CMHS NOMs Client-Level Measures for Programs Providing Direct Services (Services Activities): FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is TRAC?

1) What is the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993?

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) is a law that was passed by Congress in 1993. GPRA was enacted to improve stewardship in the Federal government and to link resources and management decisions with program performance. GPRA requires that all Federal departments:

- Develop a strategic plan specifying what it will accomplish over a 3- to 5-year period;
- Annually set performance targets related to their strategic plan;
- Annually report the degree to which the targets set in the previous year were met; and
- Regularly conduct evaluations of their programs, and use the results to explain their successes and failures on the basis of the performance monitoring data.

As part of the annual budget development process, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires agencies to report performance measures, referred to as GPRA measures, based on the Government Performance and Results Act.

2) What are the National Outcome Measures (NOMs)?

In response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), SAMHSA has created ten domains for measurement known as National Outcome Measures (NOMs). The ten domains are:

- Access/Capacity
- Functioning
- Stability in Housing
- Education and Employment
- Crime and Criminal Justice Status
- Retention
- Perception of Care
- Social Connectedness
- Use of Evidence-Based Practices
- Cost-Efficiency

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) currently requires grantees to collect data for the first eight of the ten SAMHSA domains listed above.

3) What is TRAC?

- The TRAC system is a web-based system for reporting performance measures on CMHS programs.
- TRAC reporting is a strategic imperative for CMHS driven by: government-wide requirements; SAMHSA's data strategy; and the Center's commitment to performance management.
- ***CMHS monitors four types of grantee activities through TRAC:***
    - Client-level Measures for Discretionary Programs Providing Direct Services (Services Activities);
    - Infrastructure Development, Prevention, and Mental Health Promotion (IPP);
    - Technical Assistance Survey (TA); and
    - Annual Goals and Budget Information.

4) How is TRAC data used?

TRAC data are used for the following purposes:

- ***Grantees*** – to manage programs on a continual basis
- ***CMHS*** – to conduct performance management
- ***CMHS Constituents*** (SAMHSA; DHHS; state, local, and tribal governments; provider organizations) – to understand how CMHS is performing
- ***Office of Management and Budget (OMB)*** – to review program performance
- ***Congress*** – to include program performance as part of the budget process

CMHS NOMs Client-level Measures (Services tool) Information

5) Am I required to ask and report the questions exactly as written in the Services tool? If the questions on the tool are with the same as questions I collect for our program's evaluation, do I need to collect Services Activities data? Can I change the tool or add questions?

Questions must be asked as they appear on Services tool and cannot be changed. However, grantees in some programs may use their existing instruments (in lieu of the Services tool) to collect data under the following conditions:

- Questions have the **exact same wording** as those in the Services tool;
- Response categories on your tool are **exactly the same** as the Services tool response categories;
- Response categories on your tool can be **rolled up** to the Services tool response categories;
- Your tool is approved by CMHS.

For more information, please contact your Government Project Officer (GPO).

6) Are there different versions of the Services tool?

Yes. There are three versions. They are:

- ***The Adult Programs Version –*** Adult programs have a Services tool specifically designed for the population they serve. (Note: CMHS decided that the Healthy Transitions Initiative (HTI) Program grants would use this version even though this program serves youth aged 16 to 25.)
- ***The Child Program Version –*** CMHS recognizes that programs serving children and adolescents may require an alternative to directly interviewing the consumer and has developed **a combined version** of the tool accordingly.
    - ***Combined Child/Adolescent & Caregiver Respondent –*** Used when either the child or the caregiver is being interviewed on behalf of the child/adolescent. This version was created for the convenience of programs that routinely interview both caregivers and children/adolescents and who want to use the same form for both.
- ***The Minority AIDS Initiative-TCE Version –*** The adult program MAI-TCE has their own tool that is specifically designed for their population served.

Please see the Question-by-Question Instruction Guide for further guidance on which version(s) to use to conduct consumer interviews.

