Combating the Opioid Crisis in Rural Alabama: HBCU-Based Training and Apprenticeships for Master's Level Social Work Students

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Learning Objectives

- Analyze the opioid crisis in rural Alabama and the innovative approach of training master's level social work students from HBCUs to address the issue, including an understanding of the project's methods and objectives.
- Assess the project's effectiveness by examining the number of students completing specialized training and apprenticeships, as well as the impact on their skills and knowledge for working with opioid-impacted families.
- Discuss the challenges encountered in establishing the apprenticeship program and evaluate the role of mental health collaborations, HBCU policy advocacy, and antiracist education in supporting communities affected by the opioid crisis in rural Alabama.
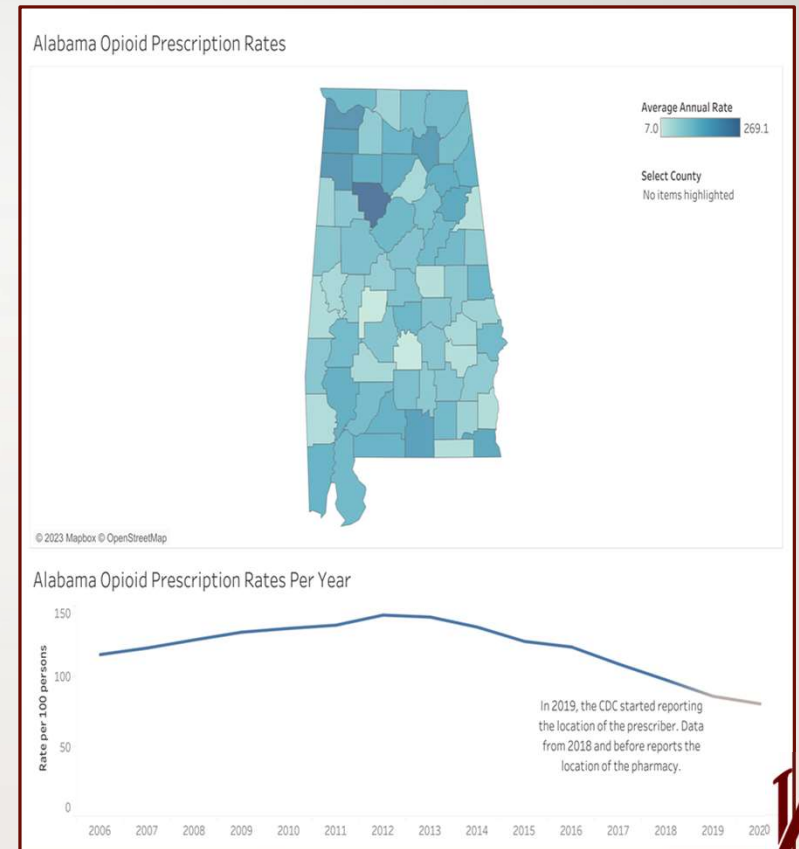
Presentation Outline

- Introduction

- Overview of OIFST program

- Program Effectiveness

- Challenges To Success

- Conclusions

- Q & A

Introduction and Overview

- Alabama ranks number one as the highest prescribing state in the nation for opioid pain reliever prescriptions, according to the CDC.

- The Graph demonstrates the location of prescribers from 2018 CDC data.

- Walker and Colbert County Dark Areas have the highest prescribers.

Alabama Opioid Prescription Rates

Average Annual Rate
7.0 — 269.1

Select County
No items highlighted

© 2023 Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Alabama Opioid Prescription Rates Per Year

Rate per 100 persons

In 2019, the CDC started reporting the location of the prescriber. Data from 2018 and before reports the location of the pharmacy.

2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Overview

- Alabama is currently experiencing a shortage of professional social workers.
- There is just one mental health clinician for every 850 Alabama citizens, making us the worst ranked state in health workforce availability, the most severe shortage in the nation.

