



# SAMHSA'S PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE WELLNESS

*Incorporating Wellness Into Recovery*

## SAMHSA's Program to Achieve Wellness Recognition of Excellence in Wellness

**What:** Through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Program to Achieve Wellness, organizations and communities will be recognized for their exemplary wellness efforts that improve the health and wellness of those living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

**When:** Apply by June 22 to showcase how your organization or community improves wellness outcomes for people with mental and/or substance use disorders, including individuals living with serious mental illness.

For more information, visit the [Program to Achieve Wellness webpage](#).

### Background

Studies have found that individuals with serious mental illness are 3.5 times more likely to die than the general population, many of whom are at risk of losing nearly 28 years of life largely due to natural causes. 85% of these premature deaths are due to preventable diseases (Olfson, Gerhard, Huang, Crystal, & Stroup, 2015 as cited by NIMH, 2015). The most common causes of death among people with serious mental illness are heart disease, cancer, and lung disease (Druss et al., 2011; as cited by CDC, 2017).

People with serious mental and/or substance use disorders are twice as likely to be overweight or obese (Daumit et al., 2013), adding to a greater risk for diabetes and high blood pressure. Healthy People 2020 notes that while mental health disorders can precede chronic disease; chronic disease can intensify the symptoms of mental health disorders—"in effect creating a cycle of poor health" (2017). The whole health and well-being of individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders is critically important for supporting all Americans in living long, full, healthy, productive lives. SAMHSA's Program to Achieve Wellness strives to address this complicated cycle of poor health through the Recognition of Excellence in Wellness.

## Goal

The goal of the “Recognition of Excellence” is to identify and showcase programs and practices that put the concept of wellness into action. Recognized programs will be those that:

- Create meaningful improvements in the lives of people in recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders, including those living with serious mental illness
- Effectively work to address the rates of chronic illness and premature death experienced by this population

SAMHSA’s Program to Achieve Wellness is inviting applications from programs that have demonstrated exceptional achievements in integrating effective wellness practices into services for people in recovery from behavioral health disorders. Three programs will be selected and highlighted as models that other communities can adopt and implement. Programs will be selected for their success in improving quality of life and well-being for individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders through innovative approaches to fostering healthy behavior changes and improving [wellness](#).

## Benefit

The Recognition will allow SAMHSA’s Program to Achieve Wellness, and the selected programs, to share comprehensive, effective, and outstanding program and practice strategies and designs with the mental health field, public health field, and general public. A webinar will announce the selected programs, providing an opportunity for viewers to learn more about the effective approaches, as well as how to replicate their strategies. The importance of wellness, and the need to address health disparities and the mortality gap, will be illuminated through the Recognition of Excellence in Wellness.

## Eligibility

- National organizations, community-based organizations (including providers, peers, and peer providers), communities, states, and tribes in the United States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories are eligible to apply
- Federal agencies and individuals are ineligible
- Applicant organization must provide services or supports to those living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders
- The program described in the submission must address at least one of the [Eight Dimensions of Wellness](#)

## How to Apply

Complete and submit an application cover sheet, a narrative description of the program, two testimonials from program participants, and documentation of the impact on health or wellness.

### Application Cover Sheet

[An application cover sheet](#) is required for all submissions.

### Narrative Description

Submit a narrative no longer than five pages that clearly and concisely describes:

1. What are the components of the wellness program, the rationale for the program, and funding supporting the program
2. How the wellness program was implemented, including the story of the transition or change in adopting the program, staff responses to the change, challenges that were overcome, and any champions who served as catalysts for change
3. How the program impacts the quality of life and well-being of the target population
4. Why the program should be acknowledged for excellence
5. How the program is being, or will be, sustained

#### Application Package Overview:

- Application cover sheet
- Narrative description
- Two testimonials from program participants
- Outcome documentation

### Testimonials

Applicants are asked to submit **two brief testimonials or stories** from individuals who participate/participated in the wellness program. Testimonials can be submitted as written attachments or video supplements; and must be offered from the perspective of the service recipients, e.g.: a case manager cannot submit anecdotal accounts of an individual's improvements in quality of life and well-being. **Written testimonials should not exceed 500 words. Testimonials submitted as videos should be no longer than three minutes.** Applicants must include a release form signed by each wellness program participant for whom a testimonial is submitted, authorizing use of the testimonial and any submitted photos/videos portraying the individual.

