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# Medicated Assisted Treatment Program

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# PAD3311: Program Planning & Evaluation

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# Michael Ryan

Dear Professor Ryan,

I would like to formally request grant funding, for $50,000 to perform an in-depth evaluation of the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program. The MAT program has been a key initiative aimed at addressing opioid dependency among incarcerated individuals, reducing re-incarceration rates, and improving sobriety outcomes, since initiation in 2020. If granted, this evaluation could enhance the program's effectiveness, increase its societal benefits, and may be able to help others also battling the opioid epidemic.

The plans of this evaluation, funded by this grant, will review the program's success rates, it will be able to determine areas for improvement, and it will create information on how to make this program a fundamental cornerstone to combating the opioid epidemic.

By investing in this evaluation, your support will contribute to the ongoing improvement of a already established program that addresses one of the most pressing public health crises of our time—the opioid epidemic.

Thank you for considering this request. I am confident that this evaluation will provide valuable insights and advance the program in addressing opioid dependency. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and provide any additional information needed to facilitate your decision.

Sincerely,

Jacob Donohue

**Project Abstract**

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is seeking grant funding to extensively evaluate its Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, which has been operational since April 2020. Established in collaboration with two independent contractors, NaphCare and First Step of Sarasota, the MAT program goal is to help lessen the dependance of opiates from the inmates in the jail. Since the turn of the century, both local and national governments have been trying to battle the opioid epidemic, and this is a program that helps contribute to that cause. They help contribute by offering a pre-planned combination of medication to help fight off the opiate dependency, peer recovery services, and case management and support upon release. The MAT program aims to reduce re-offense rates, improve recovery outcomes, and alleviate the burden on the community that is associated with opioid addiction. The proposed evaluation will study the effectiveness of the program itself and where needed it will identify areas for improvement. By funding this evaluation, the grant will enable the SCSO to continue to invest their time and efforts in its MAT program to continue to provide the best possible solutions to one of the most pressing public health crises currently. When reevaluating programs, you must continuously look at your systems and programs and keep trying to enhance them. As time changes, so do the needs and requirements of the program to be equally successful.

**Needs Statement and Related Research**

The importance of the Medicated Assisted Treatment Program (MAT) is because it aims to help individuals with opioid use disorder, or addiction, manage cravings and tolerate recovery through medication supplementation. The inmates don’t necessarily need to come into jail on drug charges, but if they are deemed to be opiate dependent, they are possible candidates for this program. The opiate epidemic has been increasing over the past decade or two. Almost everyone has been witnessed to the devastation of the opiate epidemic as it has stolen the lives of too many people over the years. There are more users and more drugs widely available to them. When buying off the streets, the drugs that these addicts are buying are not pure, they have been cut with other ingredients and/or drugs so the dealer can make more profit. What they think is cocaine may be cocaine mixed with other drugs, including the dangerous and deadly fentanyl. Fentanyl, used in even little doses, has been found to be extremely potent and easily overdosed. Drug use on the streets is a very slippery slope, one minute you’re taking a "party drug" and the next you’re addicted to a fatal substance like fentanyl as well as a slew of others (heroin, methamphetamines, etc.). This creates a huge risk to the addicts, unknown to them that it could lead to their death. Opioid-involved overdose deaths have increased significantly within the past two decades. In 2022, nearly 108,000 people died from drug overdose, with approximately 82,000 involving opioids. This is a tenfold increase in opioid overdose deaths compared to 1999 (*Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic*, 2024). The epidemic has led to increased overdose deaths and hospitalizations, increased overall mortality rates, and has placed a significant burden on governments, health systems, communities, and families. With the increased burden on governments, health systems, communities, and families, the nation has been working diligently on finding ways to help. The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) has been offering a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program since April of 2020. This program was created in partnership with inmate medical provider NaphCare and First Step of Sarasota. Upon release, one of the ways the individuals in the program continue to receive support from First Step of Sarasota in the form of recovery peer services and case management.

