

**First Step House Peer Support Services Program  
Report 1: 10/15/2017**

**2. Program/Project Status**

*Provide an update on the progress of your program/project. Be as descriptive as possible including identifying successes and challenges that the agency has faced during this reporting period.*

The Peer Support Services (PSS) Program at First Step House has proven to be critical to the success of previously homeless patients' treatment, wellbeing, and overall recovery. The PSS program has created effective ways to reach as many patients as possible, including those who have struggled with homelessness – a majority (83%) of those who complete a wellness recovery action plan (WRAP) show an improvement in health and wellness once they complete it. Due to the challenge of ensuring that all patients in the WRAP program participate in a community service project, the Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) recently created a leadership team of patients to help plan and oversee community service projects. As a result of their increased involvement, the number of patients participating in community service activities has increased. In addition to the variety of resources available (community recovery groups, community events and service activities, etc.), recovery coaching by the CPSS has played a significant role in patients' success in residential treatment (see testimonial below). Through coordination with other case managers and therapists to eliminate redundancy in group classes, the CPSS's life skills classes (e.g., navigate communicating support groups, accessing job sites, facing triggers in the community) have been revised and feedback has been positive so far. Additionally, the CPSS has helped reduce the number of patients who leave against clinical advice and helped to successfully re-engaged patients and invite them back into the program. Overall, the PSS Program has worked to overcome challenges and make data-driven changes necessary to ensure a positive impact on the patients and First Step House.

**Patient Testimonial:  
October 13, 2017**

Six months ago, I was homeless and hopelessly addicted to alcohol and drugs. I had lost all hope and faith in everything. When I began treatment at First Step, I was shown by example – from the Peer Support Specialist – what can be accomplished by people who were exactly where I was. Being able to interact with people who were where I was, and with people who were where I hoped to be, helped me connect in a way I never had in treatment before. The Peer Support Services Program has become one of the primary parts of my recovery, and it is one of the essential parts of First Step House that sets it apart from other programs. I feel connected and confident, and the Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) has pushed me in wanting to help and do the same for others. I don't even know how to put into words the love, respect, and admiration I have for all of the staff at First Step House. The past six months have been the best 6 months of my life; they helped save my soul and gave me an understanding of myself to be able to love myself and love others. I am filled with such gratitude to be able to still be a part of First Step House, and I am honored to be a part of everyone's recovery at First Step House too. Most of all, I am grateful for the love, patience, and understanding that – to this day – is still shown to me for no other reason than that the staff love, care, and want to save people's lives. I am grateful to be one of the ones lucky enough to be involved and to be clean.

**Program Outcomes:**

**July 1, 2017 – September 30, 2017**

60% of patients complete a WRAP plan	60%
70% will report an improvement in health and wellness	83%
60% who were homeless (coming from street, shelter, jail, prison, or place unfit for human habitation) will exit to stable housing	86%
10% decrease in those who leave against clinical advice compared to 2017 rate (25% FY2017)	11% currently 22.5% goal
10% increase in patient employment status (part time or full time) compared to 2017 percent improvement (183% FY2017)	184.4% currently 201% goal
Transport patients to 4 community based recovery meeting per week	Average 3.83 per week
60% of patients will complete one or more community service project	50%