### Outcome Documentation

Applicants are to **include a brief summary of documentation of outcomes** to show that the wellness approach is an effective practice for improving health and wellness outcomes and reducing premature mortality of individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders. Outcome documentation can include a formal evaluation or assessment or other quantitative or qualitative data that illustrates successful outcomes of the program. **Documentation of outcomes should not exceed two pages.**

## Submission Terms and Conditions

By submitting a nomination, each participant automatically confers on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) an irrevocable, nonexclusive, and unrestricted license to use the submitted content for purposes consistent with the agency's national service mission. This includes the right to copy, reproduce, display, or distribute the content of the submission, and to make derivative (copied) works based upon the submission or a substantial portion of it without attribution or prior permission. When submitting testimonials, photos, or videos applicants must include a written and signed release statement from the wellness program participant giving consent to share the story, photo, or video as part of The Recognition of Excellence application. Applications without this consent will not be reviewed.

The Recognition of Excellence in Wellness is sponsored by SAMHSA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857. Policy Research Associates, Inc. is the Administrator for the Recognition of Excellence in Wellness under SAMHSA contract no. HHSS280201500001C.

## Submission

Applicants are to submit completed application packages via email to [paw@prainc.com](mailto:paw@prainc.com) with "Recognition of Excellence in Wellness" in the subject line. If submitting videos or photos, they can be submitted in the application email, or applicants can include a link to a cloud storage server for access, e.g.: Dropbox, WeTransfer.

Alternatively, applicants can submit completed application packages via postal mail to:

Program to Achieve Wellness Recognition of Excellence  
Policy Research Associates  
345 Delaware Avenue  
Delmar, NY 12054

**All materials must be received by 11:59pm ET on Friday, June 22, 2018.**

## Judging Criteria

**Impact** – Judges will award up to 50 points for an application that demonstrates significant impact on the lives of individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders. Points will be awarded when formal evaluations or other forms of outcome data, qualitative or quantitative, are indicative of an improvement in the well-being of the applicant's target population, including illustration of improved health outcomes for individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders. Strong applications will demonstrate how the wellness program addresses a need in the narrative section, having an impact on the community; illustrate positive results and improvements in the outcomes section; and include detailed testimonials of the impact of the program on individuals with lived experience.

**Replicability** – Judges will award up to 30 points for applications that show creative use of funding and staffing resources, which would allow the program/practice to be easily replicated by other groups across the country. Strong applications will demonstrate replicability by detailing

funding sources, staffing patterns, and the use of champions in the narrative and describing data collected for outcomes that could reasonably be collected by other programs.

**Innovation** – Judges will award up to 20 points for applications that represent highly innovative, practice-tested programs. Innovative programs are those successful programs that exemplify creativity, effectiveness, and demonstrate a new and novel approach for enhancing or promoting wellness among individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders. Strong applications will include a description of creative use of funding or staffing in the narrative, or otherwise a unique and underused approach to wellness; creative and cost-effective approaches to data collection and outcome reporting; and testimonials that speak to the wellness program as uniquely engaging and effective.

## Recognition

While there is no cash prize, three programs will be showcased on the website for SAMHSA’s Program to Achieve Wellness and SAMHSA’s social media channels. The Program to Achieve Wellness will host a webinar featuring the Winners and their programs, congratulating them, and allowing for Q&A with webinar participants.

## Timeline

<b>Announcement:</b>	Wednesday, February 21, 2018
<b>Submission Deadline:</b>	Friday, June 22, 2018
<b>Winners Notified:</b>	Friday, July 13, 2018
<b>Official Announcement Webinar:</b>	TBD, in August 2018

## Questions?

Please contact PAW Assistant Director, Dr. Crystal L. Brandow, at [cbrandow@prainc.com](mailto:cbrandow@prainc.com) or call 1-800-850-2523 with any questions about the application process.

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