7) Is the Services tool available in other languages? How should the interview be conducted for a deaf consumer?

A Spanish version of the paper Services tool is available on the TRAC website for download. In cases where a consumer speaks a language other than English or Spanish, or for consumers who are deaf, the grantee should follow the same procedures for collecting Services Activities data as used to obtain any other information for the consumer.

8) Where can I get a copy of the Services tool, FAQs, Question-by-Question Instruction Guide, TRAC Data Entry and Reports Guides, and the Codebook?

These materials are available to the general public on the TRAC website: https://www.cmhs-gpra.samhsa.gov/index.htm. They may be accessed by selecting the "General Info & Training" tab button.

9) Where can I find information about upcoming trainings for the Services tool administration, and how do I sign up?

Trainings are scheduled specific to each CMHS program's needs. When a new grant starts, your GPO will tell you what activities you will need to do in TRAC, and the TRAC Help Desk will schedule your training. Training invitations and registration information will be sent to Project Directors by email. For grants that already use TRAC, TRAC offers refresher trainings throughout the year. Please contact the TRAC Help Desk at 1-888-219-0238 or TRACHELP@westat.com for more specific questions concerning TRAC trainings.

Data Collection Requirements

10) Is my grant required to comply with TRAC data collection requirements?

Beginning in 2010, all CMHS Requests for Applications (RFAs) will list the data collection requirements by program. CMHS grant applications require prospective grantees to explain the procedures they have or will put into place to ensure compliance with the collection of required data elements. If you are awarded a grant, your Government Project Officer (GPO) will also tell you what data your grant is required to collect.

11) What are the requirements for collecting data with the Services tool? When am I required to start collecting and submitting data?

Your GPO will determine when all the grants within his/her program are required to start collecting TRAC data. Some programs have start-up years where few direct services are offered, others start offering services right away.

12) Do we have to collect information on every consumer served?

Yes. You must collect data on *every* consumer that is enrolled in treatment for their duration of their episode of care. A consumer is defined as a person who is actively in treatment with a CMHS funded program. An episode of care begins when the consumer enters CMHS-funded treatment or services, as defined by the program, and ends when the consumer is discharged and no longer receiving CMHS funded treatment or services from your project.

13) Does CMHS allow us to offer consumers incentives for completing interviews?

The use of incentives is addressed in each individual CMHS program's RFA. Preferred incentives include items such as food vouchers, transportation vouchers or phone cards.

14) What are the required interviews for Services tool data collection?

Services Activities data are collected through three types of face-to-face interviews:

- Baseline
- Reassessments
- Clinical Discharge

For more detailed information about how and when to conduct interviews, please see the NOMs Client-level Measures for Discretionary Programs Providing Direct Services Question-by-Question Instruction Guide.

15) If my grant receives an extension, are we required to continue TRAC data collection?

If your grant receives an extension or is re-awarded, you are required to continue data collection. Please have the project director or any alternate project director of your grant go to the TRAC website and select "My Account" and then "Update My Grant" and complete the "Request No Cost Extension" fields. Any grantee can also contact the TRAC Help Desk regarding an extension so that the TRAC system is updated with this new information.

16) My Reassessment Rate is low. What could be the reason for this?

If your reassessment rate is low, it is could be due to one or more of the reasons below:

- ***Discharge records are not being entered into TRAC*** – when a discharge record is entered into TRAC for a consumer (or a Reassessment indicates in Section I that the grant has not had contact with the consumer for 90 days), reassessment interviews will no longer be counted as due. The discharge record must be entered within the reassessment window for the current due reassessment to be removed from the 'due' column in the Reassessment Interview Rate Report.
- ***Consumers are not being reassessed within the window*** – Reassessment interviews must be conducted within the window, which is 30 calendar days before and after the reassessment due date. . Please use the Notification Report to see which interviews are currently due and the earliest and latest eligibility dates of the window.
- ***The reassessments are not conducted interviews*** – In order to have reassessments count toward the number received, they must be conducted interviews. They cannot be administrative record.

