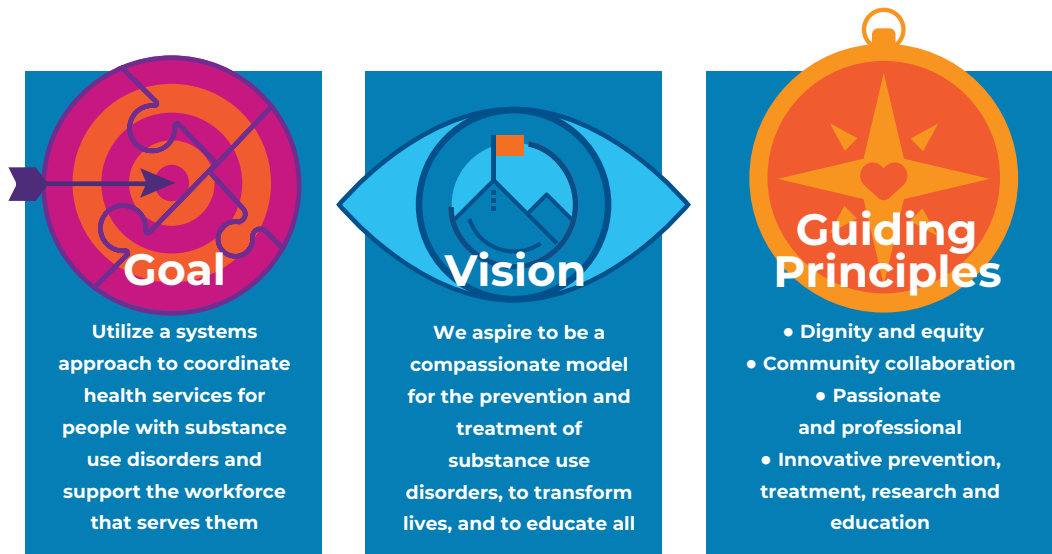




CENTER FOR ADDICTION MEDICINE (CAM)

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**At the Center for Addiction Medicine,
every door is an opportunity.
Doors open to hope.
Doors lead to new beginnings.
There are no wrong doors.**

To meet people where they are with the care they need, the Center for Addiction Medicine created a **Hub and Spoke Model** of care that ensures there is no wrong door to seek substance use treatment and support at Denver Health.

Center for Addiction Medicine Hub & Spoke Model

- Identification/Diagnosis
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Induction
- Outpatient Behavioral Health Services Intake
- Referral
- Treatment
- MAT Maintenance

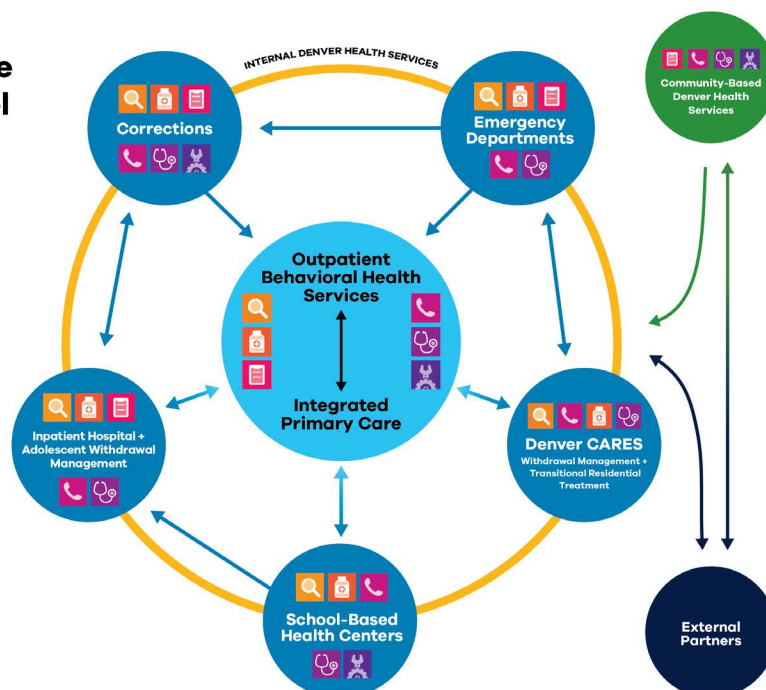


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HELLO FROM CAM'S DIRECTORS

We're excited to share that in 2024, the Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) successfully completed its first five-year strategic plan (2019-2024). During this time, we:

- Built infrastructure for a learning health system model to coordinate, evaluate, improve and support the full continuum of care of Denver Health's clinical substance treatment services.
- Grew from one full-time staff person to six dedicated full-time staff and several part-time and volunteer staff.
- Launched a brand-new CAM Academy to share our learnings and best practices with others throughout the region.

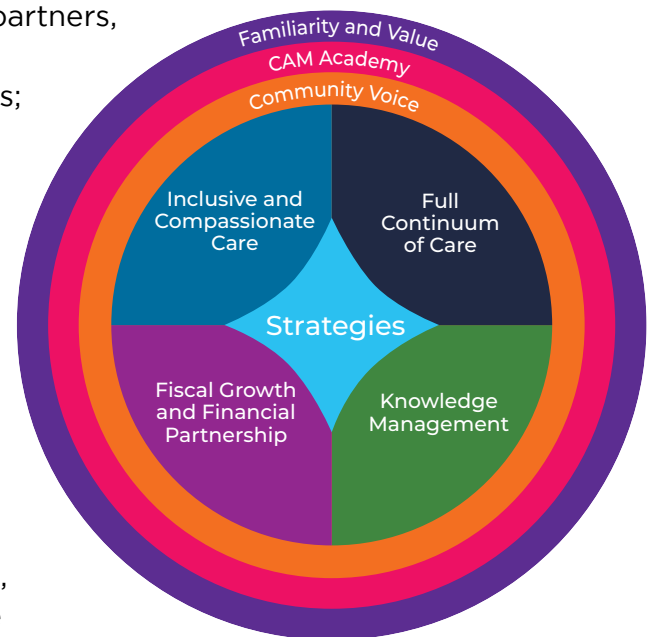
This growth and success are due to support from our partners, philanthropic donors, local and state grants, and the innovation and perseverance of all our CAM Champions; for this, we thank you!

Over the last year, we also underwent a comprehensive strategic planning process to guide our way forward for the next five years (2025-2029).

We would like to give a HUGE shout out to Allison Barth, from the Denver Health Lean Team that facilitated this year-long effort. Internal and external partners informed this strategy work, including people with lived experience of substance use disorders, to help us understand the current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and define a strategic way forward for the CAM that aligns with Denver Health's overall strategy.

We are excited to share this new strategy with all of you and look forward to ongoing growth and collaboration over the next five years.

If you have received our previous annual reports, you will notice this one looks different! We decided to revise the structure to share more details about each strategy that CAM focuses on. Before we dive into the strategies, we want to share some high-level achievements of CAM and Denver Health's clinical substance treatment services for 2024.



JUDITH C. SHLAY, MD, MSPH
Associate Director, Public Health
Institute at Denver Health;
Medical Director, Center For
Addiction Medicine



BROOKE BENDER, MPH
Administrative Director,
Center For Addiction
Medicine

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) completed its first five-year strategic plan (2019-2024) while developing a new strategic vision for 2025-2029. Key achievements included:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Building a learning health system model for coordinating substance treatment services
- **Staff Growth:** Expanding from one full-time staff person to six dedicated full-time staff plus part-time and volunteer contributors
- **CAM Academy Launch:** Establishing a dedicated training center to share best practices regionally
- **Strategic Planning:** Completing a comprehensive, community-informed strategic planning process for 2025-2029
- **System-Wide Impact:** Coordinating care across Denver Health departments to create seamless substance use treatment experiences

CAM's six key strategy areas each made important contributions to advancing CAM's mission in 2024

Across our six strategy areas, we have created meaningful progress in how substance use disorders (SUD) are understood, treated and supported throughout Denver Health and beyond.

Inclusive and Compassionate Care

1,000+ staff were reached via our Words Matter Anti-Stigma presentations in 2024. An evaluation of our Words Matter initiative objectives demonstrated a 34% decrease in stigmatizing terms within the electronic medical record following implementation of the Words matter campaign.

