



Incentives and Alerts for Improving Substance Abuse  
Treatment in Washington State

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ALERTS ARM

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**QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS:**

**1. When will we receive alerts?**

Alerts will be sent once a week on Thursday or Friday through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) secure e-mail system.

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**2. What information is in the alerts?**

The weekly alerts will contain a listing of clients at risk for not meeting performance measures. At a minimum, the alerts will provide the following:

For outpatient clients:

- client name
- date of last service
- date by which another service must occur in order to meet the criteria for the treatment engagement performance measure

For residential or detox clients:

- client name
- discharge date
- date by which another service must occur in order to meet the criteria for the continuity of care performance measure

Depending on the number of clients served, alerts may contain graphs tracking trends in the agency's performance indicators. Along with the alerts, you will also receive a "tip" that may be helpful in improving performance along with links to websites that offer information that may also be useful for improving treatment engagement and/or continuity of care. These tips will also be available in an online support library (see question #6 below).

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**3. Who in the agency will be the contact person for receiving the alerts?**

Prior to the start of the study, your agency will decide on one or more program staff members to be designated recipients of the alerts. They will receive these alerts via the DSHS secure e-mail system. If you have not yet notified BHSIA who in your agency should receive the alerts or if you would like to make any changes to the designated staff members, please contact Buzz Campbell [[CampbKM@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:CampbKM@dshs.wa.gov), 360-725-3711].

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**4. What if my agency has more than one level of care?**

For agencies that offer multiple levels of care, they will receive separate alerts for each level of care.

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**5. Do we need to respond to the alerts?**

No, the email account sending the alerts does not accept incoming e-mails. However, based on information contained in the alerts, agencies may decide to take steps to facilitate delivery of additional services in order to meet performance measure criteria. By doing so, those agencies randomized into the incentive group and incentives plus alerts group will have the opportunity to earn incentives by acting on alerts and supports to improve performance.

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**6. What is in the support library?**

Included in the alert e-mail is a link to a repository of links (the support library) to websites offering information that may be useful for improving treatment engagement and/or continuity of care. This information may be useful in helping you to improve service delivery to your clients. For example, the websites include tips on steps that your agency may take to increase client engagement rates or continuity of care rates and general information for improving service delivery.

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**7. How much work will it be for my agency to be involved in this project?**

No additional work is required so there is no burden to your agency. However, since your agency has been randomly selected to be in the alerts arm of the study, you may choose to use information from the alerts to initiate or modify current activities to improve your performance measures. For example, after checking the alerts about your clients and identifying which are in danger of not meeting performance measures, you may decide on steps that are needed to keep targeted clients on track to engage in treatment or achieve continuity of care after residential or detoxification services. It could be as simple as a reminder call to the client to return for a visit or make contact with a referral to aftercare. These and any other steps for improving performance are optional and up to your agency.

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**8. If the study determines that incentives and/or alerts improve program performance and client outcomes, will Washington State adopt these approaches?**

If incentives and/or alerts produce a degree of improvement in program performance that offsets the cost of providing incentives, BHSIA will work to adopt these approaches.

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Brandeis University



**Where can I find more information?**

[http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/incentives\\_project.shtml](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/incentives_project.shtml)

**Who can I contact if I have questions?**

Buzz Campbell at BHSIA, [CampbKM@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:CampbKM@dshs.wa.gov), 360-725-3711