Data Entry

17) How can I get a TRAC username and password? If a staff member leaves a project, how can I disable their account?

- ***Grants that are new to TRAC –*** Once a GPO chooses a new grant's data collection start date, the TRAC Help Desk will create a Project Director's user account based on information CMHS provides. These accounts will be released around the time of the new grant's TRAC training dates. After the Project Director receives his/her user account information, grantees can go to the TRAC website at https://www.cmhs-gpra.samhsa.gov to sign up for their own user account. Once the Project Director or Alternate Project Directors approves the grantee's request, the grantee will receive his/her login and temporary password information via email.

- ***Grants that already use TRAC*** –After a grant has been set up in the TRAC system, a grantee can go to the TRAC website at https://www.cmhs-gpra.samhsa.gov to sign up for a TRAC user account. Once a Project Director or Alternate Project Directors approves the grantee's request, the grantee will receive his/her login and temporary password information via email.

Project Directors and Alternate Project Directors can disable TRAC user accounts on the "Manage Accounts" screen in TRAC. The TRAC Help Desk disables Project Director TRAC

user accounts.

18) The TRAC system shows that my password has been disabled. What do I do now?

Accounts are disabled after 5 unsuccessful password attempts (attempts do not have to be in succession). If your password is disabled, there are two ways to get a new one:

- Click "Forgot Your Password?" on the TRAC login page and enter the email address used for TRAC. A temporary password will be sent to the email address on record. You will be prompted to create a new password when you log onto the system; OR

- Contact the TRAC Help Desk and you will be sent a new temporary password. The TRAC system will require you to reset this temporary password once you log onto the system.

19) Can we upload our data rather than using the data entry system?

No. You must submit data via the online data entry TRAC system.

20) Who develops the consumer identification number?

The unique consumer identifier is determined by you. It can be between 1 and 11 characters and can include both numerals and letters. It cannot begin with a dash or contain non-alphanumeric characters (including any of the following: ". [ ]! @#$%^&*( )") with the exception of dashes or underscores. This ID is designed to track a specific consumer through his/her interviews, baseline, clinical discharge, and reassessments, while maintaining the anonymity of the consumer. The same unique ID is used each time, regardless if the consumer has more than one episode of care (i.e., if he/she is discharged and then returns). For protection of Personally Identifiable Identification (PII), do not use any information that could identify the consumer. This includes using, but is not limited to, the consumer's name, date of birth or Social Security Number as all or part of the Consumer ID.

If you collect services data, you will need to have a Site ID in order to enter interviews. To request Site IDs for your grant the Project Director must go into "My Account" > "Update my Grant" on the TRAC website and request one by completing the questions under the "For Consumer Service Program Grants Only Section". The Help Desk will contact you with questions as necessary. The Site ID will be emailed to your grant from the Help Desk.

21) I need to delete or change some data. How can I do that?

All data in Section A through K can be edited. Please refer to the TRAC Client-level Measures Data Entry Guide for instructions on how to edit data.

Data in the Record Management Section **cannot** be edited; if you need to change data in this section, the entire baseline interview must be deleted and you will need to re-enter the entire

interview. Grantees can delete interviews by following the steps below. If you do not have a paper copy of the completed interview, print the summary screen for each record before deleting the record. ***NOTE: In order to remove an entire Baseline interview, all reassessments and discharges related to that consumer's baseline data will need to be deleted as well.***

The steps for deleting a consumer record are:

1. Find the consumer that you need to delete the baseline interview for using the "Find Interview" Screen under the "Data Entry" > "Services" section of the TRAC website.
2. Click "Show Interviews" next to the Consumer ID.
3. If necessary, print the summary of the interview by clicking "Print".
4. Click "Del".
5. Confirm you want to delete and click 'Yes'.
6. Re-enter the interview with the correct Record Management data, if necessary.