**Goals and Objectives**

The goal of this grant, if it were to be approved, would be to operate a complete evaluation of the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, ensuring that it is still an effective program with the aim of also increasing its impact. This evaluation will create methods to enhance the program's ability to address opioid addiction among incarcerated individuals, mitigate its associated societal consequences, and successfully rehabilitate and re-enter these individuals back into society to be able to contribute and give back to their society. Some of the specific objectives would be as follows; Meticulously assess the MAT program's effectiveness in achieving reductions in relapse and reincarceration rates by examining pre- and post-treatment data of the participating inmates; Evaluate ultimately the success rate, focusing on sustained sobriety and successful community reintegration, as followed and reported by the peer recovery services and case management personnel; Identify and address the possible complications in the program's implementation and sustainability; Analyze the cost to benefit ratio of the program, evaluating its economic benefits for the criminal justice system and broader, future societal implications; Propose research-supported improvements to optimize the program’s efficiency and alignment with the policy requirements; Distribute findings and recommendations that may serve as a model for other jurisdictions attempting at addressing similar issues related to opioid dependency within the criminal justice system. This evaluation aims to ensure the continuous improvement and effectiveness of the MAT program while contributing to public health and safety efforts to reduce one of the most devastating challenges of the contemporary era, the opiate epidemic. Even the slightest percentage of changes can have a huge economic impact on the community as well as obviously a huge impact on individuals. This evaluation, provided by this grant funding, is just one more step in the right direction of taking care of our community, which the SCSO is committed to doing.

**Methodology**

The methodology for evaluating the MAT program of the Sarasota County Sheriffs Department incorporates some of the foundational principles for program planning and evaluation systems. The evaluation follows a multi-method approach of many of the topics highlighted in Program Planning and Evaluation for the Public Manager written by Sylvia and Sylvia. It will include both qualitative and quantitative data collection to provide the best analysis of the MAT program’s overall success based on their mission. As Sylvia and Sylvia emphasize, public program evaluations must balance systematic data collection with meaningful stakeholder engagement (Sylvia & Sylvia, 2012). Using systems like the PERT/CPM chart can be useful to establish initial funding for the evaluation. It is most important to have a clear start and end date and well as clear and measurable goals and objectives of this evaluation. The program MAT goals are to reduce relapse and reincarceration while simultaneously helping the local government with the being about to successfully reintegrate these inmates while they maintain their sobriety. These goals can be easily measured, as the inmates will be followed for 6 months after release, as well as can have a definitive and clear start and end date for the entire evaluation.

Another key concept in this evaluation will be matching operations to expectations and monitoring and improving internal processes. Data collection will adhere to the ultimate standards of quality to ensure accurate results, as we all know the saying ‘garbage in, garbage out’. This evaluation will be dedicated to accuracy. Some of the quantitative data will include statistics on current relapse rates, employment, housing stability, and sustained sobriety. This program has been running for 5 years now, so there will be data to compare to as well. Since the program has already been running for years at this point, it will be easy to see the difference between the program before, during, and after the evaluation. Qualitative data would be the information collected from interviews and counseling sessions from both the inmates and the employees working with them. With both this qualitative data and quantitative data, the evaluation will be able to get an accurate read on not only the current trends, but also the people’s experience as they go through it. A lot of the quantitative data is hard to define but is extremely important. It is vital to make sure that not only is the program working on paper and in the jail, but the participants also feel like they have the power and resources be successful in the long run as well. Mindset is key.

The methodology is divided into two primary phases: the Incarceration Phase and the Post-Incarceration Phase, each lasting six months as outlined in the project schedule.

## Phase 1: The Incarceration Phase. During this phase, data collection begins instantly as

formative evaluations are essential during initial phases to diagnose issues and refine processes (Sylvia & Sylvia, 2020). Data to be gathered consists of initial demographic and history, interviews and psychological assessments, attempting to identify operational challenges, and creating preliminary reports. This phase gathers data on the program and the inmates for the first six months, until they are released from the jail.

