS, AND RECOVERY

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SOAR Technical Assistance Initiative

- SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery

- Focus is on people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness

- Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in collaboration with SSA since 2005

- All 50 states currently participate; no direct funding provided to states

- SOAR TA Center helps States and communities by providing technical assistance and training

SSI and SSDI: The Basics

☐ SSI: Supplemental Security Income; needs based; federal benefit rate is $710 per month in 2013; provides Medicaid in most states

☐ SSDI: Social Security Disability Insurance; amount depends on earnings put into SSA system; Medicare generally provided after 2 years of eligibility

☐ The disability determination process for both programs is the same
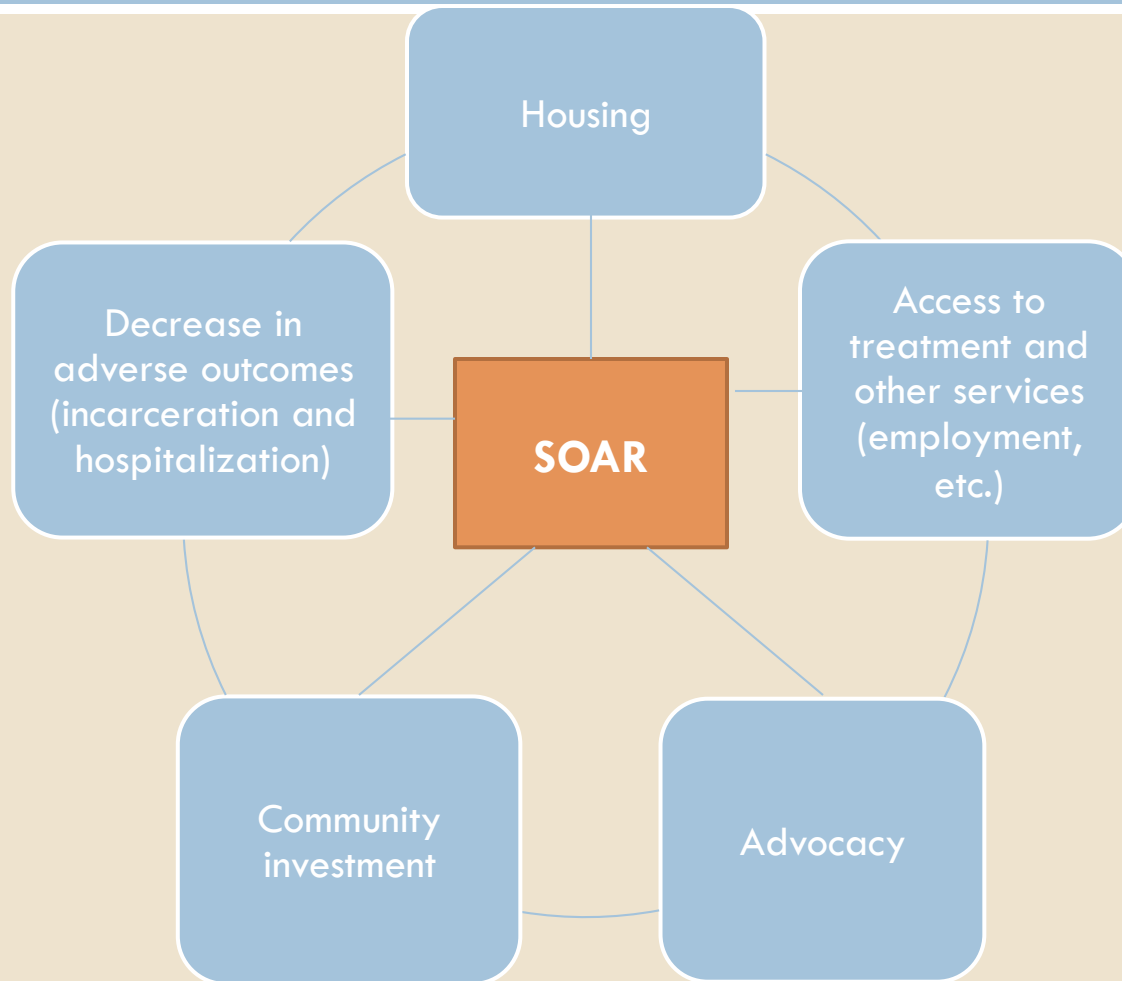
The Problem

- Only about 10-15 percent of homeless adults are approved on initial application

- Only about 29 percent of **all** applicants are approved on initial application

- Appeals can take a year or longer

- Many people give up and do not appeal

What We Know Is Possible

- As of June 2012:

    - More than 15,000 individuals were approved for SSI/SSDI on initial application

    - **66 percent** approval rate

    - In an average of **98 days**

- SSI/SSDI brought nearly **$142 million** into state and local economies

- In 2012, seven states reported Medicaid reimbursement totaling **$1.5 million** - an average of **$5,256** in Medicaid reimbursement per person approved, as a result of SOAR

- Eight states reported public assistance reimbursement by SSA totaling **$1.1 million**

Use SOAR to Reach Broader Goals

- Housing
- SOAR
- Access to treatment and other services (employment, etc.)
- Advocacy
- Community investment
- Decrease in adverse outcomes (incarceration and hospitalization)

Benefits for States and Communities

- People experiencing homelessness are frequent users of expensive uncompensated health care

- Providers can recoup cost of this care from Medicaid for up to 90 days retroactive to date of SSI eligibility

- States that fund health care for low income and/or disabled persons can save state dollars once Medicaid is approved

- States and localities can recoup from SSA the cost of public assistance provided during the application process

- SSI, SSDI and Medicaid bring federal dollars into states, localities and community programs

Benefits for Healthcare Providers

- Recovery of costs for uncompensated care

- Results in newly insured patients who were previously uninsured

- Non-profit organizations fulfill "community benefits" requirements

- Reduces public health care costs by providing ongoing treatment and services

- Helps to reduce homelessness

Impact on Health Care System

Examples from SOAR programs:

- Anchorage, AK -- $299,428 reimbursed by Medicaid for 9 persons approved for SSI

- Two counties in Kansas -- $1,1232,000 reimbursed by Medicaid for 172 persons approved for SSI

- Covington, KY – One hospital recouped $552,000 over a three year period

- Portland, OR -- $611,000 reimbursed by Medicaid for 40 persons approved for SSI

Impact on Criminal Justice System

- **Miami-Dade County Jail** has participated in SOAR for four years

- In 2009, the team was able to demonstrate **$6,913,248 in savings** to the state of Florida

- 77% of 719 applications approved since 2008

- Recidivism dropped from 70 percent to 22 percent

- Studies show that when homeless persons receive SSI, Medicaid and housing, justice system costs decline by 82 percent

Making This Happen in Your Community…

Reallocate existing resources. Try it on a small scale.

- Being able to get people on SSI and/or SSDI and Medicaid in 90 days or less frees up resources to assist others

- Use Social Work interns or apply for AmeriCorps State or VISTA members

- Partner with PATH programs

Making This Happen in Your Community…

Successful states and communities:

- Form steering groups (including SSA and DDS) that meet regularly to address challenges

- Provide ongoing support to case managers assisting with applications so that communication and quality are enhanced (e.g., refresher trainings, quality review, support group meetings)

- Use outcomes to argue for additional resources