

Workforce Plan
Robeson RCORP
Pembroke, NC
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	Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina	
	Robeson Substance Use Coalition	
	Stop the Pain	
	Robeson Community College	

Workforce Strategic Plan

Assessment Summary

Several approaches were used to identify workforce gaps and needs. First, a comprehensive survey of various community stakeholders including service providers, service users, and community residents was conducted for their perceptions of the problem and knowledge of community resources. Agency administrators were asked about their current workforce requirements, gaps, and barriers related to recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The second method involved reviews of existing data available through state and federal websites to understand provider patient ratios such as County Health Rankings, NC Opioid Dashboard, and UDS Mapper. Finally, consortium members met in January 2020 to discuss workforce needs and brainstorm possible solutions.

Relevant workforce related gaps from the needs assessment and associated activities in the strategic plan include:

1. Enhancing provider competencies related to screening and effective treatment/referrals for substance use disorder: Providers (86%) who completed the RCORP survey reported needing more specialized training. Focus groups with providers provided insight into the types of needed specialized training/competencies such as those related to identifying and delivering quality services. For instance, providers reported that new child welfare workers need training on identifying indicators of parental substance use. Providers from different sectors such as social services and the courts reported needing competencies related to engaging and locating appropriate referrals for youths. A proposed strategy to address this gap is provider training in Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (SBIRT)¹
2. Administrators of substance use agencies who completed the RCORP Survey reported having open positions for licensed providers such as LCAS, LPCs, LCSWs, nurse practitioners and psychiatrists. Given resource constraints and challenges in recruiting credentialed staff, enhancing peer support services is one of the proposed strategies designed to promote engagement with community resources among community residents.²
3. Lack of effective ways to engage individuals in recovery: Several challenges were reported in the surveys, including stigma that is interfering with successful prevention, treatment, and recovery. As a result of this stigma, the social distance between those affected by substance use and the community is increasing. Stigma surrounding substance use accounted for 29% of all the challenges reported by community residents, service users, and providers in Robeson County. The strategic goal to address this gap is that community stakeholders who report stigma surrounding substance use as a key challenge in Robeson County will decrease and this will be achieved through education on stigma, addiction and pathways to recovery.³
4. Break in the recovery continuum of care: Although 100% of service users who

completed the Robeson RCORP survey indicated that that recovery was very important to them, there is consensus among service users, community residents and service providers that the county lacks community-based supports needed to promote sustained recovery and self-sufficiency. Limited recovery supports create a gap in continuity of care for service users resulting in higher rates of those returning to use. Strategies to address this gap include expanding available community-based recovery resources through building partnerships consistent with the recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC) model⁴ and increasing the number of recovery specialists.⁵ As the recovery-oriented system of care model is implemented in Robeson County, there will be opportunities for enhancing services across the continuum of care to include prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery services.

Problem Statement

Workforce related priority problems in Robeson County include:

1. Provider shortages: Population to provider ratios in Robeson County are higher than state levels at 2,560 versus 1,420 per person for primary care physicians, and 590 versus 440 for mental health providers. There are only 12 DATA waived providers and 37 certified peer support specialists in Robeson County. Consequently, key limitations to accessing needed care include lack of providers as reported by 67% of service users in Robeson County and 75% of family members and stakeholders. In addition, interviews with community residents and service providers indicated the need for enhanced collaboration among providers and engagement of non-medical professionals such as the police, first responders, and the church to enhance recovery support systems.
2. Inability to attract and retain qualified staff: Although UDS Mapper <https://www.udsmapper.org/> reported that there were 9 National Health Service Corp (NHSC) sites in Robeson County by November 5, 2019 that provided incentives for licensed clinicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and nurses to work in rural and underserved areas in exchange for a two-year service obligation, 80% of agency administrators who completed the Robeson RCORP Survey reported limited availability of qualified staff in the local area and low pay as major barriers to filling needed staff positions. Several other factors influence the community's ability to attract and retain new workers such as lack of feeder institutions in the local area for credentialed staff. Although Robeson County has two institutions of higher education, they have not been able to meet the demand for workforce in the area. While the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP) has graduate programs in counseling, nursing, and social work, licensure regulations for counseling and social work that require graduates to have about two years of supervised work before they can attain their certification contribute to the inability to recruit qualified staff. The nursing program at UNCP is in the planning stages of a psychiatric nurse program. Both the counseling and social work programs at UNCP now offer graduate certificates in substance use disorder. Once running these specialist programs through UNCP will contribute to increases in the number of licensed Addiction Specialists and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners in the county. The second higher education institution, Robeson County Community (RCC) College has a vibrant program that has provided training in emergency medical services personnel, they are

working on getting a Substance Use Certification program that will assist with the training of Peer Support Specialists. Finally, Robeson County has competitors such as Fayetteville, Ft. Bragg, Raleigh, and Wilmington where many of the qualified professionals prefer to settle after graduating from UNCP or RCC. The need for provider incentives to retain qualified staff in Robeson County is substantial.

3. Finally, about 80% of service providers and agency administrators who completed the RCORP Survey agreed or somewhat agreed to the statement “I need more training to address opioid misuse in my professional role.”

Workforce Objectives

By December 31, 2023, Robeson RCORP will increase the number of professionals providing SUD/ODU prevention, treatment, and recovery services by 20% over baseline.

1. By December 31, 2023, Robeson RCORP will increase opportunities for providers and community stakeholders to receive training on effective ways to screen and engage individuals experiencing SUD/ODU in prevention, treatment, and recovery by 15% over baseline.
2. By December 31, 2023, Robeson RCORP will increase the level of collaboration among SUD/ODU providers and community stakeholders by 10% over baseline.

What Consortium Members said:

- Professions to prioritize churches, fire department, and police department
- All health service professionals be trained in SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment)
- Provide education incentives
- Provide employment incentives
- Increase educational/training programs
- Increase the number of peer support specialists, LCAS, doctors who can more effectively engage with persons with opioid use disorder and other substance use disorders.

Goal

1. By December 31, 2023, Robeson RCORP will increase SUD/ODU workforce in the region.
2. By December 31, 2023, Robeson RCORP will report enhanced collaboration among providers and community stakeholders in the prevention, treatment, and recovery of SUD/ODU.

What Consortium Members said:

- Train lay leaders in the community
- Collaborate with primary care/mental health providers to ensure seamless referrals
- Increase the number of mental health and SUD qualified providers
- Increase MAT providers
- Add an inpatient treatment facility
- Increase Transitional Housing capacity
- Contact 5 community agencies to sponsor individuals that are interested in becoming

peer support specialists

Long-Term Outcome

Robeson RCORP will have reduced population to provider ratios that allow for widespread screening and increased access to needed care for residents at risk of or experiencing SUD/OD.

What Consortium Members said:

- Increase access to recovery resources
- Increase the number of credentialed individuals in the community
- Thorough widespread screening of individuals throughout the community
- Reduce patient to provider ratios

Long-Term Outcome Indicators

Number of providers trained in working with individuals experiencing SUD/OD

- Number of MAT waived providers
- Number of licensed substance use counselors
- Number of certified peer support specialists
- Number of trained community-based prevention professionals such as first responders, police, school support professionals (school social workers, counselors, pastors)
- Number of trained community-based prevention and recovery ambassadors
- Number of evidence-based practices implemented to improve workforce skills/competencies to address SUD/OD prevention, treatment and recovery.
- Level of collaboration among SUD/OD providers and community stakeholders

What Consortium Members said:

- Increase in referrals to treatment providers
- Decrease in poor health outcomes/morbidity associated with opioids
- Increased engagement of non-health related institutions
- Job placement for sponsored individuals