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### Improving Utilization of Buprenorphine in a Residency Program

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# Improving Utilization of Buprenorphine in a Residency Program

Christopher Bender, MD; Amy Dechet, MD

## Project Aims

Improve the care for patients with opioid use disorder at PPMC through improved utilization and understanding of the use of buprenorphine

Achieve 100% buprenorphine waiver completion among residents in the PPMC internal medicine residency program

## Background and Local Problem

Opioids were involved in almost 50,000 drug overdose deaths in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Buprenorphine is one of three FDA approved medical treatments for opioid use disorder, but providers must apply for a waiver to prescribe it

Most residents at PPMC lacked a waiver at the onset of the program

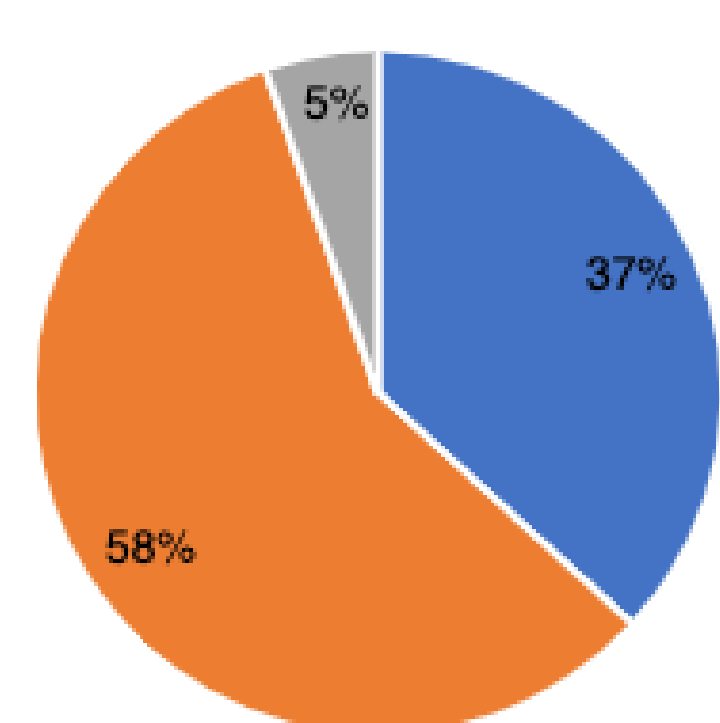
Waivered providers were not being tracked by the program

Patients needing a buprenorphine prescription might be unable to receive one

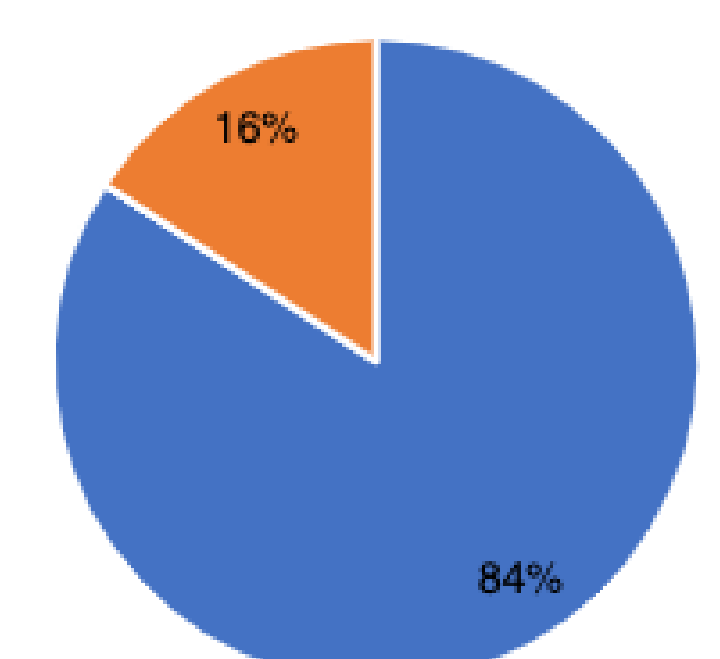
## Gathering Baseline Understanding

- 19 out of 31 total residents responded to a survey regarding prior experience with the use of buprenorphine
- Of residents surveyed, only 4 had completed both required training and a waiver allowing for the prescription of buprenorphine

