



SOAR

SSI/SSDI, OUTREACH, ACCESS, & RECOVERY

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STATE REGIONAL NAVIGATORS

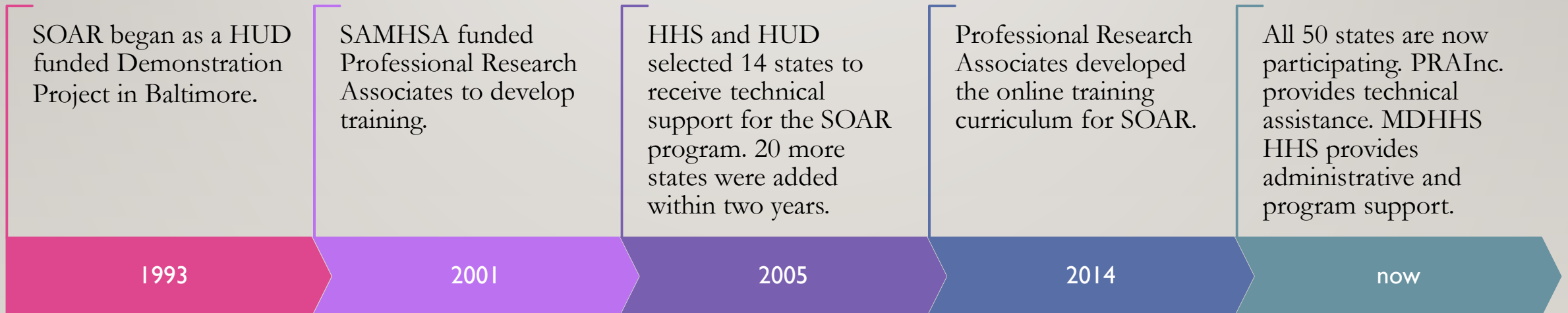
AGENDA

- An Introduction to SOAR
SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access, & Recovery
- What SOAR Looks Like in Michigan
- SOAR eligibility
- How Does SOAR Work?
- SOAR Training
- Q & A

WHAT IS SOAR?

- SOAR is a national program funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) designed to increase access to the disability income benefit program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA).
- SOAR is a model for assisting eligible adults and children in applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
- SOAR targets assisting individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.
- SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications are prioritized in processing through SSA and Disability Determination Services (DDS).
- SOAR is in all 50 states and Washington, DC

THE SOAR TIMELINE



WHY SOAR?

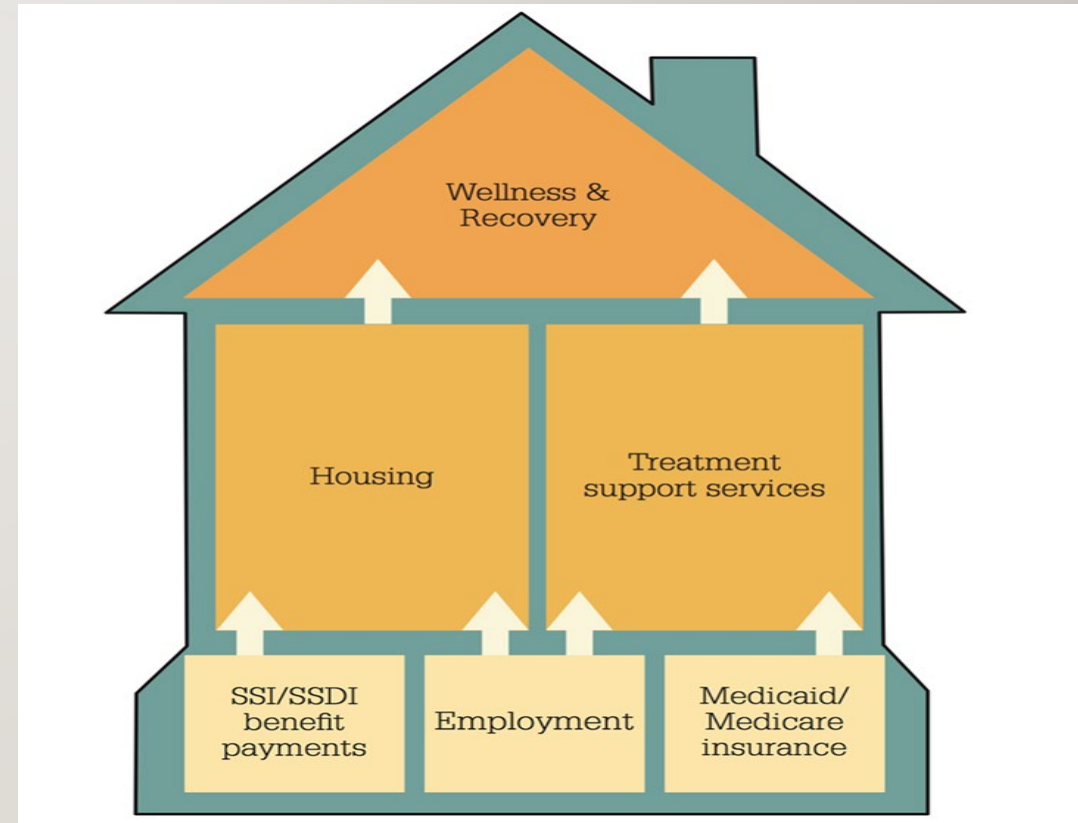
SOAR is more than an application...