WorkForce Demand

- Well trained master's level social work students from HBCUs to work in rural affected areas.
- Offers specialized training and apprenticeships.
- The purpose of our program is to meet the workforce demands for mental health practitioners specializing in behavioral health skills and knowledge training. With this training, students will be able to work with families impacted by opioids use disorders and other substance use.
- Grant from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

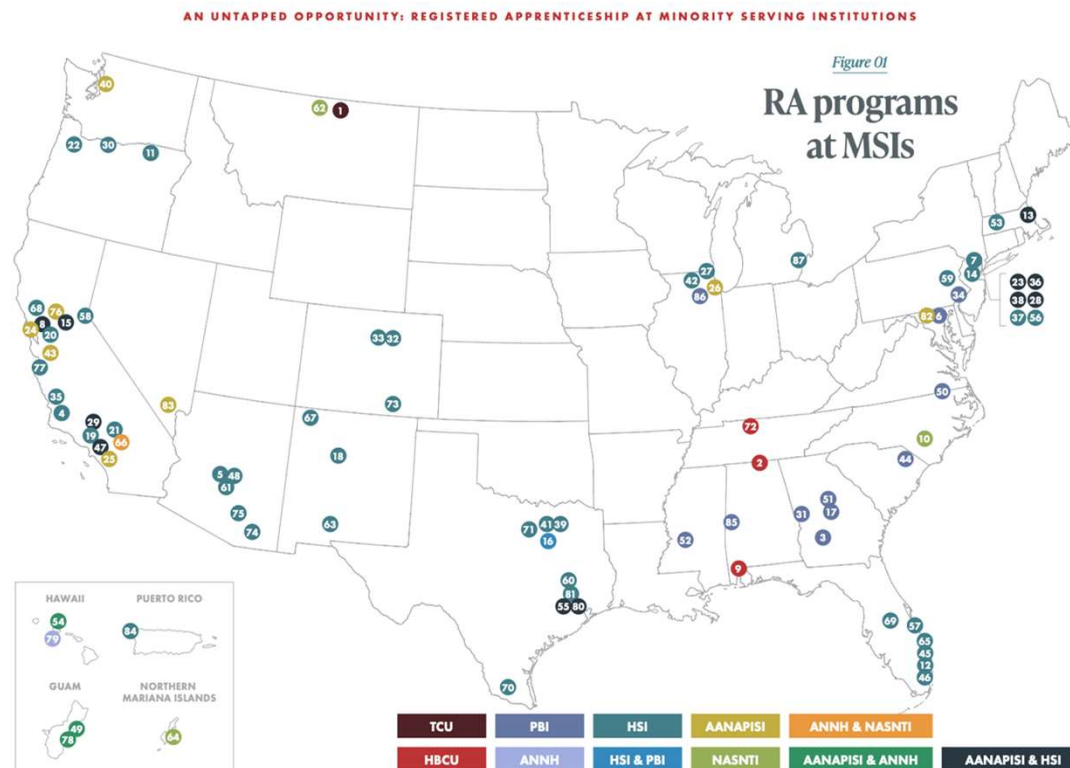# What is Registered Apprenticeship?

- Registered Apprenticeship is a form of work-based learning and a proven workforce training model that combines paid on-the- job learning and formal classroom or online instruction to help a worker master the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for career success.

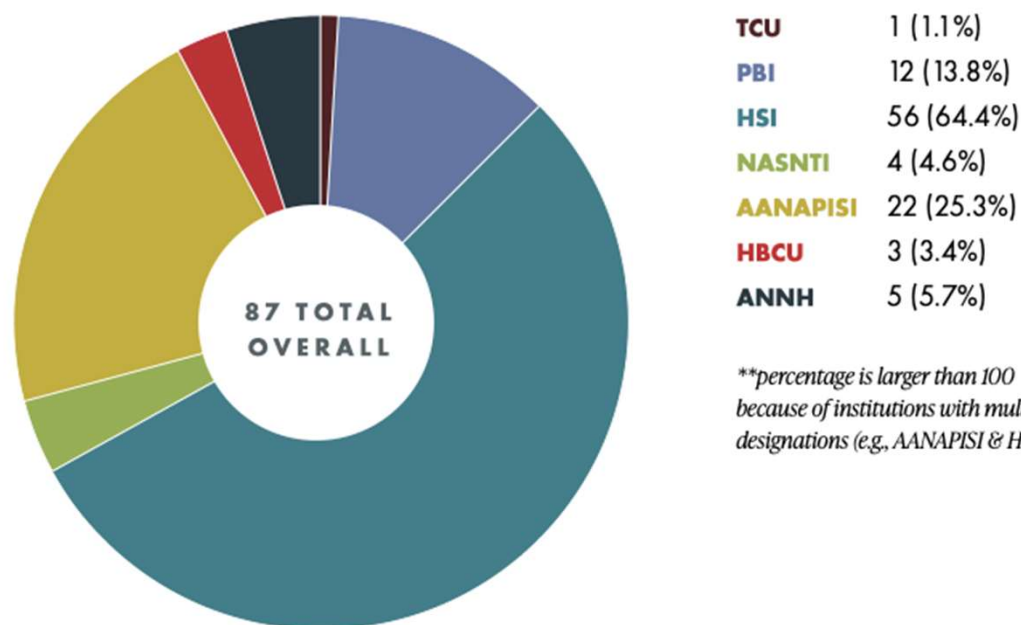# Top 5 Reasons to Embrace Registered Apprenticeship?