Full Continuum of Care

Nearly 200 SUD referrals were made across the Denver Health system utilizing our SUD Treatment Referral in the electronic health record system. With our hub and spoke model of care, patients have the opportunity to be referred to SUD treatment services wherever they enter the Denver Health system, get linked to the right level of care, and retained in treatment.

Fiscal Growth and Financial Partnership

In 2024, CAM secured three new grants to sustain and expand efforts that enhance the care provided to patients with SUD at Denver Health and throughout the state.

Knowledge Management

Across the Denver Health system, there is a large demand for data and analytics related to SUD. Our Knowledge Management team received close to 80 data requests in 2024 and spent 275 hours fulfilling those data requests. Approximately 90% of the staff who accessed these data and informatics services were satisfied with the tools and support they received.

CAM Academy

Thanks to CAM Academy's commitment to improving care for people with SUD, over 2,600 health care staff and community members better understand the science of trauma and addiction, which enables them to wholistically serve people with SUD in a supportive way.

Community Voice

CAM's Community Voice efforts reached 78 unique individuals with lived SUD experience, who provided a total of 500 hours throughout the year to inform CAM programming. Nearly 100% of survey responses indicate that the programs and services offered by the CAM are reflective of the experiences and needs of the communities we serve.



CAM's impact through research, knowledge sharing and community awareness

Research and Knowledge Sharing

CAM's SUD hub and spoke model of care identified nearly 21,000 individuals with substance use disorder across our system for upwards of 70,000 substance-related visits in 2024. Upon examining persons identified, half were between the ages of 25-44 years. Additionally, most patients were males (63%), over half were persons of color (55%), most were insured with Medicaid (58%), and one quarter (25%) were persons that experienced homelessness in 2024.

- 9 Denver Health SUD abstracts/conferences ([see appendix 1](#))
- 18 [Published Manuscripts](#)
- 27 Denver Health new SUD projects
- \$7.7M in Denver Health SUD grants ([see appendix 2](#))
- 53 CAM Awards (recognizing staff excellence)

Community Awareness

- [CAM Academy Video Tour](#)
- [2024 Overdose Awareness Video](#)
- Media Impact: 157 news stories about CAM's work reaching 129.3 million people



**The following highlights
efforts of the **six strategic**
areas that supported CAM
throughout 2024**

STRATEGY 1: INCLUSIVE AND COMPASSIONATE CARE

Purpose: Ensuring inclusive and compassionate care where all health care professionals treat patients with SUD with respect and dignity and improve patient outcomes.

LOOKING BACK ON 2024

Initiatives:

- Engaged clinical champions from across the Denver Health system to inform anti-stigma work
- Developed and implemented Words Matter public awareness campaign
- Trained media to reduce stigmatizing language
- Integrated Words Matter content in other CAM Academy trainings/standardized workshops
- Identified ICD-10 codes that include stigmatizing language to consider revising in electronic health record

Outcomes:

1,072

unique people reached, resulting in 682 staff pledging to use less stigmatizing language

-
- 21 unique internal marketing efforts completed
 - 5 Words Matter presentations given
 - 2 media outlets trained on Words Matter

2024 SPOTLIGHT



CAM Academy's Words Matter campaign works to reduce stigmatizing language in medical records

After a system-wide analysis of notes in the electronic health record at Denver Health found that 13.5% of patients had a stigmatizing term present in their medical record, CAM Academy launched an education campaign to align the entire organization around why clinically accurate, person-first language is a fundamental aspect of promoting empathy and respect in health care communications.

[Read more in our 2024 spotlight story](#) and visit the [Words Matter webpage](#) to learn more and take the Words Matter pledge.

Impact:

An evaluation of the Words Matter Initiative objectives demonstrated a 34% decreased presence of stigmatizing terms in 2024 following implementation of the Words matter campaign.

THE LEADERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

Judy Shlay (she/her/hers) is the Associate Director of the Public Health Institute at Denver Health, Medical Director of CAM, and Professor of Family Medicine. With over 35 years in public health, she ensures CAM's work is operationalized across Denver Health and shared regionally. She co-leads the Inclusive and Compassionate Care workgroup focusing on ensuring that all persons with SUD are treated with dignity.



Hannan Braun (he/him/she/her) is a primary care internist and addiction medicine physician specializing in low-barrier treatment, HIV prevention and treatment for people who use drugs, harm reduction, and LGBTQ+ health. He collaborates on initiatives promoting inclusive care throughout Denver Health.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025:

- Evaluate the Words Matter awareness campaign by using a time series analysis to examine the prevalence of stigmatizing language throughout the Words Matter initiative and submit for publication
- Finalize and disseminate ICD-10 guide for diagnosing SUD using non-stigmatizing terms in the electronic medical record
- Work with the CAM Academy to develop and disseminate the Images Matter awareness campaign to media outlets
- Update Language Guide with evolving expert opinion and clinical guidelines
- Develop Spanish SUD Language Guide to increase access of anti-stigma resources
- Develop research question to evaluate equity within addiction medicine treatment at Denver Health

STRATEGY 2: FULL CONTINUUM OF CARE

Purpose: Strengthening the continuum of care for people with SUD throughout the Denver Health system and beyond. Ensuring that patients receive the right level of care for their individual needs.

LOOKING BACK ON 2024

Initiatives:

- Implemented system-wide survey to understand need for quality improvement integration meetings between departments
- Established new Integration Meeting structure and hosted monthly to quarterly meetings
- Integrated data from Knowledge Management Team to inform quality improvement efforts and inform process changes
- Documented, updated and shared finalized standardized workflows
- Implemented monthly Addiction Education Collaborative for awareness building, collaboration and educational purposes across the system and the community
- Expanded referral tools for system-wide ease in referring patients to SUD treatment

Outcomes:

- 43% of SUD referrals from the Substance Treatment Line result in a completed intake/visit (n=176)
- 30 integration meetings held for quality improvement
- 4 new standardized workflows for specialty populations that were implemented
- 191 SUD referrals triaged from across the Denver Health system

2024 SPOTLIGHT



Transforming perinatal care to help save lives

Pregnancy-associated deaths due to drug-related causes have increased by 191% over the past decade. The majority of these deaths are preventable with proper screening and treatment for substance and opioid use disorders during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

To help reduce preventable deaths, CAM helped transform Denver Health's OB PEAR (Perinatal Addiction and Recovery) program from a single-provider service into a comprehensive system spanning 15 clinics and multiple inpatient units.

[Read more about the transformation here.](#)

Impact:

Patients can be referred to SUD treatment services wherever they enter the Denver Health system, be linked to the right level of care, and retained in treatment.

THE LEADERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

Holly Witt (she/her/hers) began her Denver Health career in 2012 and now supervises behavioral health services in the Denver jails and oversees the Jail to Community MAT program. Driven by her commitment to serving vulnerable populations, she joined CAM in 2022 and provides technical assistance to correctional facilities through the CO-MAT Project.



Mindy Paddock (she/her/hers) is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Licensed Addiction Counselor with Outpatient Behavioral Health Services. With 25 years in behavioral health and 4.5 years at Denver Health, she brings expertise in compliance, quality assurance and integrated care to the Continuum of Care leadership.



Daniella Rocha (she/her/hers) is a substance treatment consultant specializing in mental health and addiction. She has a passion for breaking down stigma, working with underserved communities and advocacy. As a primary care representative within CAM, she ensures strong connections between departments to streamline services.



Sarah Christensen (she/they) is the Medical Director of Outpatient SUD Treatment with a background in Internal Medicine and Primary Care. With a passion for helping patients who use drugs and alcohol, she leads the Addiction Education Collaborative, bringing together professionals from across Denver Health and the metro area.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025:

- Continue hosting integration meetings for linkage to care quality improvement
- Develop and pilot evaluation plan to understand perceived effectiveness of standardized workflows by frontline staff
- Submit CAM Awards quarterly for workflow partners that have gone above and beyond

STRATEGY 3: FISCAL GROWTH AND FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Purpose: Enhancing internal and external revenue streams to ensure quality services are accessible far into the future.

