

NATSAP Research Network: Development of the Golden Thread

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs started a large-scale outcomes research initiative among member programs approximately 10 year ago. Participants collect data from clients and parents at admission, discharge, and 6 & 12 months post discharge. These data are stripped of identifying information and stored in a large database. Researchers analyze these data and use the results for publication/presentation, informing treatment, and persuading insurance companies to pay for services.

Participation in the NATSAP research network is currently voluntary. Participating programs are financially responsible for all associated costs involved in data collection. A team of researchers, funded by NATSAP, handle analysis of the data.

Each participating program subscribes to an online data collection platform called OutcomeTools. OutcomeTools accounts are owned by the program and are not connected.

The Problem:

When client participate in more than one NATSAP researching program the client and parents are asked to complete the same consent and other forms redundantly. These redundancies reduce the likelihood of continued participation. Additionally, because these data are collected by different programs and deidentified before being added to the database researchers are unable to link sequences of data to the same client resulting in a limited view of the truth about client change over time.

The Solution:

Software Development: The Golden Thread

- Enables programs to access all consented data from prior and future placement. (Eliminates redundancies and makes it easier for programs to secure post-discharge data from clients still receiving treatment services)
- Matches clients in the aggregate database (Allowing researchers to study a more accurate view of client progress)

The Need:

- Funding for software
- \$175K for initial development (can be broken into installments over 24 months)
- \$24K annually for system maintenance

Golden Thread Development: Funding Options

Any single option, or combinations of the options in the following list may be considered:

- NATSAP General Fund
- Assess a fee to programs participating in the NATSAP research network.
- Other associations interested in joining the NATSAP research network (IECA, Therapeutic Consultants Association, Young Adult Transition Association, Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Council, Association of Children's Residential Centers)
- Research grant
- Parents of alumni
- Non-profit organizations (i.e. Anasazi Foundation, Sky's the Limit Fund, The LOA Fund)
- Universities interested in accessing the database for research
- NATSAP member sponsorships
- Crowd source campaign (i.e. Kickstarter)

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