22) The race categories do not appear to be culturally competent – can they be modified?

No. The race categories cannot be changed. The Services tool has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget. A respondent may indicate "Refused" for all categories listed if he/she does not associate himself/herself with any of the existing categories.

23) What is Section H? Why can't I find Section H in my training materials?

Section H is for program specific questions. CMHS will determine if your grant will administer questions from Section H. If it applies to your grant, your GPO will let you know. Currently, only two programs require Section H to be collected: Primary and Behavioral Health Care Integration (PBHCI) and Minority AIDS Initiative – Targeted Capacity Expansion (MAI-TCE). Appendix A of the Adult Question-by-Question Instruction Guide also provides a current list of Adult programs that are required to collect Section H data. There are currently no Child programs that have a Section H.

24) Does the arrest definition include immigration charges?

Yes. An arrest, regardless of the charge, should be counted.

Reassessment and Clinical Discharge Data Collection

25) Do we have to conduct a reassessment interview on each consumer?

Yes. You must attempt to reassess all consumers for whom a baseline record was submitted.

26) Should we enter the 6-month (calculated as 180 days) reassessment if the interview was conducted outside of the expected timeframe?

Yes. CMHS encourages you to collect interview data within the specified window to ensure the consistency of comparing consumer outcomes at the various time points. If you have an interview, please enter it, even if it was not conducted within the data collection window. Otherwise, you should enter administrative data.

27) Do we have to conduct a clinical discharge interview on each consumer?

You must attempt to conduct a consumer interview at the time of discharge, but are not responsible for finding the consumer to conduct the clinical discharge interview for the purpose of completing the interview. If a clinical discharge interview is not conducted, an Administrative Clinical Discharge must be entered into the TRAC system. Please refer to the Client-level Measures Question-by-Question Instruction Guide for more information about administering the clinical discharge interview or collecting administrative data.

28) How is clinical discharge defined?

A clinical discharge is defined by the grant. However, if the consumer has not had contact with the project for 90 calendar days or more, or the consumer has died, the consumer should be considered discharged. Contact refers to services or referrals provided, phone calls related to a treatment plan (not scheduling), or crises intervention or emergency services.

29) If a consumer has lost contact with the project or has been clinically discharged, what is the procedure if they return to the project to receive services again?

If a consumer is reenrolled or readmitted into your project, the next time the consumer is seen, you must conduct a new baseline for the consumer using the existing Consumer ID. This applies to consumers who either lost contact with the project by being out of contact for 90 days or more OR who were clinically discharged. Each consumer is only counted once toward the target number of consumers served regardless of the number of completed baselines.

Administrative Data Collection Requirements

30) Are we required to enter any data if an interview is not conducted, for example if the consumer refuses the interview or is impaired?

Yes. In this scenario, you must enter administrative data. Please refer to the Question-by-Question Instruction Guide for information about what kind of administrative data is required for each interview.

If an Administrative Reassessment or Clinical Discharge is entered in the TRAC system and then an interview is conducted, please contact the TRAC Help Desk for assistance in entering the interview.

31) If a consumer is discharged while a reassessment window is open, do we have to collect both records? How will this affect this consumer's reassessments?

No, you would conduct a discharge interview and enter it into TRAC. Once the discharge interview is entered, this reassessment and any future reassessments will no longer be due.

32) The typical episode of care for my consumers is very short. Many consumers may end up with baseline and clinical discharge interview dates very close to one another. Do we still have to collect both records? How will this affect this consumer's reassessments?

Yes, both interviews are required regardless of the amount of time between the two. This provides CMHS with outcome data.

Who to contact

33) We have additional questions that need to be addressed. How do we get them answered?

For all questions related to the TRAC system and the CMHS NOMs Client-level Measures (Services Activities module), please contact the TRAC Help Desk by phone at 1-888-219-0238 or email at TRACHELP@westat.com.