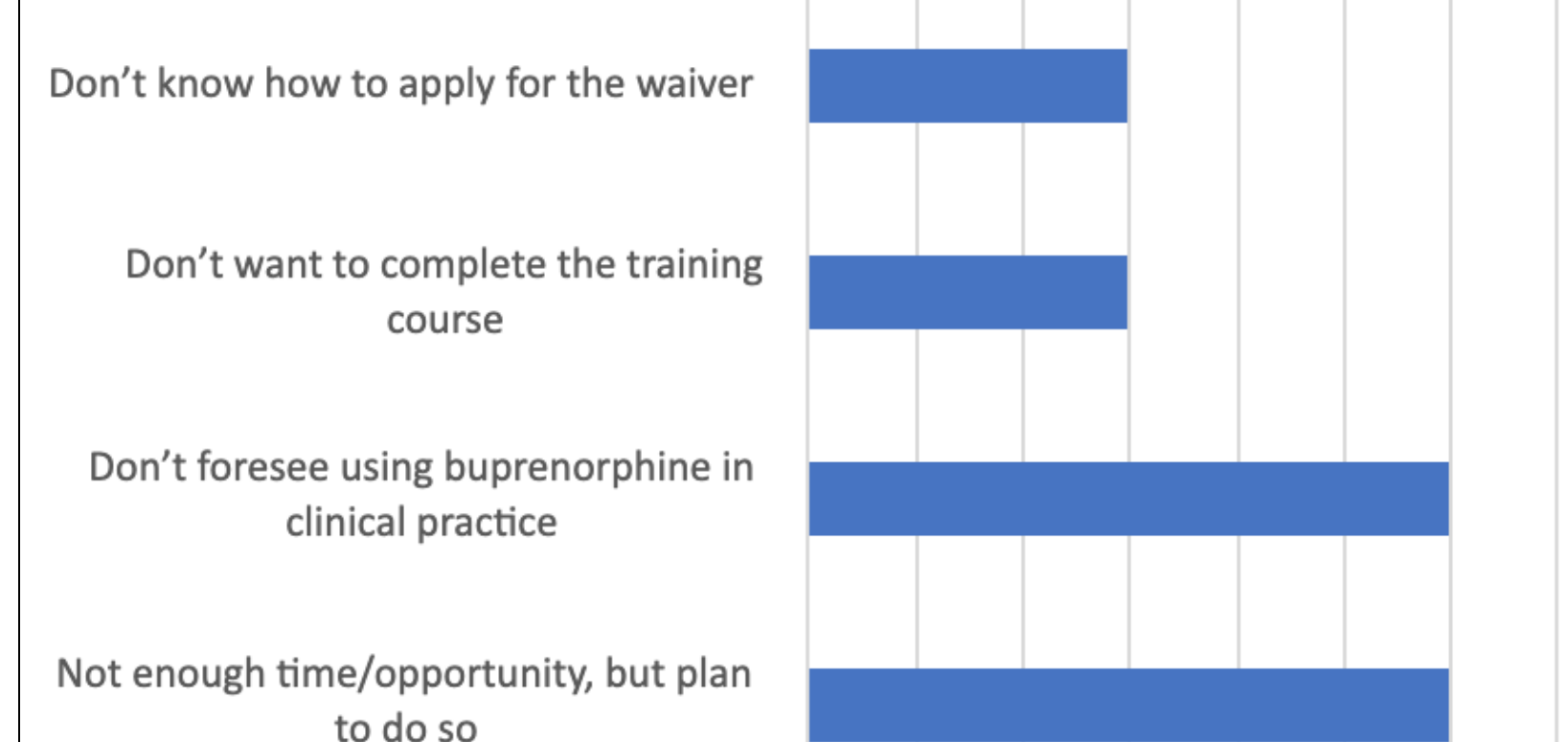
Inpatient Inductions Performed



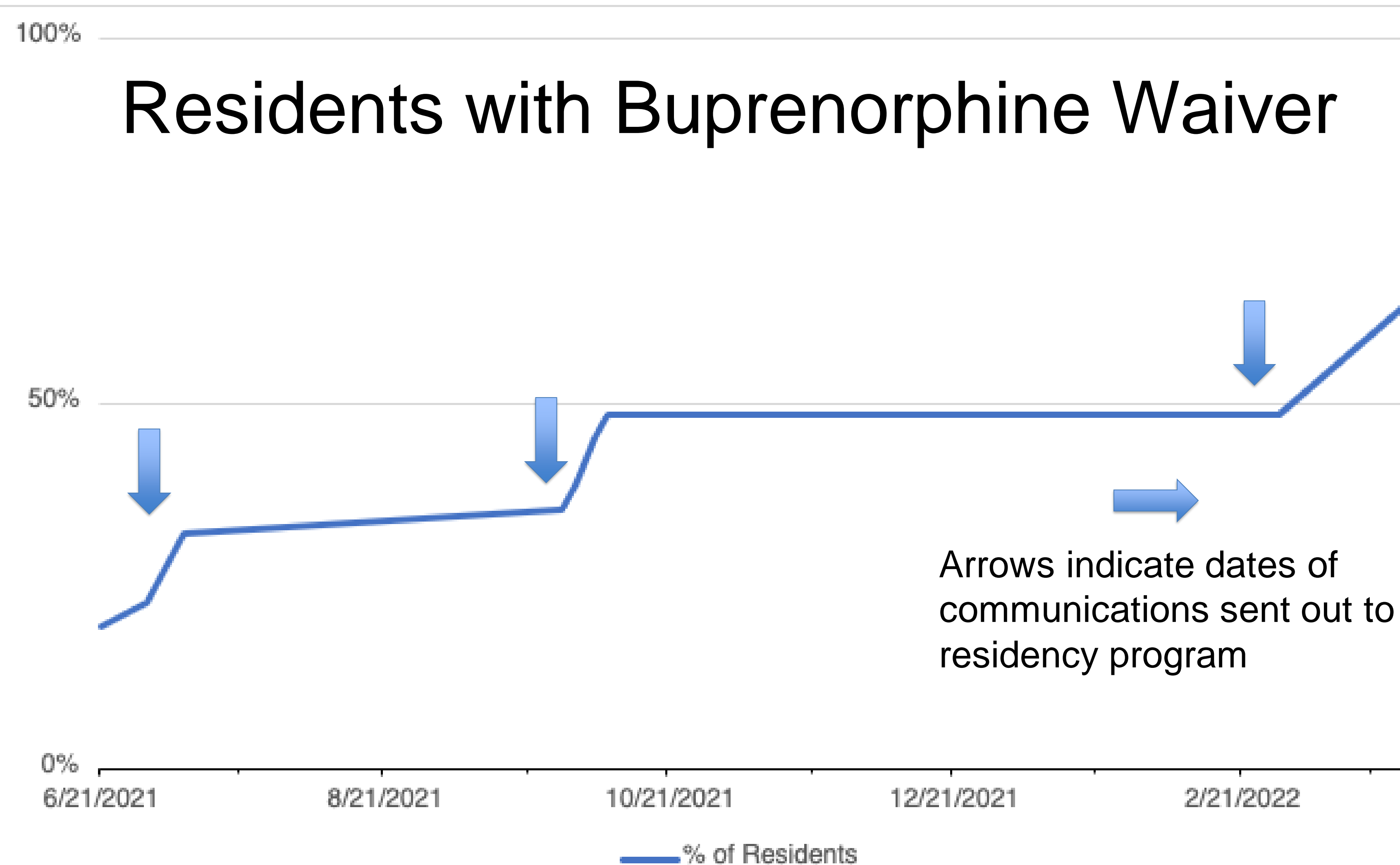
Outpatient Inductions Performed



Provided Reasons for not Obtaining Waiver



## Tracking Waiver Progress



## Timeline of Changing Legal Environment<sup>2</sup>

- 1974 – Narcotic Addict Treatment Act creates strict regulatory environment for the use of methadone in the treatment of opioid use disorder
- 1989 – Language changed to apply to broader scope of drugs used in opioid use
- 2000 – Drug Addiction Treatment Act allows for the outpatient prescription of schedule III, IV, and V drugs for the treatment of opioid use disorder after completion of a waiver
- 2002 – Buprenorphine (schedule III) FDA approved for the treatment of opioid use disorder
- January 2021 – Trump administration announces plan to eliminate need for waiver
- April 2021 – Biden administration reviews policy, keeps waiver requirement while eliminating need for training course for those prescribing to less than 50 patients

