

Treatment Court Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan

Idaho Supreme Court

Statement of Purpose

Alignment with best practice standards maximizes cost-effectiveness by ensuring that Treatment Courts (TxC) achieve the best possible outcomes. Idaho's TxCs have long strived to follow evidence-based practices and nationally accepted models of implementation. There have been recognized standards or guidelines for TxCs since March 2002. Those standards and guidelines are updated periodically and have been expanded to reflect all types of TxCs.

The purpose of this quality assurance (QA) plan is to continue to support evidence-based practices by establishing a structure to promote TxC efforts and to monitor progress towards goals. As such, this plan is intended to be used as a tool for Idaho's TxC and for the Judiciary as a whole.

This document contains a plan to facilitate consistent adherence to evidence-based practices and to ensure consistent, positive outcomes. The plan outlined below includes eight QA activities, detailed with the required frequency and timelines, resources needed, and parties responsible for completion (see Appendix A).

Idaho's TxC Best Practice Standards

Historically, the Idaho Courts have had five sets of standards or guidelines for six different types of TxCs— adult felony drug courts, juvenile drug courts, mental health courts, child protection drug courts, DUI courts, and veterans treatment courts. In January 2019, the Idaho Supreme Court (ISC) moved to adopt the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards, Volumes I and II (referred to henceforth as the "Standards"). In November 2019, the ISC moved to have the Standards serve as the guiding document for all of Idaho's TxCs, with the exception of juvenile treatment courts.

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This **groundbreaking** set of evidence-based standards are the blueprint to **dramatically improve outcomes** for individuals involved in the justice system due to substance use disorders and mental health conditions. Representing **25 years of empirical study** on addiction, pharmacology, behavioral health, and criminal justice, these standards are the **foundation** upon which all drug courts should operate.”

—NADCP

QA and Improvement Activities

A. TxC Certification

Certification for adult TxCs will be fulfilled through a three-part annual process to assess compliance with the Standards. First, members of the TxC team will receive a set of surveys with items related to the Standards. Survey results will be used to produce a report that will help inform the certification process, as well as the peer review. The report will be for the individual court, outlining the extent to which they align with the Standards and will also serve as a tool for the peer review. It will outline responses from the reviewed court, so the reviewing court can confirm the results and provide comments. The peer review process will be discussed in more depth in a subsequent section. In addition to the TxC team providing responses to surveys for certification, the court coordinator will also submit the TxCs current policy and procedure manual and participant handbook for review. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) staff will review these documents and provide specific feedback to the court. Finally, AOC staff will review the minimum data elements entered into the court's case management system for completeness. Data quality is not only integral to conduct evaluations and make informed decisions, but it is also specifically discussed in the Standards.

Upon completion of the certification process, each court will receive a report and a percentage grade. The report will provide courts information on where they excelled, and where practices could be improved to better align with the Standards.

Courts receiving a score of 80% or above will receive a certificate in July, valid for three years, that represents compliance with the Standards.

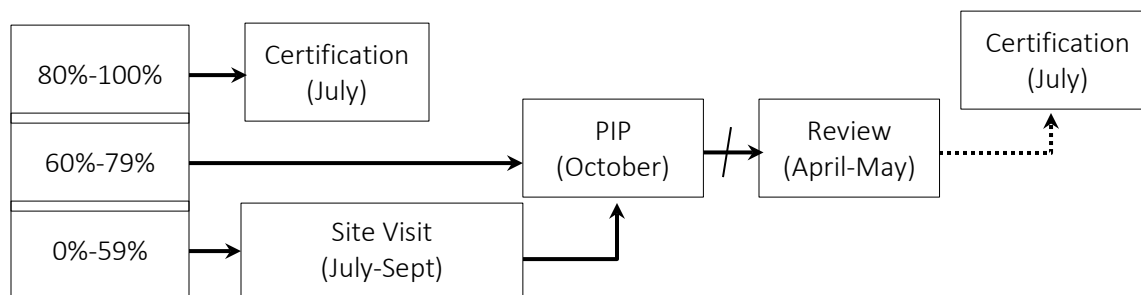
Courts with scores between 60% and 79% will be informed of their requirement to submit a performance improvement plan (PIP) in July. PIPs are due October 1st, and progress on PIPs will be reviewed by AOC staff between April and May of the following year. Courts that have sufficiently addressed areas of concern and are now assessed above 80% will be issued a certificate, valid for two years, that represents compliance with the Standards. Courts that do not sufficiently address areas of concern may be subject to a range of sanctions that could include the loss of part or all of ISC funding.

