



# MATTERS

Medication for Addiction Treatment & Electronic Referrals

## Background & Overview

The MATTERS concept was originally built on the public health model of prevention and treatment. In 2016, the University at Buffalo Department Emergency Medicine (UBEM) in combination with UB|MD Emergency Medicine set out to decrease opioid prescribing in their emergency departments. Guidelines were established for patients and prescribers for appropriate opioid prescribing. To ensure consistency across the region, these documents were endorsed by every major health system and urgent care organization in Western New York. From 2015 to 2018, the emergency departments of the major academic health centers in Buffalo saw a >50% decline in opioid prescribing.

The MATTERS concept began as Buffalo MATTERS with an aggressive effort to train emergency physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs) in responsible opioid prescribing, medication assisted treatment (buprenorphine primarily), and rapid referrals. These trainings and initial organization of the network were supported by UBEM and a grant from the John R. Oishei Foundation. Ongoing efforts to provide DATA 2000 waiver training to emergency physicians and APPs continue.

Understanding that rapid, reliable referrals were necessary for success. In Western New York, we do not have a large umbrella of University based substance use disorder clinics. Several community-based substance abuse treatment organizations initially agreed to a common set of values to ensure consistency of treatment approach across the network. Initially, patients were referred from one hospital to 3 clinics to ensure proof of concept. Over the course of 2018, the network grew to 13 hospitals that refer to 27 separate substance abuse treatment clinics. As of early 2019, over 80 weekly appointments are offered at over 30 clinic locations to patients referred through this network.

Joshua Lynch, DO, FACEP, the founder of the MATTERS network has worked with the Erie County Department of Health, the New York State Department of Health Aids Institute and the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to expand the MATTERS approach to other regions of New York State.

The concept is simple:

- Reduce unnecessary controlled substance prescribing
- Provide access to medication assisted treatment in the ED and hospital settings
- Provide rapid access to follow up with a substance use disorder treatment facility

Recently, we have brought on other physicians to assist with research initiatives and expanding our concept to correctional settings along with other outpatient areas, mainly primary care and OB/GYN practices.

For professionals visiting this site, we hope you find the clinical resources helpful and we would be happy to assist you in developing similar networks in your region. Our goal is that your region can employ the MATTERS concept and bring together your hospitals, clinics, and other key stakeholders to provide rapid, high quality follow up to your patients. Please feel free to utilize the resources on this site! If we can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out! Thank you for visiting!

Joshua Lynch  
Founder, MATTERS Network