# Humber River Health

# CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY PROGRAM RE-DESIGN

# Optimizing to Meet the Evolving Needs of Our Patients

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## DESCRIPTION

Needs of patients requiring care for addictions and substance use are increasing in volume and complexity. The population of Humber River Health's (HRH) Chemical Dependency Program (CDP) consists of individuals with complex medical, social, and mental health needs, who frequently have trouble accessing community-based services and/or primary care, often while experiencing concurrent disorders (i.e., experiencing both mental health and substance use concerns simultaneously). HRH recognized the need to adapt programming to optimize treatment, experience, and outcomes. This initiative also aligned with two of the organization's strategic pillars—to advance the empowerment of our people and patients, and to foster innovation, research, and academics.

# **ACTIONS TAKEN**

The team formulated guiding principles and developed a driver diagram to identify and prioritize change ideas and define the program scope.

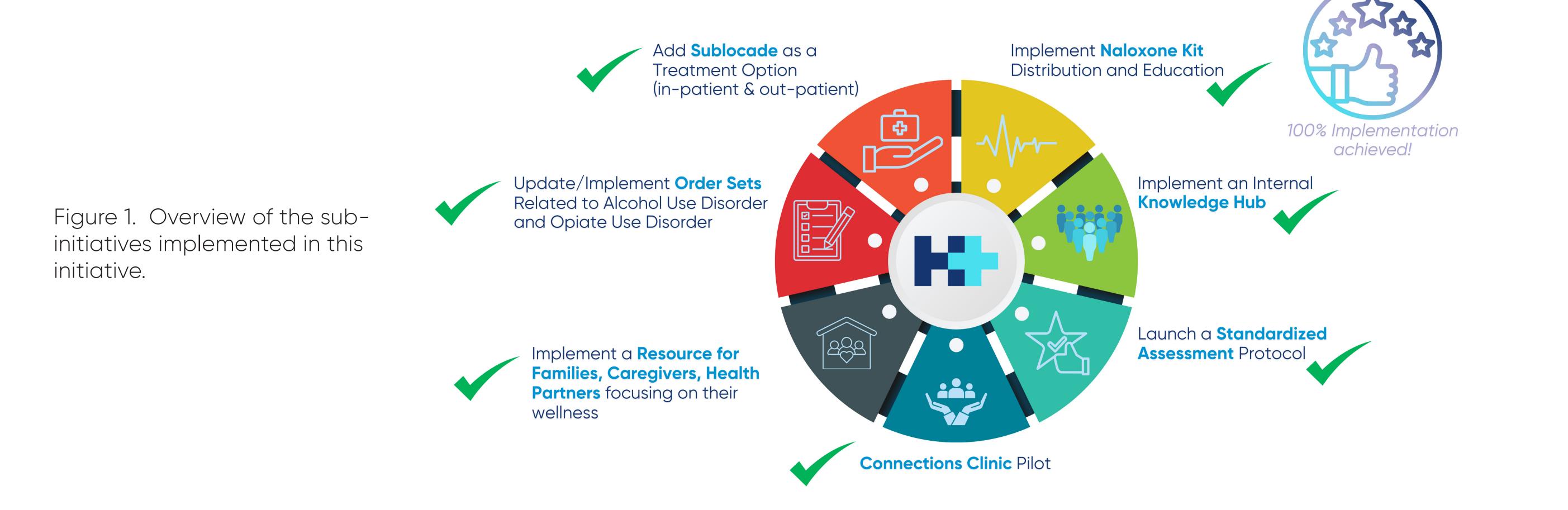
There were seven sub-initiatives:

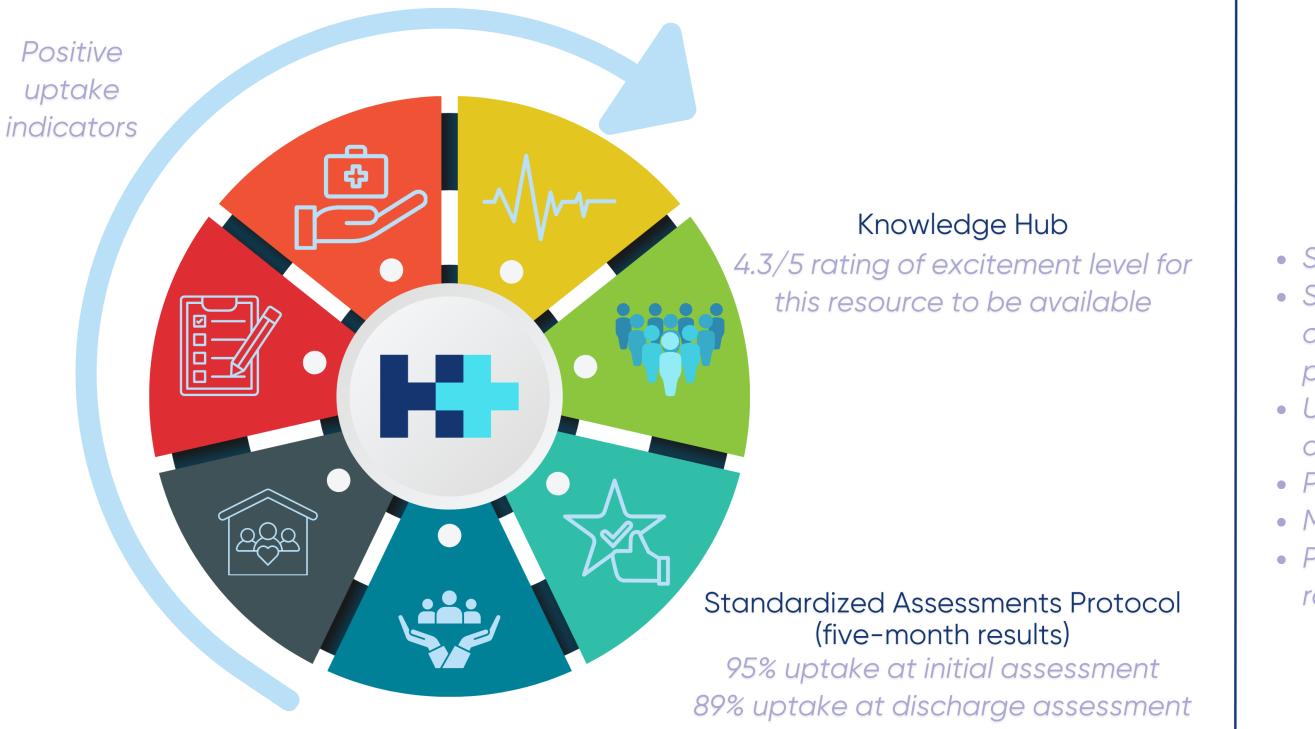
- Implement internal knowledge hub
- Launch a standardized assessment protocol
- Connections Clinic pilot—facilitate transition from Emergency Department (ED) to CDP
- Implement Naloxone kits

