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## Time to Ask Program at Redington-Fairview General Hospital: Summary of Participant Feedback

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# Time To Ask Program

## Alcohol Use Conversations in Primary Care

A summary of participant feedback from the Redington-Fairview General Hospital, *January 2024*

### Overview



The alcohol-attributable death rate in Maine is higher than the national average



Almost 20% of Maine adults report binge drinking at least once per month



On average in 2020 and 2021, 948 Mainers died annually from alcohol-attributable causes

To address these issues, the Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance of Maine, a program of Massachusetts General Hospital, developed the Time to Ask Program (TTA). The TTA Program is designed to expand regular screening and monitoring of alcohol use in Maine by advancing the skills and increasing capacity of interprofessional care teams in discussing alcohol use with their patients. To date the program has been at 16 participating practices in 7 counties across Maine and has trained over 330 health care professionals.

### TTA At Redington-Fairview

Health care professionals (HCPs) from Redington-Fairview General Hospital and Kennebec Behavioral Health participated in a series of 7, 1-hour CME webinar sessions as part of the **Time to Ask Program**.

Most sessions included 15 minutes of didactic instruction led by experts, followed by 40 minutes of case-based learning on **unhealthy alcohol use, alcohol use disorders (AUD), and alcohol screening**.

Training participants completed **post-session surveys** to provide feedback on the content, delivery, and utility of each training session. Some participants also participated in a **focus group** to provide overall feedback on the content, delivery, and impact of the webinar series.

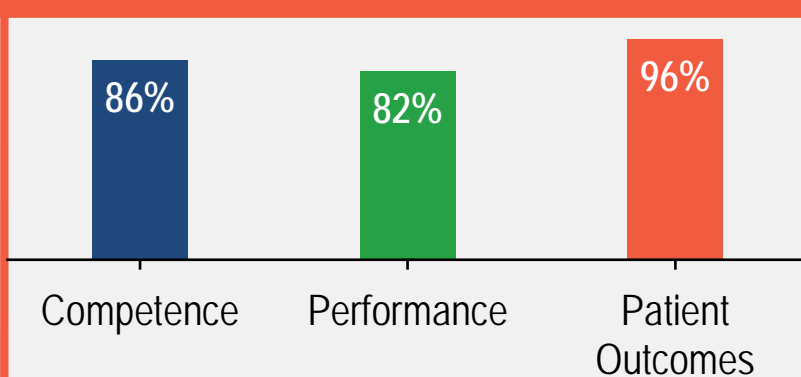
#### Sessions Included:

1. Introduction to AUD as a Public Health Issue
2. Recovery Conversations
3. Motivational Interviewing
4. Medications to Treat AUD
5. Alcohol and Obstetric Considerations
6. Withdrawal Management in Primary Care
7. Focus Group Feedback

**44** total learners participated in the RFGH TTA Program. Individual session attendance varied between 18 and 44 learners.

### Survey Findings

Participants indicated the knowledge and skills they learned will assist them in improving their:



#### Based on what they learned from the TTA Program, participants shared changes they plan to make to their practice:

- Greater awareness of and screening for AUD
- Continue motivational interviewing with renewed interest in alcohol, in addition to improved conversations with patients overall
- The ability to better prescribe medications for AUD based on their patient's goals
- Overall improvements in their ability to treat patients with AUD

**69%** of participants indicated that they would use the information they learned from the program immediately

*Participants identified some barriers they face in their current practice setting that may impact patient outcomes:*

Lack of time & workflow challenges

Lack of evidence-based guidelines for vulnerable populations

Lack of flexibility to employ patient-centered approaches

### Focus Group Findings

#### Most Useful Elements of the TTA Program

- Sessions on medically supervised withdrawal in primary care and medications to treat AUD
- Case studies
- Motivational interviewing and conversation techniques
- General information on AUD and the need for enhanced screening, diagnosis and treatment
- Ability to interact with colleagues

*"I mean, when I first started doing this. I was operating from inexperience and fear. So, you know, my comfort level has increased significantly and the information that I got from this program has been a large part of that."*

*"I found that Dr.Publicker's information in particular was apropos and on topic for me. I have recently begun treating alcohol use disorder, and so my experience level with that was somewhat low and it was nice to have somebody such as Dr. Publicker come in and talk to us about it."*

*"Absolutely, I found [the case studies] to be very helpful. They give me real world analogies of what's going on and how I can deal with very similar situations."*

*"I've taken the information that I got, particularly from Dr. Publicker...both the treatment and the withdrawal, and have instituted a lot of that information into my daily practice and have found it very, very useful."*

#### Ongoing Challenges

- Lack of time to adequately address AUD
- Engaging/retaining AUD patients
- Limited referral pathways
- Lack of a comprehensive system of care for AUD in Central Maine



HCPs who participated in the program had an increased awareness about unhealthy alcohol use and AUD that they plan to implement into their clinical practice to better manage AUD as a chronic condition.



The program provided HCPs with the skills to normalize and have more productive conversations on alcohol use with patients using motivational interviewing techniques.



After the training, HCPs felt they had a better understanding of and ability to provide treatment for AUD including the ability to expand not only AUD screening but also the use of outpatient treatments such as medically supervised withdrawal and medication to treat AUD.

*"I think our biggest problem with all substance abuse, especially in Central Maine, we don't have, great access to detox facilities. We don't have great access to residential care. We don't have access to higher levels of care, so that, I don't know that you can solve."*

### Suggested Program Enhancements



Identify treatment and other recovery resources



More in-depth, ongoing discussion of addressing alcohol use disorder



Expanded, interactive motivational interviewing training



Incorporate curriculum content on stigma and bias



Expand content to include materials on trauma informed care



Provide training content on addressing co-occurring behavioral health disorders



Include content on strategies for retaining alcohol use disorder patients in treatment



Incorporate content into the modules on addressing polysubstance use

*"I think it's important to continue this work and to continue the training so that we can develop a more robust force out here, in the sort of hinterland, that's comfortable with and willing to do this work on a daily basis. Your program is a big piece of that and so I would strongly encourage ongoing efforts in this direction."*

For more information about Time to Ask, visit

<https://lunderdineen.org/program/alcohol-use-time-to-ask/>