

PRO-A Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance
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Overview of PRO-A statewide counselor survey

In an effort to understand our current service system counselor workforce and their collective perspective on how people with addictions are being served, a statewide survey of the counselor workforce was completed and delivered to DDAP. At the point we ended the survey in May 2013, we had received 837 responses.

We found that:

The typical survey respondent was a 50 year old, Caucasian female, holding a master's degree, working at an Outpatient/IOP program, not in recovery, with over 20 years of work experience. 33.3% of those who completed the survey identified themselves as in recovery. 70% of those who identified themselves as in recovery were in recovery for 20 years or longer. There is some evidence that a significant portion of the workforce that is in recovery is aging out of or preparing to leave the workforce in the near future.

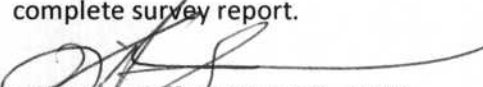
Also:

- 376 or 53.1% of those respondents who identified the question as applicable reported that none or only some of our clients are getting the proper level and duration of services from funders.
- In regard to paperwork, respondents who identified that the question was applicable reported that the paperwork requirements have increased was 527 or 77.7%.
- 285 or 48.2% of applicable respondents reported being frequently or always asked to provide unnecessary and personal information about persons they serve and their families that exceed the PCPC.
- 435 or 57.9% of those who responded indicated that they felt pressure to provide more information than is necessary and allowable under confidentiality laws to get proper care for their clients.
- 522 out of 699 or 74.6% of respondents for whom the question applied indicating that a client gets a shorter duration, lower level of care, or that the service required is not funded or offered.
- 239 or 37.7% of applicable respondents reported that the clients they serve exceed the capabilities of the programs they are in because it is probably less expensive or the service needed is not offered.
- The combined answers of those respondents who intend to leave drug and alcohol or the human service field entirely within the next five years was 173 or 22% of the total respondents.

The survey would suggest that people seeking help for addiction problems are served in lower levels of care and for shorter durations of time than the treating clinicians would consider as indicated. Strains on the workforce are evident by the numbers of people identifying that they are considering leaving and / or face overwhelming barriers to providing counseling in a number of areas. Many of the respondents indicated that ever-increasing paperwork, high case loads, poor funding, high stress, and poor compensation are factors in their consideration of no longer doing this kind of work. Some indicate that they are already leaving the field.

We consider this survey as a preliminary report. As advocates for recovery, we understand the critical importance of having a strong and functioning drug and alcohol service system to serve our communities into the next generation. These services are a fundamental aspect of the recovery process for many Pennsylvanians and their families.

Please contact PRO-A at 717-545-8929 or email me at Billstauffer@pro-a.org if you are interested in a copy of the complete survey report.


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