

## COMHAR

Philadelphia, PA

[www.comhar.org/](http://www.comhar.org/)

*“Therapists were thrilled that they no longer had to inform clients of a two-month wait for services, and patients were excited that they could get same-day service.” Lisa Kramer, Change Leader, COMHAR*

COMHAR is a Philadelphia agency serving people all ages with developmental disabilities, mental health concerns, physical limitations and other challenges. Founded in 1975, COMHAR provides assistance at home and a broad array of services at COMHAR locations throughout Greater Philadelphia and lower Montgomery County.

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## Aims and Measures

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- The first change project aimed to reduce no-shows for intake appointments for the outpatient mental health program. The baseline no-show rate was 50 percent.
- Subsequent change projects titled “Same Day Service” at the Outpatient 2055 site and the Latino Treatment Program aimed to reduce no-shows for psychiatric evaluations.
- To engage and increase continuation rates by engaging more individuals who were only seen by the psychiatrist to be seen by a therapist and to increase compliance of documentation
- To decrease the # of days from initial intake appointment to 1<sup>st</sup> therapy session

## Changes Implemented

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- The change team tested making reminder calls before a scheduled appointment as a way to reduce no-shows for the outpatient services.
- Subsequent change projects at the Outpatient 2055 site and the Latino Treatment Program tested same-day service to increase the show rate for psychiatric evaluations.
- Creation of a medication clinic
- Same therapist completes the intake and follow-up appointment

## Results

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- Now-shows dropped from 50 percent to 38 percent over a 4-week period at the outpatient mental health site.
- Show rates increased from 50 percent to 79 percent at the Outpatient 2055 site over a 14-month period.
- Show rates increased from 47 percent to 76 percent at the Latino Treatment program in a 12-month period.
- An additional 90 people were engaged in psychotherapy without hiring an additional therapist.



# Mental Health Case Study

## Business Case Impact

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- COMHAR anticipated revenue increases of approximately \$190,300 for completed appointments at each site, with additional revenue potential from subsequent services.

## Lessons Learned

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- Initial success of a small, manageable change project (making appointment reminder calls) helped to secure staff buy-in for process improvement
- Offering no-show spaces to clients already on site increased our capacity
- Reducing wait times improves morale for customers *and* staff
- Offering same day service increases show rate and potential revenue
- Creative scheduling saves a lot of money
- Individuals are much more engaged in treatment when the same person who completes their intake also sees them for therapy