LOOKING BACK ON 2024

Initiatives:

- Identified, applied, secured grant funding
- Managed existing philanthropy, grant and operational funds
- Reported to funders and partners

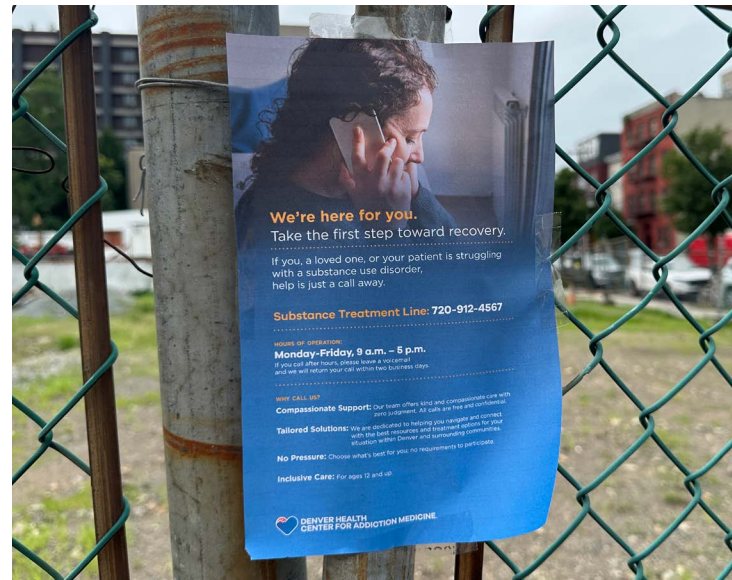
Outcomes:

- Denver Opioid Abatement Council funded 3-Year Substance Treatment Line Grant
- With our long-time partner, Sobriety House, established a new Caring for Denver sub-contract with CAM to do a one-year cost analysis of leasing Intensive Residential Treatment beds
- Colorado Attorney General's Office funded a two-year Statewide Innovation Opioid Abatement grant: Colorado Medication Assisted Treatment (CO-MAT)

Impact:

CAM services were able to be sustained and expanded to enhance the care provided to patients with SUD at Denver Health and throughout the state.

2024 SPOTLIGHT



Securing funding to meet people where they are with resources and treatment options

In 2024, CAM was awarded a 3-year grant from the Denver Opioid Abatement Council to expand Denver Health's Substance Treatment Line service from a voicemail line to a live phone line with a new, dedicated Substance Treatment Education team answering live calls.

Satisfaction with the new service has remained high. Below are a few quotes from callers:

"Thank you for helping me. I needed this so I can see my future."

"I wanted to start a program for treatment today and the information I received was very helpful."

"[Behavioral Health Educator] was kind and answered all my questions with patience and knowledge. I really appreciated the time and attention that I received on the call! Thank you."

[Read more about the Substance Treatment Line grant funding here.](#)

THE LEADER WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

Brooke Bender (she/her/hers) is the Administrative Director that co-leads the CAM and its Academy, focusing on strategy, implementation and sustainability. She also co-leads the PRIDE Employee Resource Group, advocating for LGBTQ+ staff. Brooke strives for justice, innovation and excellence through collaboration and reflection. Her favorite aspect of her job is hearing from community members about how CAM efforts benefit people with SUD.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025:

- Establish and implement a financial system with internal partners to better understand current state of funding and forecast future needs/expenses
- Explore opportunities for diverse philanthropic funds (endowment, unrestricted gifts, fundraising events, grants, etc.)

STRATEGY 4: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

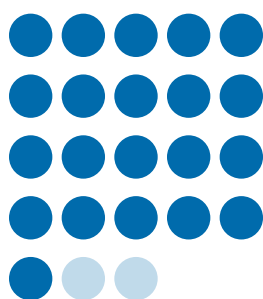
Purpose: Establishing a comprehensive data interface to support strategic, operational and managerial decisions, and research and evaluation.

LOOKING BACK ON 2024

Initiatives:

- Finalized full Continuum of Care Evaluation Models for Methamphetamine and Alcohol
- Shared linkage data for quality improvement meetings to inform process decision making
- Dissemination: data integration findings in peer-reviewed journal; several addiction-related conference abstracts
- Evaluated existing data tools and support provided through data requests
- Developed standardized data tables with quality assurance processes for ease in reporting
- Congregated data teams from across the system for shared learning and collaboration

Outcomes:



91% of Knowledge Management request survey respondents agree that the assigned analyst was responsive to questions and feedback (21/23)

- 275 hours spent on CAM-related data requests
- 79 CAM-related data requests
- 86% of Knowledge Management tool survey respondents say that the tool meets most or all of their needs (25/29)

2024 SPOTLIGHT



BEATMeth connects patients to life-saving treatment

In Colorado, methamphetamine is the second most implicated drug in overdose deaths and causes significant morbidity. People experiencing acute methamphetamine toxicity often present to care with methamphetamine-induced psychosis and may be combative and agitated. They can also present the most challenging situations for law enforcement, ambulance crews and emergency departments.

BEAT Meth seeks to better connect patients to the treatment they need, and preliminary analyses suggest those who received care navigation services (intervention) were twice as likely to link to treatment at 90 days.

[Read more in the Spotlight Stories section.](#)

Impact:

There is a large demand for data and analytics related to SUD and those who access these services are satisfied with the tools and support they receive.

THE LEADERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

Alexandra (Alex) Tillman (she/her/hers) is a Lead Epidemiologist who leads CAM's Knowledge Management Workgroup. She finds it rewarding to apply her analytic skills to projects that give voice through data to people with SUD. With nine years in public health research and an MS in Epidemiology, Alex has been with Denver Health since 2021.



Emily Bacon (she/her/hers) is a research consultant focused on health equity and population statistics who has worked with CAM for over three years. She specializes in using complex electronic health record data to answer important public health questions. In 2024, she led publication efforts describing CAM as a Learning Health System and enhanced substance use data infrastructure.



Alia Al-Tayyib (she/her/hers) is a Senior Research Scientist and Professor with interests at the intersection of infectious diseases and vulnerable populations. Her research addresses social determinants of risk and develops interventions to keep people engaged in care. She has led CAM's first two major research projects and been involved since CAM's inception.



Dean McEwen (he/him/his) is a Data Analytics Manager who was an original member of CAM. He developed the first continuum of care model for Opioid Use Disorder and brings over thirty years of experience in data science at Denver Health to support the Knowledge Management Workgroup.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025:

- Explore options and feasibility of clinician-facing data tools and a public-facing dashboard
- Share standardized data tables with other Denver Health analysts
- Disseminate data tool work and Continuum of Care models in peer-reviewed journals
- Implement quality assurance plan to stay apprised of new SUD data elements
- Continue engaging Denver Health researchers interested in SUD
- Explore opportunities and benefits for researchers to be affiliated with CAM

STRATEGY 5: CENTER FOR ADDICTION MEDICINE (CAM) ACADEMY

Purpose: CAM Academy exists to provide trauma-responsive addiction medicine education and technical assistance across the region.

LOOKING BACK ON 2024

Initiatives:

- Hosted grand opening of CAM Academy Training Center
- Developed new Addiction Medicine 101 Standardized Workshop
- Implemented new Colorado Opioid Abatement Innovation Challenge Grant
- Supported requests for support with adolescent substance use disorder (SUD) treatment training, canine-assisted treatment and Words Matter Campaign

Outcomes:

81 CAM Academy offerings (courses, presentations, speaker engagements)

2,604 participants reached during 2024

2nd [annual report](#) developed by the CAM Academy

Impact:

Over 2,600 health care staff and community members better understand the science of trauma and addiction, which enables them to wholistically serve people with SUD in a supportive way.

2024 SPOTLIGHT



CAM Academy launches Training Center with ribbon cutting and first training for media

“Denver Health has been a tireless champion for improving the condition of addiction medicine,” **U.S. Colorado Representative Diana DeGette**, who helped secure funding for the project, said at the ribbon cutting. “This center will be a model for the entire country.”

[Read more](#) in the Spotlight Stories section.

THE LEADERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

Josh Blum (he/him/his) has treated clients with SUD at Denver Health for several years and retired in 2024. He loves hearing each patient's unique story and is driven by the belief that no individual is beyond hope or redemption. Josh is devoted to provider education and grateful to work alongside committed colleagues.