1. Paid Job
2. Structured On-the-Job Learning/Mentorship
3. Credentials
4. Supplemental Education
5. Industry Led

Where are Registered Apprenticeship Programs Located?

AN UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITY: REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AT MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS

Figure 01

RA programs at MSIs

Representation of HBCUs in Registered Apprenticeship

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP BY MSI-TYPE

|	
TCU	1 (1.1%)
PBI	12 (13.8%)
HSI	56 (64.4%)
NASNTI	4 (4.6%)
AANAPISI	22 (25.3%)
HBCU	3 (3.4%)
ANNH	5 (5.7%)

87 TOTAL OVERALL

*percentage is larger than 100 because of institutions with multiple designations (e.g., AANAPISI & HSI)

AAMU Registered Apprenticeship Program

- First Registered Apprenticeship Program for Master of Social Work in U.S.

- Competency Based Apprenticeship Program

- Apprentices receive one-year of pre-apprenticeship training and one yar of apprenticeship training.
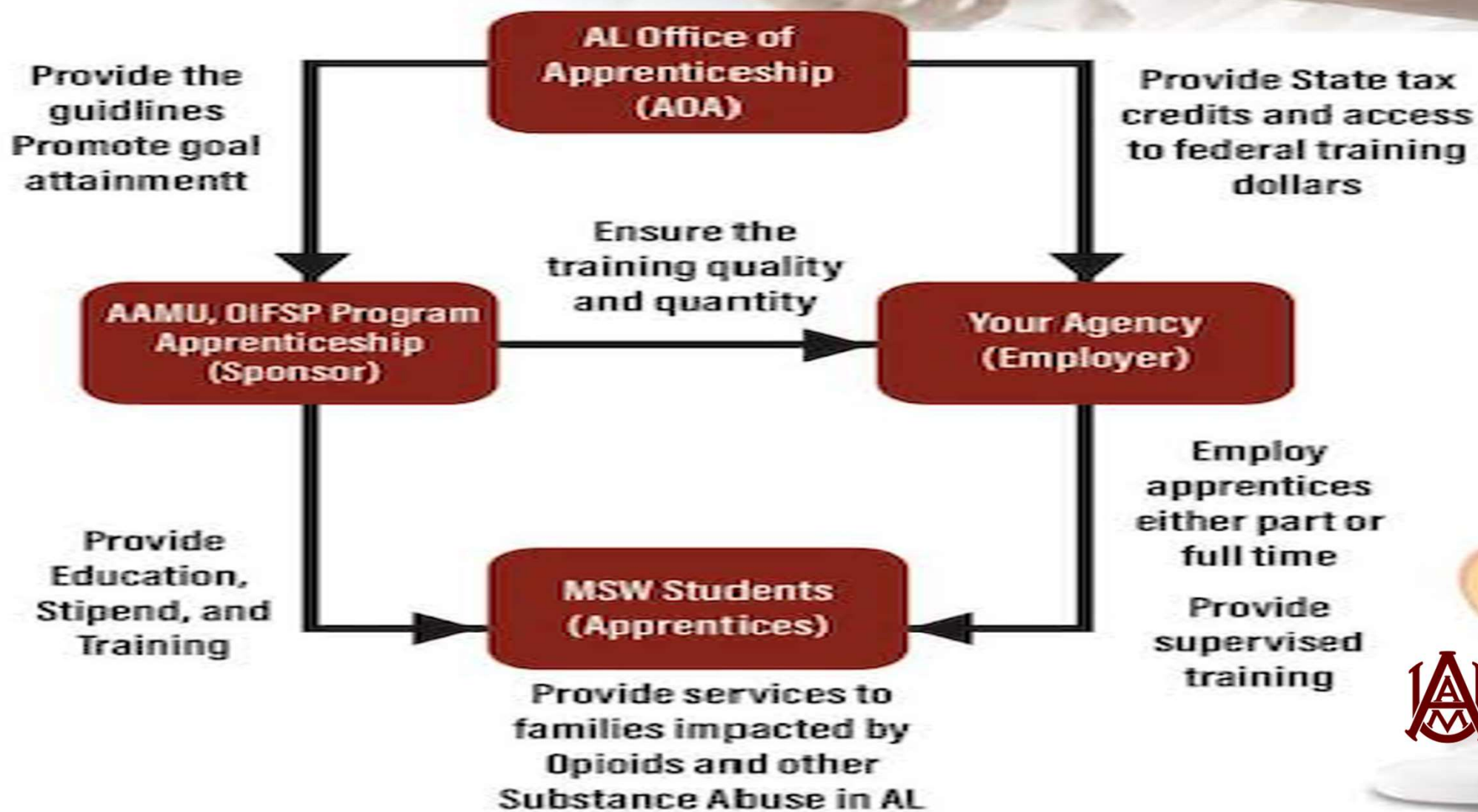
Agency Benefits as Apprenticeship Site