Courts that score below 60% will be informed in July of their requirement to host a site visit and submit a performance improvement plan. Site visits will be conducted between July and September by AOC staff to identify areas of improvement and outline barriers and possible solutions. PIPs are due in October, and progress on PIPs will be reviewed by AOC staff between April and May of the following year. Courts that have sufficiently addressed areas of concern and are now assessed above 80% will be issued a certificate, valid for two years, that represents compliance with the Standards. Courts that do not sufficiently address areas of concern may be subject to a range of sanctions that could include the loss of part or all of ISC funding.

Juvenile Treatment Courts may not share the same standards as adult courts, but will engage

in similar QA activities. Timelines for Juvenile Treatment Courts may vary as they develop.

Figure 1. Outcomes of Certification Scores



Currently, Idaho has 64 TxCs, which include adult drug courts, veterans treatment courts, child protection court, DUI courts, and mental health courts. In order to accommodate the volume of documents to review for certification and scheduling for peer reviews, the courts will be divided into three groups (see Table 1). Approximately one-third of courts, with representation from each judicial district, will participate in certification in year one. A different set of courts will participate in peer reviews, and the remaining courts will not be held to mandated QA activities. Although no QA activities are required for this last “implement standards” group, it is expected that courts will consider self-directed improvements to implement policies, procedures, and handbooks to better align with the Standards. In year two courts will rotate, moving the certification group to implementing standards, the peer review group to certification, and the implement standards group to peer review. A similar shift will happen in year three.

Table 1. Rotation Schedule for QA Activities

| | Peer Review | Certification | Implement Standards |
|------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Year one | A | B | C |
| Year two | C | A | B |
| Year three | B | C | A |

Each group above contains roughly 20 TxCs represented across all judicial districts. All courts would certify every three years, benefit from a peer review, and have a full year to reflect on modifying practices to better align with the Standards.

B. Performance Improvement Plans

PIPs lend structure to process improvement initiatives, enabling the team to establish mutually agreed upon goals, identify and address implementation barriers, and track progress. PIPs could include a variety of improvement efforts, including policy amendments, procedural corrections, or training issues related to noncompliance with the Standards.

If a court is required to complete a PIP, the Administrative District Judge (ADJ), Trial Court Administrator (TCA), and District Manager (DM) will be notified. The PIP should contain the following:

- a. What issues and concerns the PIP will address
- b. What corrective actions will be taken to address the concerns
- c. The timeline for implementing the corrective actions
- d. Barriers or resource needs that the court will address in order to implement and maintain the corrective action and ensure continued compliance with the Standards.

C. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Staff Site Visits

The AOC supports improvement efforts of Idaho’s TxCs by ensuring that districts have the information and resources necessary to succeed. The AOC distributes information from statewide and national sources regarding accepted evidence-based practices, ensures training needs are met, and offers guidance to encourage adherence with the Standards.

In addition to general information sharing and support, the AOC will provide site visits to offer intensive assistance to support the success of new TxCs or TxCs that are facing barriers to achieving compliance with the Standards. The purpose of these visits are for the AOC staff to make recommendations based on TxC observations to ensure that TxC teams have the training and resources necessary to be successful. Visits may include observation of court status hearings, pre-court staff meeting, or treatment service delivery; training in best practices; participation in TxC team member meetings; or other activities.

AOC staff will visit new courts approximately six months after the court begins.

In addition, site visits may be requested at any time by district court leadership or may be deemed necessary to explore concerns that arise from the QA activities included in this document. All site visits will be coordinated with the administrative district judge, the trial court administrator, and the district manager.

Table 1. Triggering Events for a Site Visit

| Event | Timeframe |
|--|------------------------------------|
| New TxCs | Six months of new court operations |
| TxCs that have a certification score below 60% | July-September |
| TxCs that are recommended for a site visit | As soon as practicable |

D. TxC Peer Review

During a peer review, courts are observed by different members of the same court type, allowing the reviewed court and reviewing court to learn from each other and share innovative and effective practices. Peer reviews are important to achieve positive outcomes for participants by allowing peers to encourage and assist each other to comply with the Standards. In a peer review, two TxC professionals within one court are assigned as reviewers, trained by the QA manager in the AOC, and sent to a TxC in a neighboring district. The reviewers observe court status hearings and pre-court staff meetings, interview team members

and participants, and review documents including policy and procedure manuals, participant handbooks, and reported outcomes from the certification surveys.