Helen Burnside (she/her/hers) provides programmatic oversight of the Denver Prevention Training Center's training programs and co-leads the CAM Academy. Helen joined CAM in 2023 and is committed to advancing equity in health systems. She creates brave spaces for communities and providers to plan prevention strategies.



John Mills (he/him/his) leads the development of CAM Academy service lines including education, technical assistance and tailored presentations. John excels at weaving together ideas, partners and systems into cohesive deliverables. His commitment to equity drives his ability to connect with health care professionals across disciplines.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025:

- Establish a grant fiscal growth plan and marketing plan for surrounding regions with highest level of priority for addiction medicine training services
- Create new educational offerings (e.g., standardized courses, resources and/or responsive strategy for SUD emerging issues)
- Provide technical assistance and capacity building to other health care systems interested in implementing similar efforts

STRATEGY 6: COMMUNITY VOICE

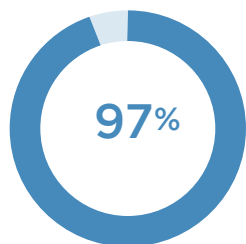
Purpose: Ensuring all CAM efforts start and end with the community we serve.

LOOKING BACK ON 2024

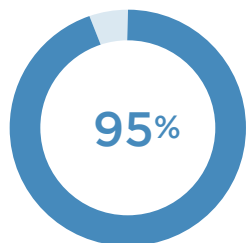
Initiatives:

- Continued to host monthly CAM Community Advisory Meetings (CAM CAM)
- Broadly solicited topics for Community Voice input and met all requests for community input/feedback
- Continued sharing all community feedback with CAM Leadership and program partners
- Continued closing the loop with community members on what was heard and how their feedback was implemented
- Continued surveying internal partners to assess satisfaction and impact of Community Voice process
- Hosted an end-of-year celebration to thank participants and recognize the hours they have contributed

Outcomes:



participants indicated that the programs and services offered by the CAM were reflective of their experiences and needs



of participants indicated that the CAM valued their expertise

2024 SPOTLIGHT



CAM CAM members inform Substance Treatment Line marketing campaign with lived experience

In May 2024, the CAM CAM informed a \$23,000+ marketing and communications plan to create awareness for the newly funded grant to expand Denver Health's Substance Treatment Line.

The CAM CAM provided invaluable information on how to market and communicate the Substance Treatment Line for the intended audience of people in the community who might be seeking substance use treatment.

"Courage to call, strength to recover," and **"Recovery starts with this call,"** were two key taglines developed by the CAM CAM that helped promote the campaign.

[Learn more about the CAM CAM's efforts here.](#)

- 78 individuals engaged with our monthly CAM CAM
- 500 service hours were given by CAM CAM members to inform and improve Denver Health's substance use-related initiatives
- 100% of internal partners that sought input from the CAM CAM indicated that they had made decisions about a new program, made meaningful changes to current service delivery, and/or were able to affirm current direction based on the input received

Impact:

The programs and services offered by the CAM are reflective of the experiences and needs of the communities we serve.

THE LEADER WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE:

Sarah Belstock (she/her/hers) has 20 years of experience developing and evaluating public health strategies for diverse communities, with an emphasis on behavioral health promotion. As Director of Community Health Promotion at Denver Health, she leads community and youth engagement strategies to support partnerships with individuals with lived experience and ensures CAM's work starts and ends with the communities we serve.



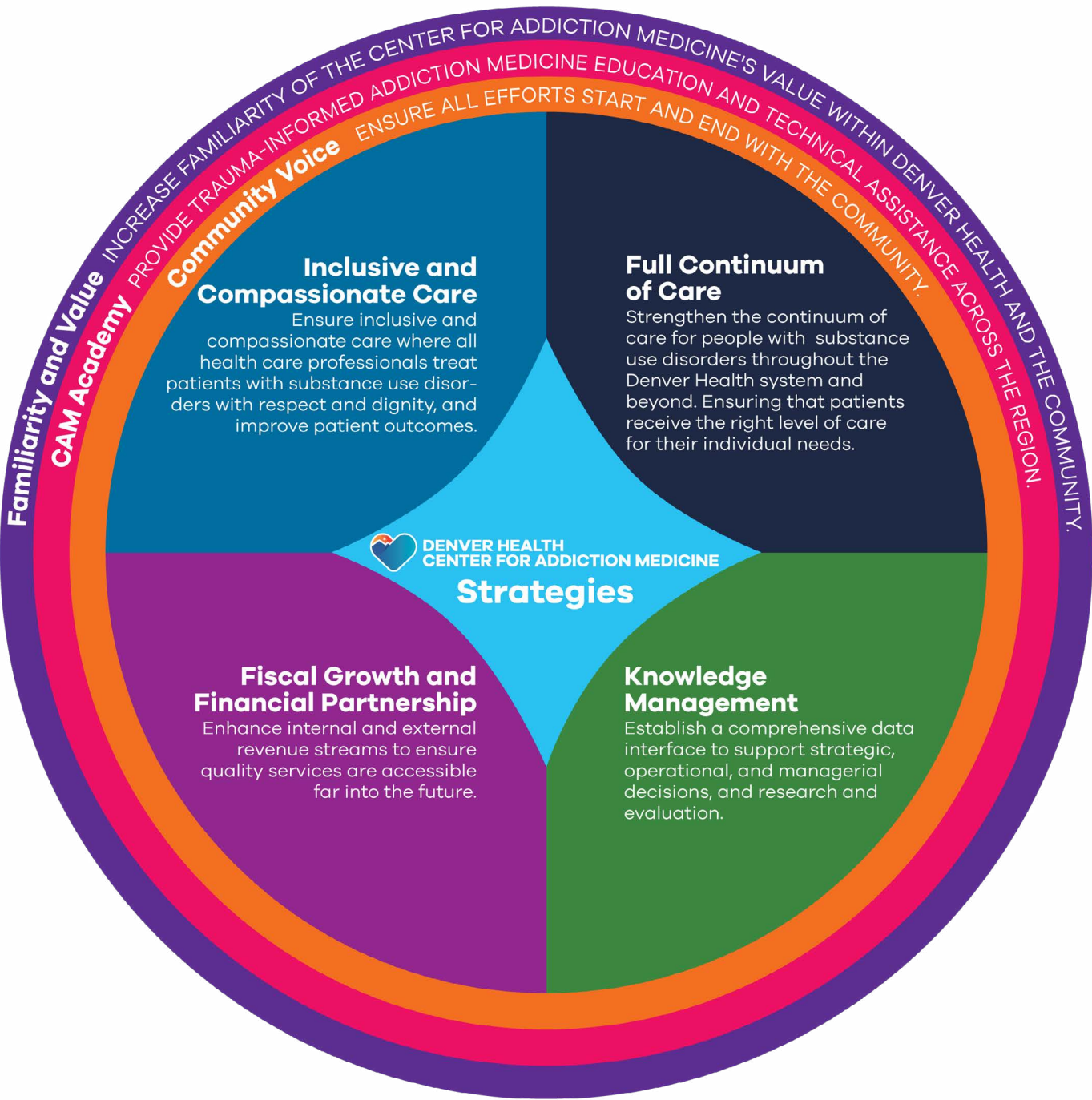
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025:

- Continue 2024 efforts engaging community members with lived experience
- Ensure community voice processes support all CAM strategy efforts
- Develop infrastructure for the Community Voice Service Line
- Develop a marketing plan for promoting the Community Voice Service Line to regional partners

LOOKING FORWARD: STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2025-2029

Strategy Update

All of the strategies from 2024 will be continued over the next five-year period, with new outcomes and tactics identified. The CAM Leadership Team added one additional strategy, **Familiarity and Value**, to increase familiarity of the CAM's value within Denver Health and the community.



CAM 2025-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

As we move into our next five-year strategic plan, CAM is positioned to build on our strong foundation while addressing emerging needs in addiction medicine. Our 2025-2029 strategic plan offers exciting opportunities for partners, funders and community members to engage with our work in meaningful ways.