- The major benefit to a registered apprenticeship program is the combined learning techniques of on-the-job training with classroom instruction.

- The employer will be able to train these apprentices in-house while they are completing their degree and learning a better understanding the theory associated with their occupation.

- Agency will have access to the state apprenticeship tax credit *($1250 per apprentice; 10 apprentice max per year for apprentices who are employed 7 months out of the calendar year) ($15.00hr, 83 hours are covered by State credit)*

Methods

- The project involves recruiting first-year MSW students from HBCUs as trainees and partnering with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship and various rural community agencies
- The training consists of two levels: a specialized didactic course and experiential training in a behavioral health setting, followed by an apprenticeship during which students are employed in behavioral health environments.
- Case Management Training by AL Department of Mental Health, Telemental Health, & Mental Health First Aid

AAMU OIFSP Training Diagram
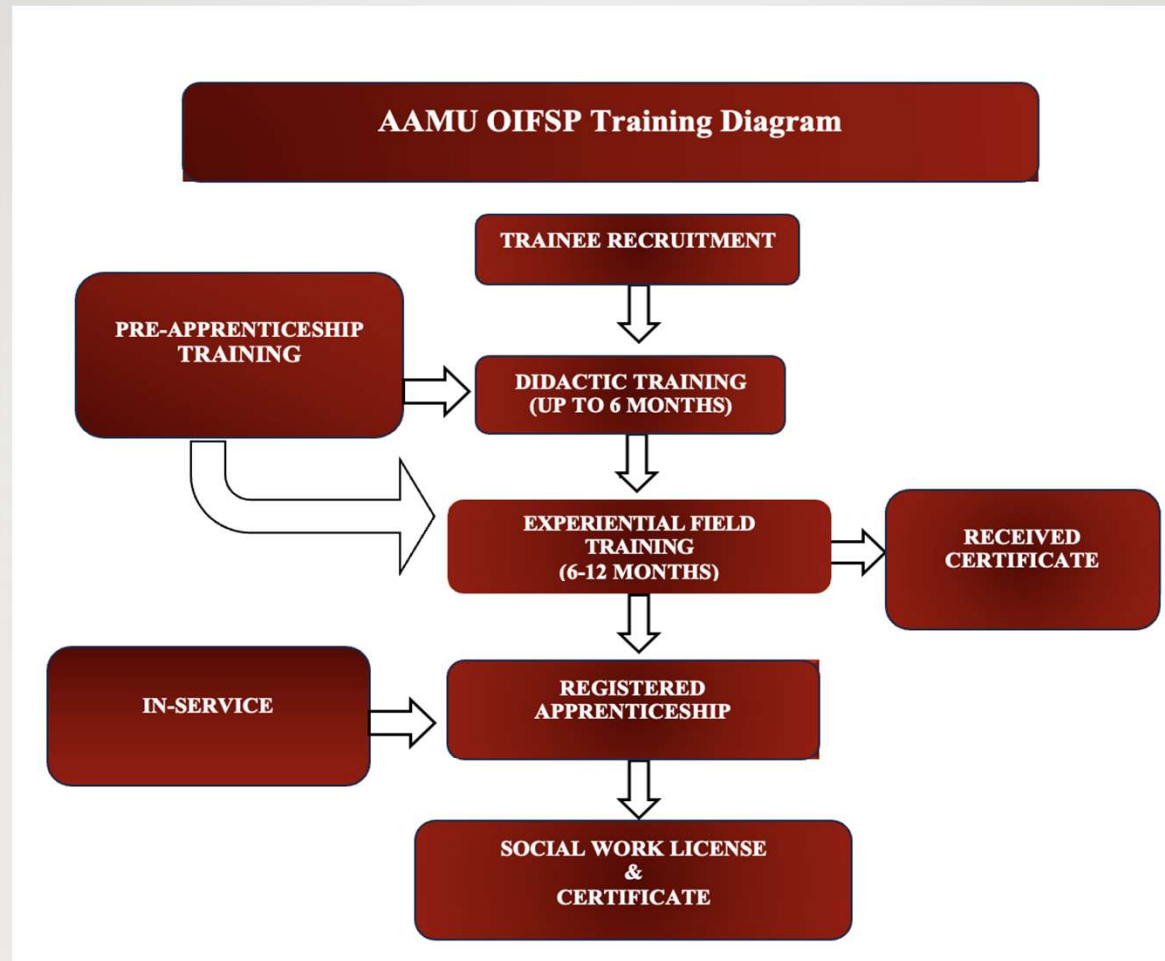
Didactic Training

