

Background

- Every year, millions of Americans struggle with Opioid Use Disorder¹.
- Medications such as naltrexone and buprenorphine are often utilized to combat this disorder²
- Assisted Recovery Centers of America is an organization that has set up mobile units to dispense these medications throughout St. Louis County
- This study would evaluate how increased access to treatment via the mobile units would impact recovery from a health and legal standpoint

Methods

- Originally, the plan was to collaborate with ARCA to study the impact these mobile units had on the community
- Statistics on the amount of time it takes people to seek treatment, percentage of people who seek treatment voluntarily, and the number of people utilizing these units that end up in jail were going to be gathered and compared to the rest of the nation
- The presence of significant differences in the data would allow for expansion of the program
- Unfortunately, data was not able to be obtained from ARCA, and the research was never conducted

Discussion

- Had ARCA gathered and provided the data, it would be used to determine whether the mobile unit is worth the funding and whether it should continue
- The units are currently funded by the Missouri Department of Mental Health and cost around \$500,000 each
- While the mobile units are currently restricted to the St. Louis area, this research would have been used as justification to expand the project throughout other cities in Missouri, and eventually cities throughout the nation
- Similar research would also have been used to determine whether the program is equally effective in other locations, and whether adjustments would need to be made
- ARCA could also collaborate with a pharmacist to evaluate which medications have the greatest impact on the metrics studied, and use that data to help determine which drugs to dispense on a case-by-case basis.
- A pharmacist would also be useful in providing counselling and follow-up with patients utilizing the mobile clinic

Conclusion

- ARCA could still conduct this research should they wish, and use it to adjust and expand their program
- If the program has positive effects on patient recovery times and incarceration rates, then it would be justified to try this program out in cities across the country
- ARCA utilizes both mobile units as well as brick-and-mortar clinics in St. Louis, and should replicate this setup in other areas were they to expand to other locations
- ARCA could partner with similar organizations that are already set up in those cities in order to get the program running quicker

References

1. U.S. National Library of Medicine. (2023, July 18). *Opioids and opioid use disorder (OUD)*. MedlinePlus. <https://medlineplus.gov/opioidsandopioidusedisorderoud.html>
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Effective treatments for opioid addiction*. National Institutes of Health. [https://archives.nida.nih.gov/publications/effective-treatments-opioid-addiction#:~:text=Medications%2C%20including%20buprenorphine%20\(Suboxone%C2%AE,to%20the%20World%20Health%20Organization](https://archives.nida.nih.gov/publications/effective-treatments-opioid-addiction#:~:text=Medications%2C%20including%20buprenorphine%20(Suboxone%C2%AE,to%20the%20World%20Health%20Organization)