Inclusive and Compassionate Care

Key Initiatives:

- Develop an effective model for reducing substance use stigma across Denver Health and the broader community
- Create a model to evaluate equity within addiction medicine treatment at Denver Health

Fiscal Growth and Financial Partnership

Key Initiatives:

- Be financially sustainable to continue and/or grow necessary services

CAM Academy

Key Initiatives:

- Grow annual revenue from courses, technical assistance, and other tailored strategies
- Develop evidence-based and responsive courses and resources to meet the needs of providers and the community

Familiarity and Value

Key Initiatives:

- Strengthen familiarity and recognition of CAM's value internally and externally

Full Continuum of Care

Key Initiatives:

- Ensure collaborative transitions between programs and people

Knowledge Management

Key Initiatives:

- Be a leader in innovative and sophisticated Substance Use Disorder (SUD) data
- Be a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) research hub

Community Voice

Key Initiatives:

- Establish CAM Community Voice as a standard of practice at Denver Health
- Develop a CAM Community Voice Service Line



**The following shares
detailed **spotlight stories**
showcasing CAM's
2024 efforts**

CAM Academy's Words Matter campaign works to reduce stigmatizing language in medical records

The Inclusive and Compassionate Care Workgroup, in collaboration with the CAM Academy and CAM's Knowledge Management Workgroup, launched the "Words Matter" initiative between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. Guided by research, health system data, and CAM's Community Advisory Group input, the CAM Academy developed a 20-minute employee-targeted presentation, resource materials, a systemwide pledge to use non-judgmental language, and a marketing campaign.

Pre-campaign, we found that 2.8% (65,766/2,365,592) of all notes in the electronic health record contained

a stigmatizing term, and 13.5% (28,436/210,062) of unique patients had a stigmatizing term present in their record. Of patients with a known SUD, 49.7% (6,586/13,250) of patients had a stigmatizing term in their notes.

Clinically accurate, person-first language is a fundamental aspect of promoting empathy and respect in our communication. It places the person before their condition, emphasizing their identity over their diagnosis.

Visit the [Words Matter webpage](#) to learn more about this initiative and take the Words Matter pledge.



An evaluation of the Words Matter Initiative objectives demonstrated a 34% decreased presence of stigmatizing terms in 2024 following implementation of the Words matter campaign.

Transforming perinatal care to help save lives

Over the past decade, **pregnancy-related deaths tied to drug use have increased by 190%**—a heartbreaking and preventable trend. Many of these deaths occur during or after pregnancy, making it clear: **we must do more to screen, treat and support pregnant and postpartum people struggling with substance use.**

Recognizing this urgent need, Denver Health launched an expanded OB PEAR (Perinatal Addiction and Recovery) program in 2024, with vital leadership and support from the CAM. Together with partners like Maternal Overdose Matters Plus (MOMs+) and the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative (CPCQC), the OB PEAR program is reshaping how substance use disorder (SUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD) are addressed in perinatal care.



A System-Wide Shift in Care

What began as a small program with a single provider has now grown into a **comprehensive, system-wide model** that spans:

- **15 outpatient prenatal clinics**
- Inpatient areas including labor and delivery, postpartum, and triage units

Thanks to CAM's guidance, OB PEAR is now a fully integrated, multidisciplinary program that connects obstetric care with behavioral health, addiction treatment, peer support and social services. Patients can be scheduled for visits with both their OB provider and a behavioral health counselor—**in the same clinic, at the same time**—removing barriers to care.

How CAM Made It Possible

CAM's expertise was essential in transforming OB PEAR into what it is today. The team:

- **Standardized care workflows** that work across a variety of clinical settings
- Built a **hub-and-spoke model**, with CAM as the central hub coordinating knowledge, training and resources

- Created clear communication channels between OB providers and addiction specialists
- Launched a **centralized referral system** that makes it easier for patients to access the right care quickly
- Led targeted training on addiction medicine, stigma reduction and trauma-informed care for OB teams
- Established a **consultation service** (via Secure Chat) to help providers manage complex cases in real time

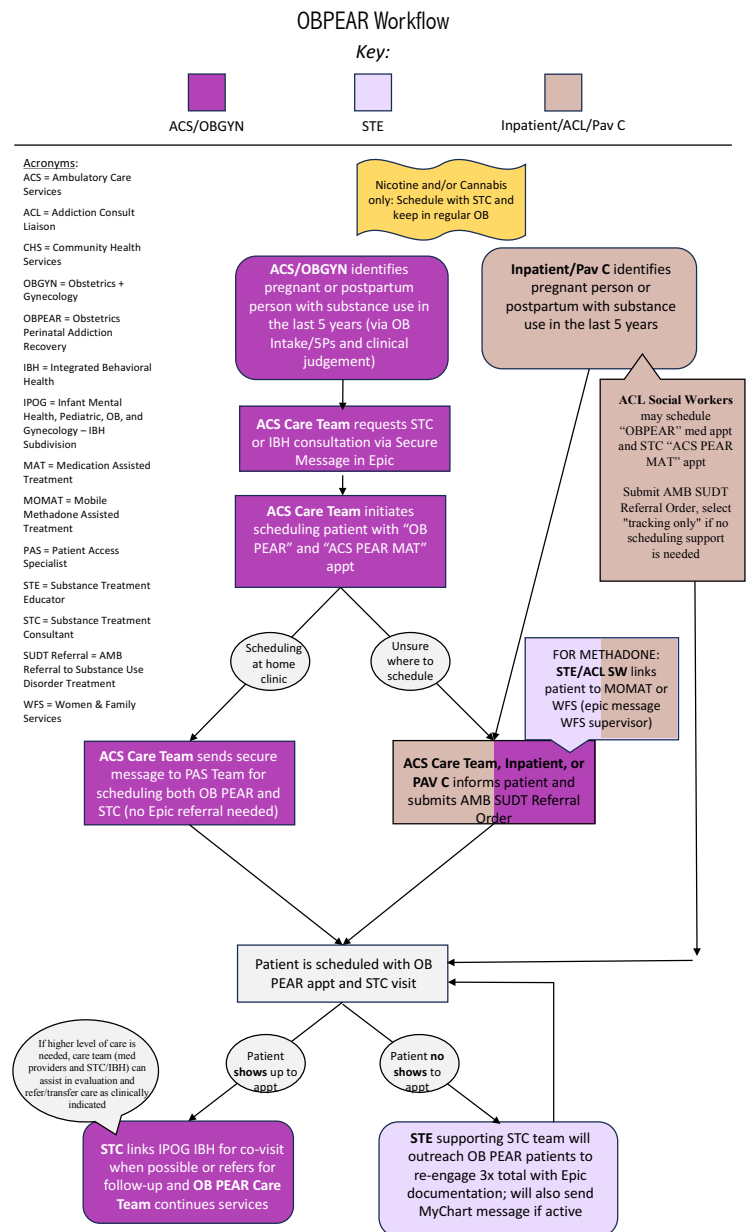
CAM also played a key role in connecting the dots between existing—but often siloed—resources across the Denver Health system, helping ensure that OB PEAR patients receive **comprehensive, coordinated care**.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Next year, CAM will continue to support OB PEAR in reaching new milestones. Priorities include:

- Real-time **dashboards** to track key outcomes
- Regular **case reviews** to spot opportunities for improvement
- Stronger **feedback loops** to continuously refine the program
- Deeper **community partnerships** to address social needs and prevent relapse in the postpartum period

Thanks to CAM's leadership, the OB PEAR program is no longer a limited intervention—it's a bold, innovative national model for integrating addiction treatment into perinatal care. And it's already making a difference for Denver Health patients, staff and the broader community.



New Grant to Expand Substance Treatment Line Program

The Substance Treatment Line is a free, confidential phone service operated by Denver Health and is available to anyone seeking treatment or recovery support for a SUD. Callers may be individuals calling for themselves, friends/family calling on behalf of a loved one, or a professional or provider calling on behalf of a patient. Callers receive support to navigate and narrow down their substance treatment options based on their needs and situation and receive guidance on next steps and how to connect to care.

In 2024, the Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) was awarded a 3-year grant from the Denver Opioid Abatement Council to expand this service from a voicemail line to a live line with a new, dedicated Substance Treatment Education team with a Program Manager and three Behavioral Health Educators answering live calls, Mon-Fri, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., to better meet the needs of the community. In addition, this funding allowed the Substance Treatment Line to market these services to professionals.



We're here for you.
Take the first step toward recovery.

If you, a loved one, or your patient is struggling with a substance use disorder, help is just a call away.