SOAR is a foundation for Recovery and Resiliency

SSI/SSDI: One Brick in a Foundation

SOAR seeks to assist individuals who have

- Limited resources and supports
- Sporadic involvement with treatment
- Experience symptoms which are interfering with their functioning and ability to work



SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Eligibility based on need: low income and resources; living arrangement
- Monthly amount based on Federal Benefit Rate: \$841/month (2022), \$914/month (2023)
- Date of eligibility based on Protective Filing Date/Application Date
- Health insurance: Medicaid

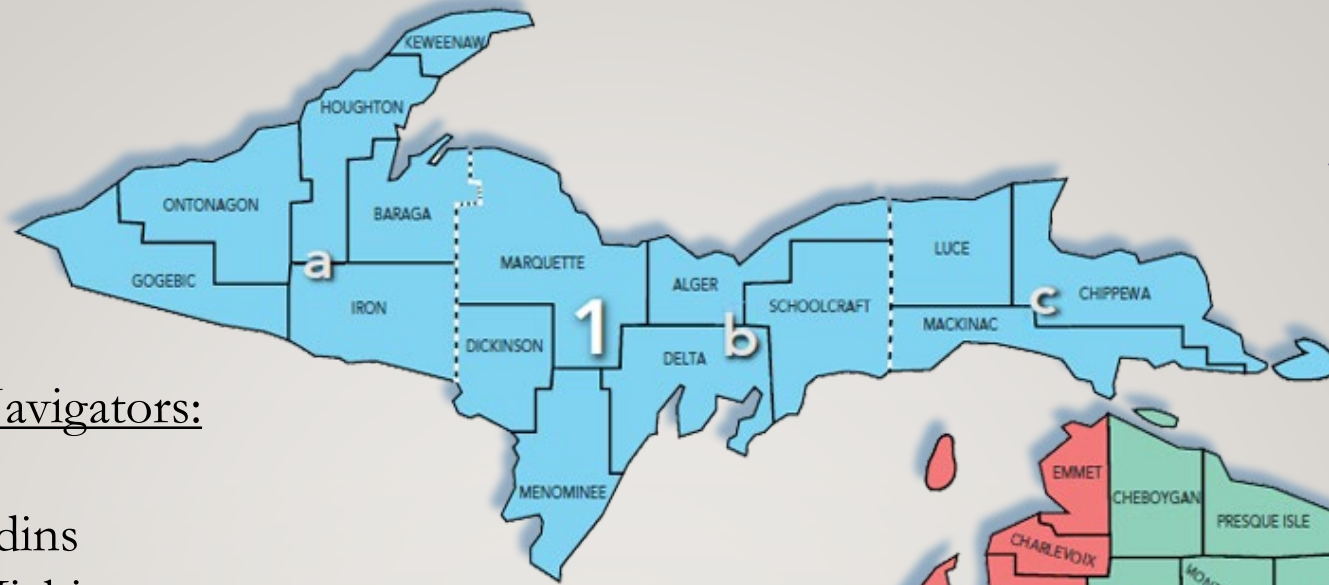
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Eligibility based on insured status (FICA payments)
- Monthly amount based on earnings history
- Date of eligibility based on “date of onset” of disability, 5 month waiting period
- Health insurance: Medicare
- 2-year waiting period for Medicare

MICHIGAN'S SOAR INITIATIVE

MDHHS Housing and Homeless Services Division serves as the Lead Agency. The MDHHS SOAR Team includes 2 FTE dedicated to SOAR program implementation and sustainability across the state. They:

- Facilitate quarterly training cohorts in conjunction with the On-Line Adult SOAR Course as provided by SAMHSA
 - [Online Courses | SOAR Works! \(samhsa.gov\)](https://www.samhsa.gov/soar-works)
- Provide direct SOAR support for local communities
- Assist with SOAR referral coordination, technical assistance, education, and recruitment



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HOMELESSNESS IN MICHIGAN

- 44% of the Homeless population in Michigan have a disability
- Of those with a disability:
 - 62% have a serious mental illness
 - 43% have a physical health condition
 - 26% have substance use disorder
 - 25% have a chronic health condition
 - 15% have a developmental disability
 - 2019 Ending Homelessness in Michigan Annual Report
 - Total exceeds 100% due to individuals having multiple conditions

THE SIX CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Mental Illness

Substance
Abuse

Physical
Disability

Unemployment

Complicated
Domestic
Situations

Ongoing Legal
Entanglements

WHY IS SOAR NECESSARY?

