

No Wrong Door: A Snapshot of Adolescent Substance Use Service Access Points Across New Orleans

Perim Isim (LSU), Mallory Grainer (LSU), Kelly Georgis, DO, MsPH (LSU), Jennifer Creedon, MD (LSU)

Background: New Orleans currently has a patchwork of services addressing adolescent substance use including prevention, treatment, and crisis intervention programs. However, many families and even providers are unclear on how to access these services, who is eligible, and what the actual entry points are. Youth are often told “we don’t do that here” or are referred in circles. A system of care approach emphasizes a “no wrong door” approach where any youth presenting with need can be guided to the appropriate level of care; but this ideal is rarely achieved.

This project aims to:

- (1) Identify and map adolescent substance use services across Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines parishes
- (2) Assess how youth and caregivers access these services across various entry points.
- (3) Identify gaps and opportunities to improve service navigation and coordination.

Methods: A service inventory was created to identify organizations offering substance use treatments and resources in Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard parishes for adolescents aged 12-17. Publicly available sources (organizational websites, service inventories, and community resource lists) were utilized to identify resources and programs across 7 categories:

- (1) Prevention and education
- (2) Support groups
- (3) Outpatient
- (4) Intensive outpatient
- (5) Residential and inpatient
- (6) Detox and rehabilitation
- (7) Crisis and family services

Identified organizations were contacted to verify services offered and document program characteristics. After brief interviews with providers and program administrators, a service access map was created to visualize entry points, gaps, and resource availability. These interviews also provided qualitative information on service navigation and typical referral pathways.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest an uneven distribution of services and limited availability of age-appropriate support groups and high acuity resources such as detoxification and residential treatment across the four parishes.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Preliminary mapping of adolescent substance use services across New Orleans depicts a fragmented system with multiple dead-ends and limited availability of age-appropriate and necessary services for substance use disorder. This system

fragmentation leads to gaps in care, financial and geographical barriers to access, and missed opportunities for intervention, resulting in many youth falling through the cracks. Next steps should focus on improving system navigation and strengthening referral pathways to ensure that every youth who enters the system is directed to appropriate services. The service map created during this project can be used as a tool to aid in system navigation efforts. Furthermore, creating age-appropriate support groups may be a feasible way to provide accessible avenues in providing peer support, accountability, and skill-building, helping to better align this system with a “no wrong door” model of care.