Substance Treatment Line: 720-912-4567

HOURS OF OPERATION:
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
If you call after hours, please leave a voicemail and we will return your call within two business days.

WHY CALL US?
Compassionate Support: Our team offers kind and compassionate care with zero judgment. All calls are free and confidential.
Tailored Solutions: We are dedicated to helping you navigate and connect with the best resources and treatment options for your situation within Denver and surrounding communities.
No Pressure: Choose what's best for you; no requirements to participate.
Inclusive Care: For ages 12 and up.

 **DENVER HEALTH
CENTER FOR ADDICTION MEDICINE**

In addition to hiring the team and implementing a live line, many other developments were completed in 2024 to support this expansion and success of the service, including:

- Worked with the CAM Knowledge Management Team to create a database to enter call details and a dashboard to organize data and outcomes
- Collaborated with the Denver Health Marketing Team to spread awareness of the Substance Treatment Line through media and advertising opportunities
- Outreached and provided business cards, posters and brief presentations of the Substance Treatment Line to 28+ internal Denver Health teams and 17+ external programs and hospitals, focusing on priority geographic areas based on overdose data

- Added additional substance treatment programs and resources to the CAM Resource Inventory to continue to grow this reference tool, and created a quality assurance standard of work to keep it updated.
- Completed an analysis and quality improvement meeting to identify areas needing change
- Created a satisfaction survey to receive feedback from callers about their experience using the Substance Treatment Line, offering gift cards as an incentive to those who complete the survey

Substance Treatment Line Results:

The Substance Treatment Line (STL) received **724** calls in 2024. After marketing efforts took place and additional behavioral health educators were hired in mid-2024:

- The STL experienced an **84%** increase in call volume from January-June (**255 calls**) to July-December (**469 calls**).
- About **2/3** of callers are community members or patients calling for themselves, with **1 in every 2** of these callers primarily using opioids.
- Throughout the year, **40% (n=292)** of calls resulted in the placement of an internal (**25%**) or external (**15%**) referral to care, and **26% (n=189)** of calls resulted in substance use treatment information being provided to the caller.
- Of calls where an internal referral to care was placed, **43% (n=176)** linked to care.

Satisfaction surveys have had consistently high ratings. Most non-clinician callers (≥95%) and all clinician callers agreed/strongly agreed that the Substance Treatment Line was a reliable resource for education, resources and referrals for SUD treatment. All respondents were satisfied with their experiences, agreeing that calls were answered in a timely manner, staff were able to assist them with the purpose of their call and answer their questions, and that they felt supported. Below are a few quotes from callers:

“[Behavioral Health Educator] was kind and answered all my questions with patience and knowledge. I really appreciated the time and attention that I received on the call! Thank you.” -Caller

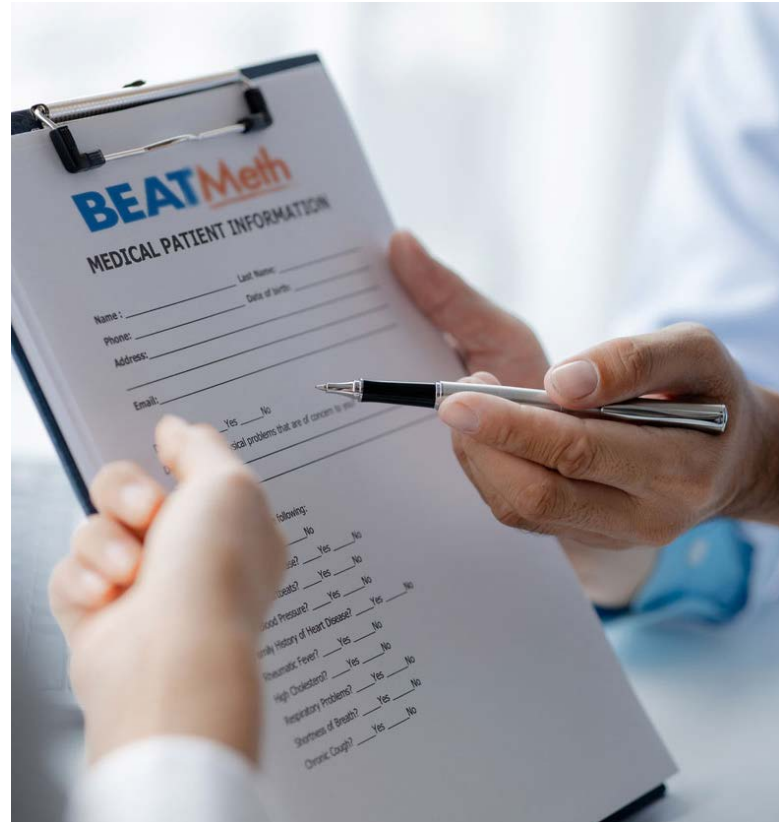
“I wanted to start a program for treatment today and the information I received was very helpful.” -Caller

“Thank you for helping me. I needed this so I can see my future.” -Caller

BEATMeth connects patients to life-saving treatment

In Colorado, methamphetamine is the second most implicated drug in overdose deaths and causes significant morbidity. People experiencing acute methamphetamine toxicity often present to care with methamphetamine-induced psychosis and may be combative and agitated. They can also present the most challenging situations for law enforcement, ambulance crews and emergency departments.

In 2021, Denver Health received a \$2.2 million research grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to fund the Beginning Early and Assertive Treatment for Methamphetamine Use Disorder (BEAT Meth) project. The overall goal of BEAT Meth is to develop standard work to identify, stabilize and connect patients to treatment.



As part of BEAT Meth, we conducted a randomized control trial to assess the effectiveness of a strengths-based, trauma-informed, client-driven care navigation intervention that incorporates principles of contingency management to incentivize engagement with the care navigator.

Between April 2023 and September 2024, adult patients with methamphetamine-related acute care encounters were recruited and enrolled into the BEAT Meth study. Patients were excluded if they were on involuntary treatment holds, had been in substance treatment in the past 90 days, or were actively seeking treatment.

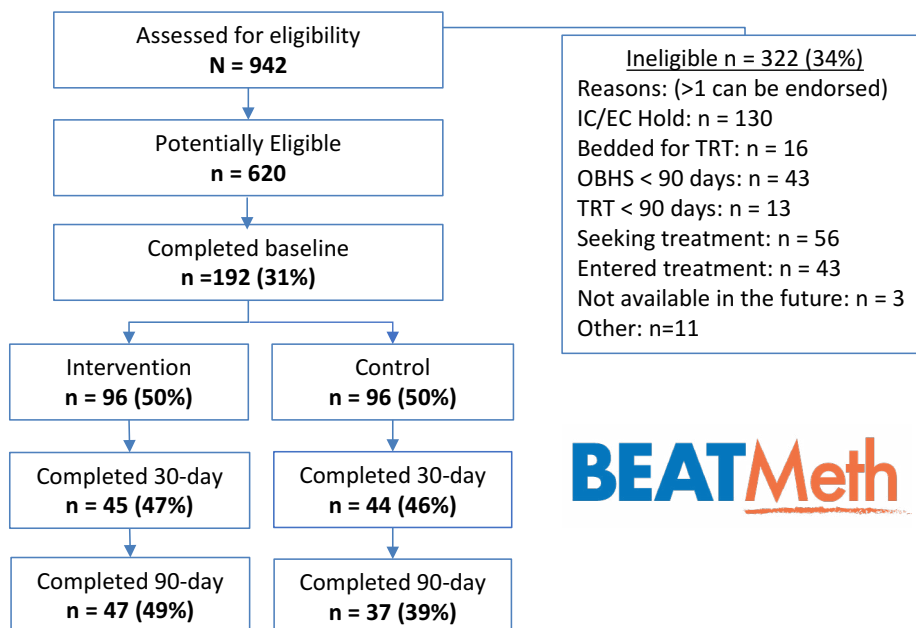
Eligible participants completed a baseline survey and were randomized to usual care or a client-driven, needs-based, trauma-informed care navigation intervention that incorporated principles of contingency management. Intervention included an initial needs assessment with the care navigator, weekly follow-up, and delivery of identified social supports including transportation, shelter assistance and primary care navigation. Participants completed interviewer-administered surveys at baseline, 30-day and 90-day follow-ups. Primary outcomes are linkage to treatment within 30 and 90 days.