# OBJECTIVE

Optimize programming to better meet needs of HRH's patients, in accordance with guiding principles (partnerships, low barrier access, patient-centered care, harm reduction approaches, and empowerment) by end of March 2024.

- Add Sublocade as a treatment option
- Update/implement order sets related to alcohol use disorder and opiate use disorder
- Implement a resource for families, caregivers, health partners focusing on their wellness





#### **Connections Clinic Pilot**

Outcomes have not met expectations but valuable insights have emerged; ongoing collaboration between CDP, ED and EPU to revise and evolve the Clinic criteria and process - to facilitate more positive results and outcomes

#### Lessons Learned

- Stakeholder engagement could be improved
- Scope change (removing implementation of Point of Care testing) negatively affected uptake and pilot duration for Connections Clinic
- Unforeseen factors e.g., Human Resources challenges, affected implementation impact
- Prototyping was valuable
- Methodology fostered alignment and valued input
- Project team participation experience average rating 4.6/5 stars!



Figure 2. Highlights of some of the outcomes and results.

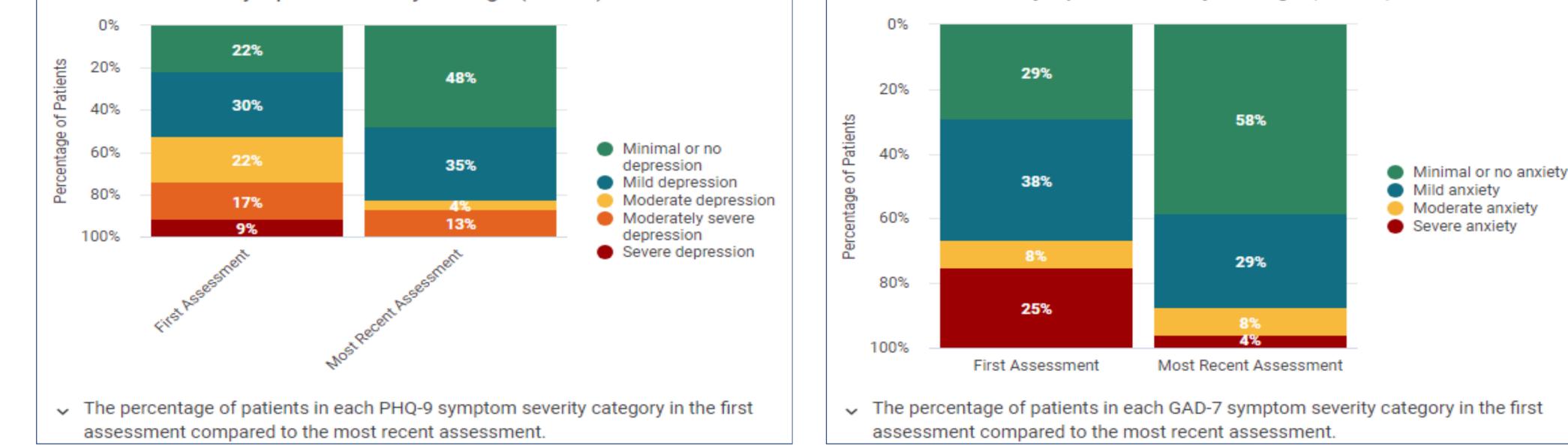
#### **Clinical Measures**

Notable decrease in symptom severity for depression and anxiety Measured between first assessment December 2023 to most recent assessment March 2024

Symptom Severity Change (PHQ-9)

Symptom Severity Change (GAD-7)

Figure 3. Clinical measures with a notable decrease in symptom severity for depression and anxiety between first and most recent assessment.



## **LESSONS LEARNED**

# **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

Given the complexity of factors related to clinical outcomes, preliminary results demonstrated a promising uptake of all but one of the changes implemented, as well as a positive experience engaging in this initiative. A change in scope for the Connections Clinic pilot required the removal of Point of Care testing, creating a barrier to sublocade treatment. Though we introduced a solution for this gap, challenges persist. The strategy to increase ED referral flow was not sustained when staff support decreased. The team is exploring system-based changes for the future.