

# Supporting Peer Recovery Coaches and Recoveree Communication with an Innovative Mobile App

## ABOUT

The care delivery model to date for opioid use disorder is very fragmented. Individuals may receive referrals for care, but it is up to the individual to secure these services, causing many to feel lost and unable to navigate the complex world of addiction recovery. Therefore, the initial point of entry into the health system serves as an opportunity to engage individuals to begin thinking about recovery. Recognizing that many may not want to begin recovery at the initial visit, Parkview Health and a growing number of organizations have adopted a new model of care that integrates a personal “peer coach” who will make contact immediately when the recoveree enters into the health system.

The existing program utilizes phone calls and text messaging for most coach-recoveree communication including urgent support, coordinating future appointments and sharing useful resources in addition to regular wellness check-in correspondence. Peer coaches in the program have however identified needs and areas for improvement—such as secure communication with recoverees, better resource and appointment management, and better teamwork between coaches all of which a mobile application could address. There is currently no mobile application that addresses both the needs of recoverees and the demands of our coworkers working with this population.

### *App Design*

To design an application that will be both desirable and usable, the Health Services and Informatics Research team (HSIR) conducted a user-centered design investigation of coach and recoveree needs for a recovery mobile app through two focus groups and ten usability testing sessions. The study findings resulted in a finalized design requirement and an interactive app prototype. The Peer Mobile App (PMA) for smartphones is currently under development with plans to go live in Spring 2021 to support our existing peer assisted recovery program at Parkview. PMA will provide an opportunity to connect peer coaches with the recoverees post discharge to check on their well-being and begin building the relationship that will hopefully help them to begin and maintain the recovery journey.

Requirements deriving from focus groups with coaches and recoverees include 1) Secure messaging, voice and video calls with end-to-end encryption, 2) Personalized shared resource library and appointment calendar, 3) Automated redirection of urgent requests and scheduled substitute coach delegation, and 4) Timeline and logged communication for reference. Based on these user-led requirements, the research team designed and developed an interactive prototype which was used for evaluation by coach coworkers and recoverees in the Parkview program. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Coaches emphasized how much PMA would help communication with their recoverees and streamline some of their workflow, while recoverees saw great value in having an all-in-one recovery app linking them with their coaches and community resources often unbeknownst to them.



# APP DESIGN CONT...

This project was launched with funding from the American Hospital Association Innovation Competition in 2018.

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## *Publications/ Presentations*

Kerrigan, C., Haaff, M., Toscos, T. Community Inspired Innovations in Mental Health. Association for Community Health Improvement (ACHI) Chicago, IL, March 19-21, 2019 (podium presentation)

Kerrigan, C., Toscos, T., Hill, J., Ahmed, R., Drouin, M., Ehinger, S. Technology Enabled On-Demand Support for Addiction Recovery. American Hospital Association Leadership Summit, July 26-28, 2018 (podium presentation: First Place, Innovation Competition).

Toscos, T. and Kerrigan, C. Innovative clinical programs in response to the opioid crisis: Case studies, Medtronic's Neuroscience Healthcare: Executive Summit, Orlando, FL, September 19-20, 2019

Kerrigan, C., Toscos, T. Priority Intensive: Strategies to Combat the Opioid Epidemic, Premier® QUEST2020™ Webinar, December 19, 2018