Of 622 potentially eligible patients, 192 enrolled in the study:

- 81% were male
- Mean age 40 (SD=10.6)
- 43% White, non-Hispanic
- The majority (85%) were not stably housed, and half did not have access to a working phone
- A little over half (54%) reported ever participating in a program to treat a SUD
- Intervention participants (n=96) received an average of 3 (range 1-13) care navigation sessions, with 52% receiving at least one session
- Common interventions included discussion of treatment options with 71% of participants, housing assistance (30%), medical care coordination (29%); 31 participants received study phones

Preliminary analyses suggest those who received care navigation services (intervention) were twice as likely to link to treatment at 90 days. Analyses will continue in 2025. With the RCT complete, we are moving into data analysis and dissemination. One of our main goals is to integrate our BEAT Meth findings into clinical practice through continued trainings, updating clinical processes, and integration with new clinical programs at Denver Health.

CONSORT: April 11, 2023 – December 31, 2024



CAM Academy launches Training Center with ribbon cutting and first training



Denver Health's Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) Academy introduced its new training facility at 77 W. 5th Ave. in May of 2024, marking a significant milestone in advancing addiction medicine education and training. U.S. State Rep., Diana DeGette, who helped secure funding for the project, cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the building. "Denver Health has been a tireless champion for improving the condition of addiction medicine," DeGette said. "This center will be a model for the entire country."

**THE POWER OF
DENVER HEALTH
ISN'T BUILDINGS; ITS
POWER IS ITS PEOPLE.**

–Josh Blum, MD



During our ribbon cutting ceremony, Denver Health CEO Donna Lynne, CAM Administrative Director Brooke Bender, and Josh Blum, MD, Medical Director of CAM Academy and Outpatient Behavioral Health Services at Denver Health also gave inspirational remarks.

Adding a touch of creativity and inspiration, the ceremony featured artwork by Myra Nagy, an artist in recovery and CAM Community Advisory Meeting member. Nagy's art enhances the space dedicated to providing training and technical assistance on comprehensive trauma-responsive SUD treatment for Colorado and surrounding regions.

The CAM Academy training facility now houses seven full-time staff members, including CAM and its Academy administrative and training staff in addition to the Behavioral Health research and evaluation team. This space was uniquely designed to not only support our CAM Academy staff, but all our internal and external partners as well.



Since its opening, the training facility has hosted internal and external teams, including Outpatient Behavioral Health Services, Denver Prevention Training Center, Doula Training Program, Nurse Family Partnerships, CAM Community Advisory Meetings and the Colorado Consortium to name a few.

If you are interested in visiting our space and/or experiencing our CAM Academy offerings, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at CAMAcademy@dhha.org.

Thank you to all the teams and individuals who helped make this facility a reality. You can learn more about CAM Academy and how to register for classes [here](#).

CAM Substance Treatment Line Marketing Input

In May 2024, the CAM Community Advisory Meeting (CAM CAM) informed a \$23,000+ marketing and communications plan to create awareness for the newly funded grant to expand Denver Health's Substance Treatment Line.

A total of 33 individuals participated in the Community Advisory Meeting (n=26) or 1:1 interviews (n=7).

Lived Experience

- 91% (n=30) of participants indicated they have personal experience with SUD and/or accessing treatment for SUD.
- 42% (n=14) of participants indicated that one or more of their family members has had personal experience with SUD and/or accessing treatment for SUD.



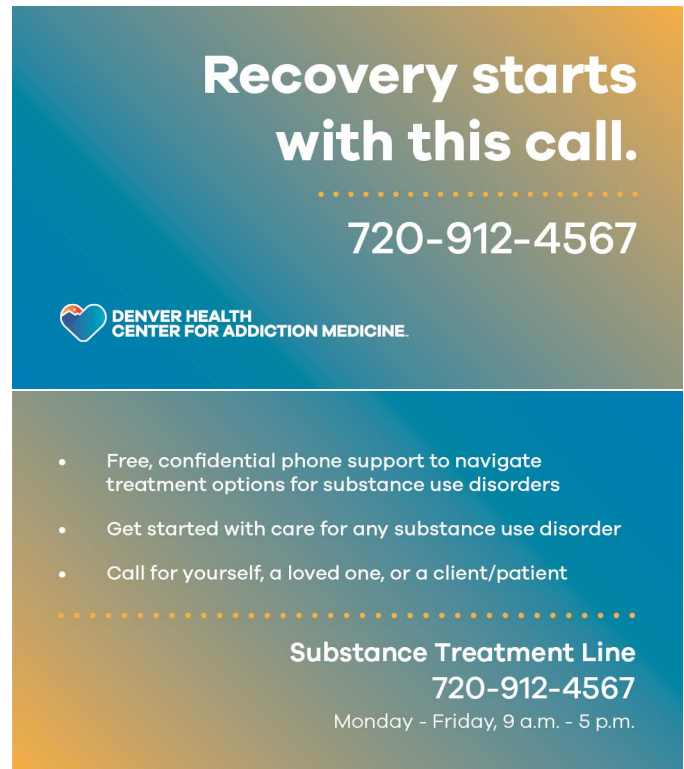
Experience with Denver Health

- 52% (n=17) of participants are currently receiving services at Denver Health
- 21% (n=7) of participants have received services at Denver Health in the past
- 30% (n=10) of participants have received Behavioral Health services at Denver Health
- 48% (n=16) of participants have received Emergency Department services at Denver Health
- 42% (n=14) of participants have received Primary Care services at Denver Health
- 18% (n=6) of participants have received services at Denver CARES
- 9% (n=3) of participants have received Specialty Care services at Denver Health

The CAM CAM provided invaluable information on how to market and communicate the Substance Treatment Line for the intended audience of people in the community who might be seeking substance use treatment. Insights included:

- Which specific search terms would be used when a community member is seeking treatment –informed marketing team on how to sponsor ads

- Design of marketing materials (posters, website, business cards, advertisements, etc.) to be warm, welcoming, informative, and best targeted to the intended audience
- Ensure clarity that all calls are “free and confidential” offering “compassionate support”
- Identified the following taglines for various communication methods:
 - **“Courage to call, strength to recover.”** – Used on Overdose Awareness Day T-shirts, which highlights the Substance Treatment Line
 - **“Recovery starts with this call.”** – Used on Substance Treatment Line business cards and on the Substance Treatment Line website banner
 - **“We’re here for you.”** – Used on the posters and on other digital display ads online



The CAM Community Voice Team took this input to Denver Health’s marketing team to implement a community-driven comprehensive communication plan that resulted in:

- 2,755 website visits
- 144 calls to the substance treatment line that were attributed to marketing efforts informed by community members

The success of this project was due in a large part to the community with lived experience telling us how best to communicate to the intended audience. In order to thank these experts of their time, the CAM Community Voice Team provided lunch, travel, compensation and shared back with the CAM CAM participants how their input informed the overall plan that was executed.

Appendix 1:

2024 Addiction-Related Abstracts

The goal of the Center for Addiction Medicine's Knowledge Management Workgroup is to enhance information systems to systematically improve processes, generate new knowledge, and drive organizational outcomes. A total of 9 Denver Health addiction-related abstracts were presented at professional conferences from January through December 2024.

DATE	CONFERENCE	ABSTRACT TITLE	AUTHOR(S)
3/4/2024	Conference on Retroviruses and Infectious Diseases	Navigation is Superior to Clinician Referral for Linkage to HCV Care from the Emergency Department	Rowan, S., Haukoos, J., Kamis, K., Hopkins, E., Minturn, M., Higgins, D., Becerra-Ashby, E., Gravitz, S., Lyle, C., McGoe, R., Bellamy, M., Al-Tayyib, A., Gardner, E., Wyles, D.
3/20/2024	2024 Joint Meeting on Youth Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery	Improving Access through a Harm Reduction and Incentive-Based Approach	Chen, E., Seely, H.
4/5/2024	American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)	Impact of Addiction Consult Social Workers on Hospital Readmission Rates	Rotello, H., Tillman, A., Terasaki, D., Lyden, J.
4/6/2024	American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)	Comparison of Opioid and Alcohol Use Disorders in an Urban Health System	Tillman, A., Bacon, E., Burman, B.
4/8/2024	American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)	We've been doing it wrong! Improving methadone restarts in the fentanyl era	Blum, J., Tillman, A., Hurley, H., Braun, H., Hinrichs, M.
5/14/2024	Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM)	Effect of Buprenorphine vs Methadone Induction in the Emergency Department on Precipitated Withdrawal and Retention	Porter, M.
6/16/2024	College on Problems of Drug Dependence	Acute Stimulant Toxicity: This is not opioid overdose	Coffin, P., Vivolo-Kantor, A., Wagner, K., Delcher, C., Al-Tayyib, A.
9/27/2024	2024 Society for Implementation Research Collaboration	Words Matter: A Campaign to Reduce Stigmatizing Language about Substance Use Disorders in an Integrated Safety-Net Health System	Braun, H.
10/8/2024	International Conference on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users	Telehealth-based hepatitis C treatment at syringe service programs in Colorado, USA	Rowan, S., Kamis, K., Wyles, D.