The evidence-based didactic competency-based curriculum was designed based on the CSWE & SAMHSA suggested training-- The training included:

- The Providers Clinical Support System (PCSS)
- Westfield State University Free Online Modules
- Integrative Behavioral Health Collaborative Training Modules
- Transfer Center Network
- MindTap® Helping Professions, 1 term (6 months) Instant Access for Van Wormer/Davis' Addiction Treatment - 4th Edition

- Opioid Response Network/Addiction Technology
- Professional Workshops
- Community Speakers
- Targeted Case Management Training
- Telemental Health Training
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- NPI Certification
- Masters Level Social Work License Preparation.
- Education and Naloxone

- Rescue Kits Overdose Training
- Rapid Response Training
- Ethics & Cultural Competence Training
- Career Professional Workshop Training.
- Behavioral Health Simulations from Mursion.
- Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

Results: Trainees

Year	Level 1	Level 2
Year 1 (2020 Cohort)	15	1
Year II (2021 Cohort)	14	7
Year III (2022 Cohort)	13	6 in progress
Year IV (2023 Cohort)	15 projected	

Results: Approved Apprenticeship Agencies

- Addiction Prevention Coalition

- Alabama Non-Violent Offenders Organization (ANVOO)

- Aletheia House

- Behavioral Health Group

- Birmingham City Schools

- Cooper Green

- Family Services Center

- IMPACT Family Counseling

- Mountain Lakes Behavioral Healthcare

- Pathways, Inc

- The Legacy Center
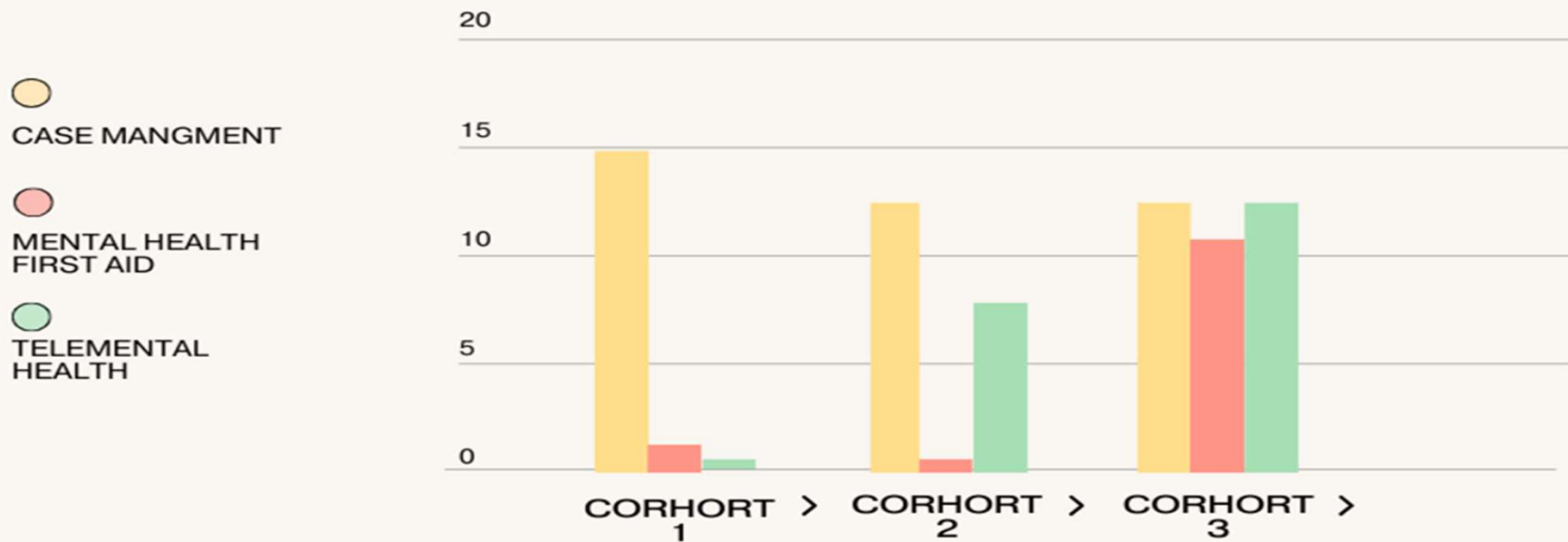
- UAB Medicine

- Wellstone

COMPLETED CERTIFICATIONS TRAININGS

The chart below displays the completion of certification trainings.

Cohort 1: Case Management 15, Mental Health First AID 0, Telemental Health 1

Cohort 2: Case Management 14, Mental Health First AID 0, Telemental Health 8

Cohort 3: Case Management 13, Mental Health First AID 11, Telemental Health 13

Results: Extra Training

- The case management training is taught by the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the certifications do not expire