Phase 2: *The Post-Incarceration Phase.* This phase focuses on the inmate’s reintegration back into the community. Long term evaluation assessments include tracking the inmate one they are released, for the first 6 months of their release to make the whole evaluation one full calendar year. They will be making weekly visits to check on their employment, housing stability, and sobriety. Another expected requirement would be to add the attendance of an AA group, or one of that nature. The benefits of these types of groups are well documented. The SCSO already helps facilitate this upon release. This will also provide a good view into the community to evaluate what kind of community resources are available to these participants and see how society impacts them upon their return. Obviously if a participant relapses or returns to jail, that will be easily tracked, and their journey will be evaluated from start to finish. The examination of the inmates will not end with a simple answer of ‘yes’ they stayed sober, or ‘no’ they relapsed. The examination will not only review their time in the jail, but also their time outside of it. Determining whether the program succeeded or failed is determined by both internal and external factors that must be accounted for. Towards the end of the year long evaluation, we will compile and analyze the final data to produce the final report.

Economic considerations are also considered, determining the cost-analysis of the MAT program. The more economic the program is, the more sustainable it can be, which means it could also have a larger impact on the participants and in this case, the community as well (Sylvia & Sylvia, 2012). The cost analysis will review the benefit of the program comparing its expense with the societal benefits as well as public safety benefits. A lot of that depends on the success of the program itself and how will the inmates do reintegrate into society. These findings will create recommendations to enhance the MAT program and its effectiveness on the inmates. With positive results, the results can be shared with the local communities, state, and nation. This evaluation will be thorough and impactful and provide actionable results that the MAT program can use to enhance the program.

Internal and external evaluations can produce their own individual results. The program itself currently has its own monitoring and evaluation process. Having a new evaluation come in that is external can help find problems because they are looking at it with a fresh set of eyes. The advantages of having a fresh set of eyes who come in, helps due to external evaluation factors and creditability “When the audience for the findings is external to the agency an outside evaluation may enhance the credibility of the results” (Sylvia & Sylvia, 2012). Internal evaluations can be effective in some senses as well, as the evaluator already understands the program, current operations, and the programs’ actual responsibilities (Sylvia & Sylvia, 2012). I think that having an external evaluation is the better choice for such a valuable program like the MAT. This program not only has the potential to benefit the inmates and reduce their risky choices in life, but it can also greatly enhance the surrounding community by reforming drug addicts and putting them back into society to be able to contribute back. There should be no concern of skewed results for one side of the argument or the other.

**Project Schedule**

The proposed evaluation project schedule of the Medication Assisted Treatment Program is similar the already established schedule of the program. It will be split into two key phases: the first being 6 months before the participating inmates are set to be released, the incarceration phase, and the second half will be 6 months after the participating inmates have been released, the post incarceration phase. This will provide enough time for the evaluation to get a full comprehensive idea of the success of the program, if there are any areas for improvement and or any changes that it discovers, and the overall impact of the program to the inmate as well as societal effects.

Phase 1: The Incarceration Phase. This evaluation will begin with inmates that are already enrolled in the program or are going to be enrolled with at least 6 months of being in the program before release. During the first month of this phase, we will start collecting the initial information needed about the program applicants while simultaneously gathering the information and previous data that has been recorded since the initiation of the MAT program. We need this data to be able to compare results. In the second month we will begin to gather more in-depth data about the inmates participating within the MAT program. We will also be conducting interviews and psychological assessments with our appointed addiction counselor. During months 3-5, we will monitor the inmates and the administration of the medication and peer or counselor support. Make sure the program is adhering to the expected policies and procedures. Attempt to identify any challenges or complications with the program. Month 6 is the final month of the first phase. This month we will compile all the data collected and produce preliminary incarceration phase reports, compared to previous reports, as well as prepare for preparing the inmates for the post incarceration phase.

## Phase 2: The Post-Incarceration Phase. This phase will follow the inmates for 6 months as they attempt to re-integrate into society. Immediately after their release, we will take a month to continue to collect data from the participating individuals. We will follow their ability to acquire work and stable housing. They will have weekly check-ins with a counselor for the first month. Months 8-10 will be continued monitoring and data gathering. We will monitor the sustained sobriety rates, the capabilities of keeping employment, and the housing stability. We will also evaluate the access to help within the community. Month 11 and 12 we will gather all the data that we have collected over the past 10 months of the evaluation process. We will analyze the new data compared to previous data in an attempt to identify key areas of success and those that need improvement. At the end of the year, we will produce data that shows the societal impact of the MAT program as well as prepare a comprehensive final report summarizing the program evaluation. We will then present the findings to the stakeholders and distribute the information to other communities attempting to also combat the opiate epidemic. With this timeline, the evaluation can successfully find better ways to enhance the effectiveness of the MAT program to better the individuals who re-integrated into society.