After observation, reviewers assess and report on the reviewed court's compliance with the Standards. Reviewed courts receive a report regarding strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations for closer alignment with the Standards. The judge presiding over the reviewed court is expected to convene a meeting with the rest of the reviewed court team to discuss the findings and develop a plan for implementing improvement efforts.

E. Managed Services Contractor Audits

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment services are provided to TxC participants by Idaho's management services contractor, BPA HEALTH Health, and the Medicaid services contractor, Magellan. Both of these contractors have requirements for service delivery and regularly perform audits to monitor compliance. Audits may focus on agency billing claims, staff personnel, client charts and evidence-based treatment service delivery. These contractors are subject for re-bid and may change.

Each of Idaho's TxC treatment providers should remain in good standing with contractor requirements. It is the responsibility of the treatment agencies that provide services to TxC participants to adhere to the requirements of the audits and contracts.

F. Quality Performance Metrics

Performance metrics provide a means of continuously monitoring processes, outputs, outcomes, and adherence to the Standards. Metrics are used by ADJs, TCAs, DMs, and AOC staff to assess TxC operations and outcomes from a district or statewide perspective. They are also used by individual TxC teams to inform improvement efforts.

Performance metrics are presented in data dashboards generated by the AOC's Data and Evaluation Department (D&E), which are distributed to TxC judges, ADJs, TCAs, and DMs. Dashboards incorporate information from the electronic data management system, surveys, and other data source. Historically, they have included the following measures: number of participants, demographic variables such as race, gender, and age, average risk levels, drug of choice, charge, and graduation rates by gender, age, and risk level.

The TxC teams are encouraged to utilize the data dashboards to inform discussions around process improvement. Additionally, D&E regularly reports to the Treatment Court Coordinating Committee with trends, findings, and recommendations from data dashboards.

G. Outcome and Process Evaluations

Outcome evaluations provide information on whether, or to what degree, courts are achieving goals. They are designed to assess recidivism and other effects of TxCs compared to other

interventions or business as usual. Outcomes of interest vary somewhat by court type.

Process evaluations assess whether program operations are conducted in alignment with the Standards and other guidelines. Process and outcome evaluations can be used in concert to evaluate the impact of specific practices on program outcomes.

Process evaluations quantify adherence to the Standards to assess the impact of outcomes in Idaho's TxC. These evaluations may be conducted as part of reviews requested by district court leadership or in response to concerns raised by other QA activities.

Outcome and process evaluations are resource intensive. Regular evaluations will be conducted for TxCs at the request of the Justice Services Division and as Data & Evaluation resources permit. Depending on priorities and the availability of resources, evaluations will either be conducted by D&E team or by an external evaluator.

Appendix A: QA Activities – Schedule and Timelines

| Activity | Court Types | Timeline | Responsible |
|--|---|--|--|
| Certification Survey and Policy Document Submission | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Approximately 20 courts, rotating every three years. Due June 1 | PSC court team members |
| Performance Improvement | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Within 4 months of a score less than 80% on | ADJ/TCA/TxC DM |
| AOC Staff Site Visits | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Within 6 months of the start of a new court, within 3 months of a score of less than 60% on certification, or as requested by district court personnel | Justice Services Division Director, TxC Statewide Manager, and/or QA Manager |
| Peer Review | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Each court participates in the summer/fall every three years (~ 20 per year) | TxC teams; QA Manager to facilitate |
| Managed Services Contract Audit | All court's treatment providers | Set by contract | Currently BPA HEALTH and Magellan |
| Quality Performance Metrics | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Annually | Data & Evaluation Team |
| Outcomes Evaluations | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Every 4 years; rotational by court type | Data & Evaluation Team or |
| Process Evaluations | Drug, child protection, mental health, DUI, and veterans treatment courts | Every 4 years, in conjunction with outcomes evaluation, or as needed to assess | Data & Evaluation Team or |