- The Mental Health First Aid is taught by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and the certification is good for 3 years from the training date

- The Telemental Health is taught by the Telehealth Certification Institute they are with the participants for the life of the Institute and the certifications do not expire

Results: Assessment

- Grades : A (N=33). B (N=9), C (N=0), D (N=0), F (N=0) among 3 Cohorts

- Exit Survey: 1) 75% was very confident to work with opioids and other substance impacted families and 25% was somewhat confidence to work with opioids and other substance impacted families, 2) 100% of trainees reported the program helped students to understand the opioid use disorder (OUD) and substance use disorder (SUD) issues, and 3) 100% of students recommended this training

Challenges to Success

- Challenge 1: Understanding of each field (Body of Accreditation & AOA).

- Challenge 2: Lack of knowledge on apprenticeship in behavioral health fields.

- Challenge 3: Recruiting agencies (limited number of agencies, limited financial resources).

- Challenge 4: Workforce Environment Improvement (low wages)

Community Empowerment

OIFST Program
- ❏ Training Students
- ❏ Financial Support for Students
- ❏ Providing Well-Trained Employees
- ❏ Seeking Funding for Agencies
- ❏ Advocating

Community Agencies
- ❏ Non-Profit
- ❏ Limited Financial Stability
- ❏ Rural Area
- ❏ Female Based
- ❏ Low Wages

AOA Requirements
- ❏ Last Dollar Scholarship
- ❏ Wage Increase
- ❏ Minimum Wages

AOA Support
- ❏ State Tax Credit
- ❏ Training

Work Force Development

Community Empowerment

Conclusions

Establishing an apprenticeships for MSW students to address the opioid epidemic in rural Alabama brings several significant social work implications:

- Strengthening the Rural Workforce
- Fostering Interagency Collaboration
- Community Engagement and Support
- Policy Advocacy
- Antiracist Education
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Cultural Competence

Q & A

Let us know your questions

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