

Spotlight on...Connections Counseling

Connections Counseling is a certified outpatient drug/alcohol and mental health clinic located in Madison, Wisconsin and founded by the agency's Director, Shelly Dutch.

Since joining the STAR-SI program in January 2012, the change team at Connections Counseling has been led by Tami Bahr. In keeping with STAR-SI's goal of "ample revenue", Connections Counseling has focused on increasing public (Medicaid, Medicare, etc) or private health insurance revenue by 5% and the Executive Sponsor set two goals related to accomplishing this goal. The first goal was to solicit contracts with three local HMO insurance companies by developing a timeline for marketing to be completed primarily through NIATx Partnering with new Payors Project. The second goal was to increase revenue from current insurance providers. The information included in this Spotlight focuses on the second goal, as that is the goal they have been focusing on through the STAR-SI Program.

The change team began their change project by evaluating denials to determine how denials could be decreased in an effort to increase insurance revenue. Their first rapid cycle was to create seven categories that they could separate the denials into, determine which denials were within the agency's control to eliminate, and then to collect baseline data. The seven categories were: No Authorization, Not Covered Under Member's Plan, Same Day Service, Invalid ID/Missing Information, Coverage Terminated, Covered by Other Insurance, and Miscellaneous.

As of September 2012, the agency has reduced their total denials by 84%. Based on the data from the seven categories of denials, Connections Counseling has created a new policy for Dean authorizations which included time frames and follow-ups. They also determined nuances of other insurance companies to change processes in an effort to reduce denials. The data has been such an important factor in their decision making, that they have transitioned to providing graphical data at all of the change team meetings so change team members can quickly see the impact of the changes they have made and to utilize the data for future decision making.