Appendix 2:

2024 Addiction-Related Projects

As part of Denver Health's Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM), we are creating an inventory of Denver Health projects that are addiction-related. We have queried Cayuse and QulRC for projects that have either been funded or have been through our internal project review process, and asked CAM champions to add anything missing from their respective departments. The following list includes 27 new addiction-related projects in 2024.

PROJECT TITLE	LEAD PI/ PROJECT LEAD	AU/DEPT	PROJECT BEGIN DATE/ SUB. DATE	PROJECT END DATE	PROJECT AMOUNT	SPONSOR
Ask the Center for Addiction Medicine's Technical Resource and Information Line (Ask CAM TRAIL)	Brooke Bender	Behavioral Health	1/1/2024	9/30/2026	\$898,365.00	City & County of Denver
2025 Quality Improvement Fund - Transitions in Care for Justice Involved Populations(Place holder title)	Rebecca Hanratty	General Internal Medicine	12/1/2024	11/30/2026	\$1,000,000.00	Health Resources and Services Administration - HRSA
CAM Academy - CO MAT 2023-2025	Helen Burnside	Public Health	1/1/2024	12/31/2025	\$790,000.00	Colorado Judicial Department
CDPHE -Zero Suicide Colorado	Sarah Belstock	Public Health	1/1/2024	9/28/2028	\$46,609.00	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment -CDPHE
DDPHE -ARPA Behavioral Health Services - Support People with HIV	Kellie Hawkins	Public Health	3/1/2024	12/31/2026	\$500,000.00	City & County of Denver
DDPHE Denver Opioid Abatement Funds	Sarah Belstock	Public Health	1/1/2024	9/30/2026	\$145,256.20	City & County of Denver
DDPHE Youth Vaping Cessation & Mental Health Initiative	Becky Bloedow	Family Medicine Services	11/1/2024	6/30/2026	\$197,000.00	City & County of Denver
Engaging People Experiencing Homelessness in Behavioral Health Care after Discharge: A Qualitative Study of Facilitator and Barriers to Inform a Novel Intervention	Chelsea Wolf	Behavioral Health	4/1/2024	3/31/2025	\$28,004.00	Denver Health Internally Funded Project
Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Toxicology Investigator's Consortium (Toxic) Drug Overdose Toxicology Surveillance (DOTS) Reporting Program	Jennie Buchanan	Emergency Medicine	5/1/2024	9/30/2024	\$34,000.00	American College of Medical Toxicology
JUST Recovery = JUdicial Substance Treatment & Recovery	Holly Witt	Behavioral Health	9/30/2024	9/29/2029	\$2,000,000.00	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - SAMHSA

Opioid Stewardship Clinical Pharmacist Specialist Program	Dawn Whiting	OPS-Pharmacy	1/1/2024	9/30/2026	\$844,541.00	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment -CDPHE
PEth as a Remotely Obtained Outcome: Feasibility for Inpatient Trials (PROOF-IT)	Dale Terasaki	Behavioral Health	11/1/2024	10/31/2025	\$27,808.00	Denver Health Internally Funded Project
Season to Share STEP Program	Mario Lintz	Behavioral Health	3/26/2024	3/31/2025	\$20,000.00	Denver Health Foundation -DHF
Sobriety House Bed Lease Pilot Program Caring for Denver Sub-Contract with Denver Health	Brooke Bender	Behavioral Health	7/1/2024	12/31/2025	\$78,613.00	Sobriety House Inc.
STEP Canine-Assisted Therapy	Christian Thurstone	Behavioral Health	1/1/2024	12/31/2025	\$280,000.00	Direct Relief
The Naloxone Project -Paramedic Naloxone Leave Behind Program	Andres Camacho	Emergency Medicine	1/1/2024	9/30/2026	\$150,000.00	The Naloxone Project
THRIVE-JOI: Jail to Community Overdose Intervention	Michael Frank	Behavioral Health	5/1/2024	8/31/2026	\$266,458.00	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment -CDPHE
The relative impacts of alcohol and opioid use disorders on an urban, safety-net health system	Emily Bacon	Public Health	6/8/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A
Characterization of youth prescribed Sublocade for opioid use disorder	Jesse Hinckley	Behavioral Health	3/8/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A
ReLink	David Wyles	General Internal Medicine	4/10/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tracking services provided by psychology residents on the Addiction Consult Service	Emi Caprio	Behavioral Health	4/29/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A
OrthoPsych Collaboration	Gina Signoracci	Orthopedics	4/25/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A
The potential for increasing pneumococcal vaccination uptake among patients with alcohol use disorder via the inpatient addiction consult team	Dale Terasaki	Behavioral Health	5/14/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A
Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Receipt and Retention by Sociodemographics at an Integrated Safety-Net Hospitals	Alexandra Tillman	Center for Addiction Medicine	11/21/2024			

Rocky Mountain Poison & Drug Safety Programs

PROJECT TITLE	LEAD PI/ PROJECT LEAD	AU/DEPT	PROJECT BEGIN DATE/ SUB. DATE	PROJECT END DATE	PROJECT AMOUNT	SPONSOR
Psychedelic Survey Year 2 Project	Andrew Monte	Rocky Mtn Poison & Drug Safety	9/27/2024	9/30/2025	\$249,999.00	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration -SAMHSA
The Impact of recreational cannabis legalization and substance use outcomes	Andrew Monte	Rocky Mtn Poison & Drug Safety	9/30/2024	9/29/2027	\$122,846.00	Northwestern University

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For Individuals Seeking Treatment:

- Call the Substance Treatment Line: 303-436-5711

For Health Care Professionals:

- [Register for CAM Academy training](#)
- Join the Addiction Education Collaborative: Email CAMAcademy@dhha.org
- Implement [Words Matter](#) principles in your practice

For Potential Funders:

- Contact the CAM Administrative Director to discuss partnership opportunities: Brooke.Bender@dhha.org
 - Support specific strategic initiatives aligned with your mission
 - [Donate today!](#)
-

Funding Priorities:

- CAM Academy program expansion
- Community Voice Service Line enhancements
- Knowledge Management data interface enhancements
- New Continuum of Care workflow implementation efforts
- Support for innovative treatment models (e.g., OB PEAR for pregnant patients with SUD)

Partnership Opportunities:

- Join the Addiction Education Collaborative: Email CAMAcademy@dhha.org
- Participate in Community Advisory Meetings: Contact Sarah.Belstock@dhha.org
- Utilize [CAM Academy training resources](#)
- Collaborate on research and data initiatives:
Email CAMKnowledgeManagement@dhha.org
- Support the [Words Matter](#) campaign in your organization

Community Engagement:

- Share your perspective and provide feedback on CAM initiatives at monthly Community Advisory Meetings: Contact Sarah.Belstock@dhha.org
- Connect with substance treatment services through our Substance Treatment Line: 303-436-5711
- Participate in Overdose Awareness Day events: Contact CAM@dhha.org
- Access training and education opportunities

THANK YOU

The CAM extends sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our success. We thank our funders, partners, Denver Health leadership, frontline staff and especially the community members who generously share their expertise and lived experience to improve our services. Together, we are building a more compassionate, effective system of care for people with SUD.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

CAM@dhha.org

Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM):
www.DenverHealth.org/CAM

Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) Academy:
www.DenverPTC.org/CAM

