



Maternal & Child Health

Division of Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Workforce Development



Outreach and Promotion Strategies for Engagement

The Screening and Treatment for [Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders \(MDRBD\) Program](#) supports seven states in implementing programs that address maternal mental health conditions that often affect women during and after pregnancy. To advance the goals of the program, MDRBD awardees have developed promising approaches to successfully implementing program models and components in diverse settings. To promote awareness of these approaches, this brief shares insights into what awardees have found to be effective and useful strategies for provider outreach to increase recruitment and engagement in the program.

How do we know “what works” in provider outreach and promotion?

Awardees describing robust outreach and promotion activities also report positive outcomes. For example, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 evaluation data showing increased provider enrollment and participation, along with dissemination of information products, over time suggest that the outreach and promotion strategies those awardees employed may be promising. Two such awardees, whose data and approaches are highlighted in this brief, are the [Kansas Connecting Communities](#) (KCC) and the [North Carolina Maternal Mental Health MATTERS](#) (Making Access To Treatment, Evaluation, Resources, and Screening better; [NC MATTERS]). All quotations listed below are from the respective program staff.

Evaluation Data on Outreach and Promotion

Kansas MDRBD Awardee

- **Increased practitioner participation 689% with the maternal mental health team from FY 2020 to FY 2021**
- Created **13 products** in FY 2021, ranging from reports and monographs; conference and poster presentations; web-based products; audio/video products; newsletters; and pamphlets, brochures, and fact sheets

North Carolina MDRBD Awardee

- **Increased practitioner participation 228% with the maternal mental health team from FY 2020 to FY 2021**
- Created **51 products** in FY Year 2021, ranging from conference and poster presentations; web-based products; press communications; newsletters; and pamphlets, brochures, and fact sheets

Awardee Spotlight

KCC’s Outreach and Promotion Strategies

KCC is a collaborative initiative to improve the mental well-being of pregnant and postpartum women through psychiatric consultation and care coordination services, continuing medical education trainings, and perinatal mental health resources. Below are descriptions of its promising outreach and promotion strategies.

Constant and Consistent Communication

KS MDRBD ensures that constant communication occurs between the program and the participating providers. It delivers quarterly e-newsletters and monthly emails focused on program happenings and updates. Additionally, KS MDRBD monitors viewing metrics of its communications to determine its provider reach (e.g., a recent, short video developed for program promotion).

Lessons Learned

Identifying low-effort ways (e.g., free, online metrics) to track the magnitude and reach of program outreach activities helps to see which ones yielded the most positive results.

In-person Networking Opportunities

KS MDRBD presents at in-person conferences. When not presenting, KCC participates as an exhibitor where it has found the greatest opportunities to make connections. Its program champions also attend in-person events to promote KS MDRBD and to recruit potential champions, as mentioned by their staff:

“What we found is [that] when those opportunities are in person, we're far more successful at engagement after the event than when they were virtual.”

Lessons Learned

Virtual participation presents more challenges than in-person in terms of generating after-event engagement with the program. Programs may want to prioritize in-person events as having the greatest potential for outreach benefits.

NC MATTERS' Outreach and Promotion Strategies

NC MATTERS launched in 2018 to enhance screening, assessment, and treatment of mental and substance use disorders in pregnant and postpartum patients through offering psychiatric consultation, behavioral health toolkits and webinars, and community-based resources to providers. Below are descriptions of how NC MDRBD uses different outreach and promotion strategies.

Leveraging Partnerships and Collaborations

NC MDRBD coordinates with the NC [Pediatric Mental Health Care Access](#) program on outreach efforts to ensure consistent messaging and to avoid duplicative work, as a staff member shares:

“We're coordinating with [NC-PAL](#) (NC Psychiatry Access Line) so that we're not duplicating, but we're coming together to do some outreach as a team...which is nice and really being intentional about working on the messaging so that we're...displaying the same sort of message about NC MATTERS, which is nice and being really consistent with that.”

NC MDRBD partners with the University of North Carolina (UNC) and Duke University on program implementation. Both partners have had success in connecting with providers throughout the community to not only engage them, but to also discover areas of need for program services, as a staff member noted:

“But the teams, both at UNC and at Duke that we contract with, are really good about reaching out to providers and making sure that they have solid connections throughout the communities and recognizing where we might have, you know, geographic gaps in services and things like that.”

Lessons Learned

- Partnering with other programs and/or organizations with similar goals to conduct outreach provides an opportunity to leverage existing strategies and to reach a broader target population.
- Dividing up geographic areas with partners for outreach activities can yield mutual benefits in terms of coverage and of learning about opportunities for deeper engagement in communities.