- Only 34% of SSI and SSDI applications are approved. People whose claims are denied can appeal, a process that can take up to 18 months. Without additional information or assistance, appeals are often denied.
- Only 10-15% of SSI and SSDI Claims submitted by applicants who are experiencing homeless are approved.
- In 2021-2022, 75% of SOAR-assisted applications were approved and the average time to decision was 138 days. 2020 average days to decision was 91.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SOAR ASSISTANCE?

- The target population for SOAR assistance are individuals experiencing a serious mental illness, substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder.
- Just as you cannot discriminate against people with a disability, you cannot discriminate against people because of the type of disability they have. Anyone with a qualifying disability is eligible for SOAR assistance.
- Applicants must be homeless:
 - Category 1-4 homeless (as defined by McKinney-Vento and the Hearth Act), or
 - have an income below 30% of AMI, or
 - be receiving public assistance to maintain current housing (HUD Section 8, PBV, HCV, PSH, etc.)

SOAR TRAINING

- On-Line Course materials provided by SAMHSA consisting of seven classes
 - Each participant completes a practice SOAR-assisted claim.
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- Training is free, self-paced and online.
 - Approx. 20 hours to complete. Receive a certificate of completion and 20 continuing education (CE) from NASW
 - MDHHS facilitates Quarterly Cohorts
- Class 1: The Need for SOAR
 - Class 2: Initiating the Application
 - Class 3: Exploring Basic Eligibility
 - Class 4: Medical Information
 - Class 5: The Link to Functioning
 - Class 6: Completing the Application Packet
 - Class 7: Supporting Resiliency and Recovery

CRITICAL COMPONENTS

APPLICATIONS THAT USE ALL FIVE OF THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO BE APPROVED.

- Serving as the claimants Authorized Representative
- Collecting, reviewing, and submitting medical records
- Writing and submitting a Medical Summary Report
- Obtaining Co-signature on the Medical Summary Report
- Completing a quality review of applications before submission

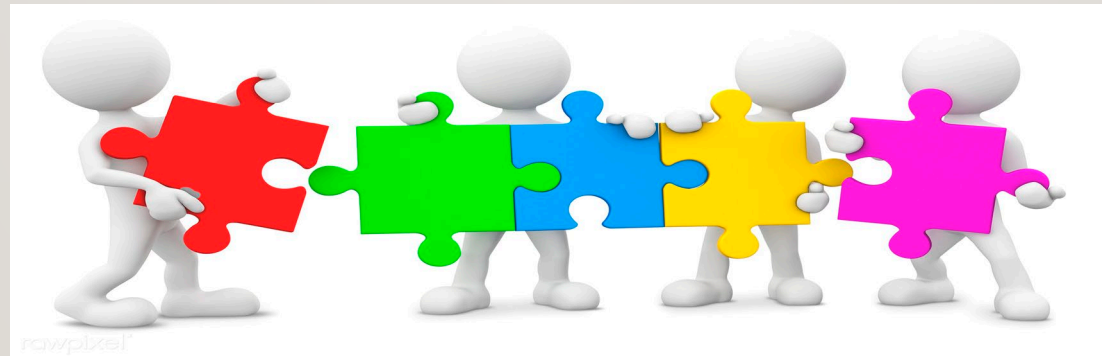


EXPECTATIONS OF CERTIFIED SOAR PRACTITIONERS

- Certified SOAR Practitioners will never charge applicants for assistance in applying for Social Security disability benefits.
- SOAR certification is renewed annually by MDHHS Housing and Homeless Services Division following MDHHS fiscal year of October 1 to September 30
 - To maintain Certification status practitioners will either
 - ✓ complete at least 3 SOAR-assisted claims; and maintain an initial application approval rate of at least 60% during the fiscal year (October 1-September 30) or
 - ✓ Attend a 2-hour SOAR refresher webinar; offered multiple times throughout the year
- Practitioners agree to enter HIPAA compliant application and outcome data into the Online Applications Tracking (OAT) system.
- SOAR Practitioners work collaboratively with other community providers to provide the full array of supports needed to end homelessness and improve health care access.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IS COMPLICATED

- With proper training the system is navigable and responsive.
- With SOAR assistance, eligible applicants can receive the financial and health care benefits they need to find and maintain stable housing, medical care and the community supports they need to live productive and independent lives.



OUTCOMES

- During time period July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022
- 134 Initial SOAR claims adjudicated
 - Monthly benefits awarded; combination of SSI & SSDI= \$93,884
 - Backpay awarded= \$276,622
- **75% approval rate**
- 138 average days to decision



QUESTIONS?

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