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| Task | Month 1 | Month 2 | Months 3-5 | Month 6 | Month 7 | Months 8-10 | Months 11-12 |
| Collect initial information and previous data | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In-depth data gathering, interviews, and psychological assessments |  | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Monitor inmates and program adherence |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |  |
| Compile incarceration phase data and preliminary reports |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |
| Post-incarceration data collection and weekly check-ins |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |
| Monitor sustained sobriety, employment, and housing stability |  |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |
| Analyze final data and compile comprehensive report |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✔ |
| Present findings and distribute reports |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✔ |

**Policy Considerations**

By having a program dedicated to treating these addicts, implementing it, and tracking successful outcomes, the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program aligns with broader federal and state policy efforts to combat the opioid epidemic. The program is consistent with the mandates provided by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) by promoting treatment and recovery by expanding prevention and education efforts (*CARA | CADCA*, 2025). It also adheres to the best practices outlined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As the program grows it needs to be maintained in the sense of making sure to keep up with their compliance with evolving legislation about addiction and treatment of it, resources and access for incarcerated individuals, and the combat against opioid overdose prevention.

This initiative supports Sarasota County’s commitment to public health and safety by addressing opioid dependency as both a medical condition and a community challenge (*Welcome to Sarasota County Sheriff’s, FL*, n.d.). Policies governing the MAT program emphasize the requirement of evidence-based approaches, fair and reasonable access to treatment, and continuity of care after their release. This guarantees that the participating inmates are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and help necessary for sustained recovery, reducing recidivism and reducing the societal impact of substance abuse, specifically opiates.

The grant will allow the Sheriff's Office to refine its program and pursue continual advancement, ensuring that the MAT program remains adaptable to legal changes while maintaining the best possibilities for incarcerated individuals to be able to return successfully to society. Additionally, the evaluation funded through this grant can enhance program effectiveness, reduce possible costs by finding better and more efficient practices, and support the distribution of findings to other jurisdictions facing similar challenges. By prioritizing these considerations, the SCSO aims to become a model for addressing addiction within the criminal justice system.

**Budget and Budget Justification**

The requested budget and funding of $50,000 will be dispersed to further improve the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) programs infrastructure. This will guarantee that the program and the inmates in the program receiving the assistance have the best possible outcomes. This budget will be divided into three main areas: program expansion, staffing, and process evaluation. Approximately $20,000 will be committed to the updates of current resources and tools necessary for effective treatment. This includes purchasing medications, educational materials for the participants, and updates to technology like software to track patient progress. $15,000 will be spent on staffing needs and development. This includes direct payments to independent addiction counselors who come in with a fresh set of eyes, as well as developing the current employees to expand their knowledge and functions in the program. The remaining $15,000 will fund the program evaluation process. This will cover the needs of data collection, analysis, and reporting of all program outcomes.

With the budget divided up into these key three areas, it will allow the Sheriff’s Office to advance their MAT program, help with efficiency, and possibly create a base for others to build upon. This budget is justified by the immediate improvement that it could have on the inmates returning to society, as well as to society itself. By investing in these critical areas, the program can continue to provide meaningful support to incarcerated individuals and the broader community. In the full scheme of things, the money for this grant has the ability to fully pay back the community. By having less citizens out there with opiate dependencies, the burden on the local government also decreases. The expenses of ambulances, hospital care, and corrections will decrease with the decrease of the opiate crisis. If successful, the money from this grant will be used to save the local government money in the future that can be applied elsewhere because of the smaller burden from the crisis. Another potential possible success story from this program, is previous addicts who have been able to manage to stay clean, may also recommend this program to the users that they used to be associated with as they now see the risks and dangers of living that kind of life. Thank you for your consideration of funding this $50,000 grant to better our community, the intentions are purely to benefit the community that the SCSO has already established that they care for so much.

**References**

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