## Targeted Interventions

Residents were provided with explicit instructions on how to apply for a waiver, with screenshots included as pictured below

- Go to <https://buprenorphine.samhsa.gov/forms/select-practitioner-type.php> and start a new application (select no for the first question about being a direct federal employee)
- Fill out your State medical license number and DEA number as below:

## Using Quality Improvement Tools

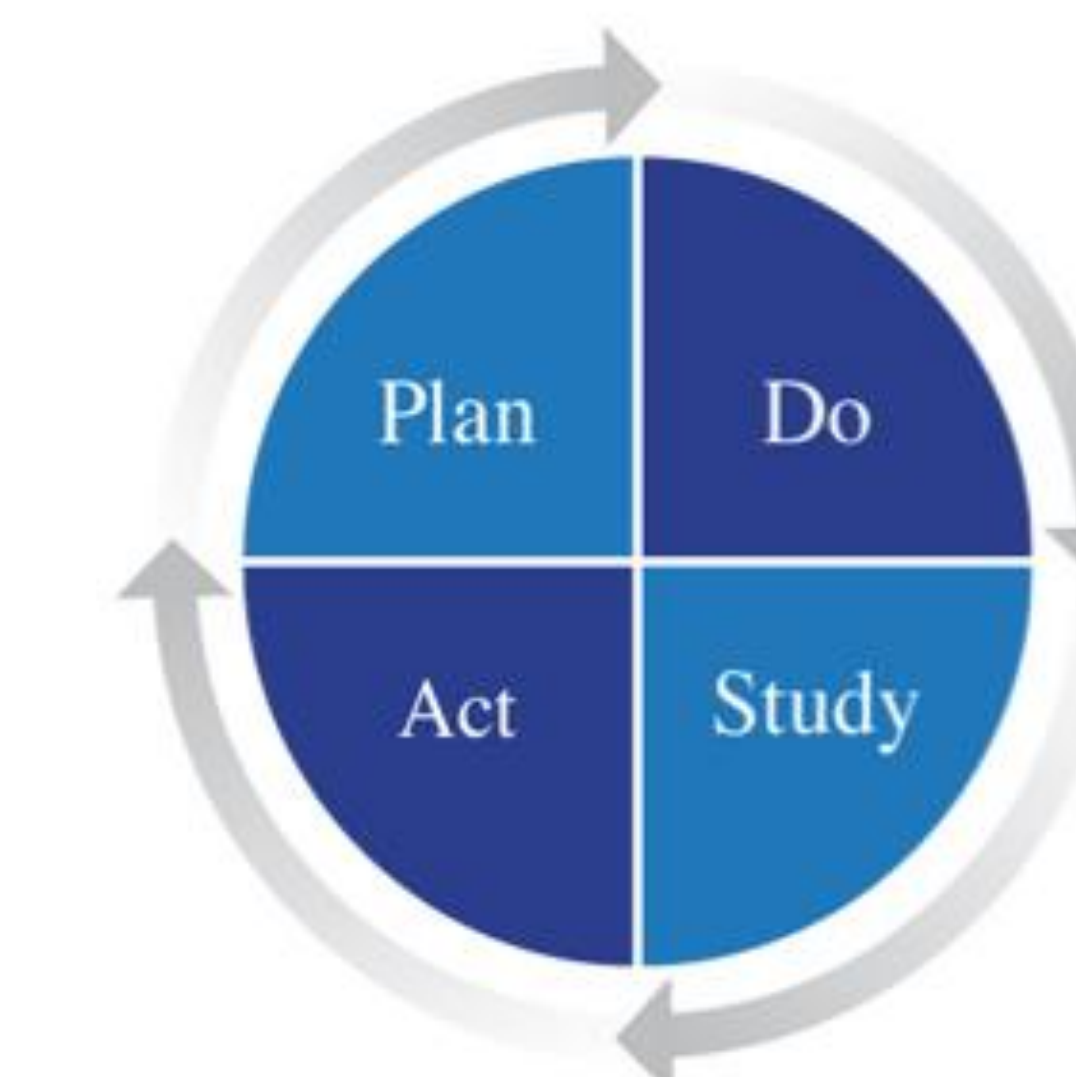
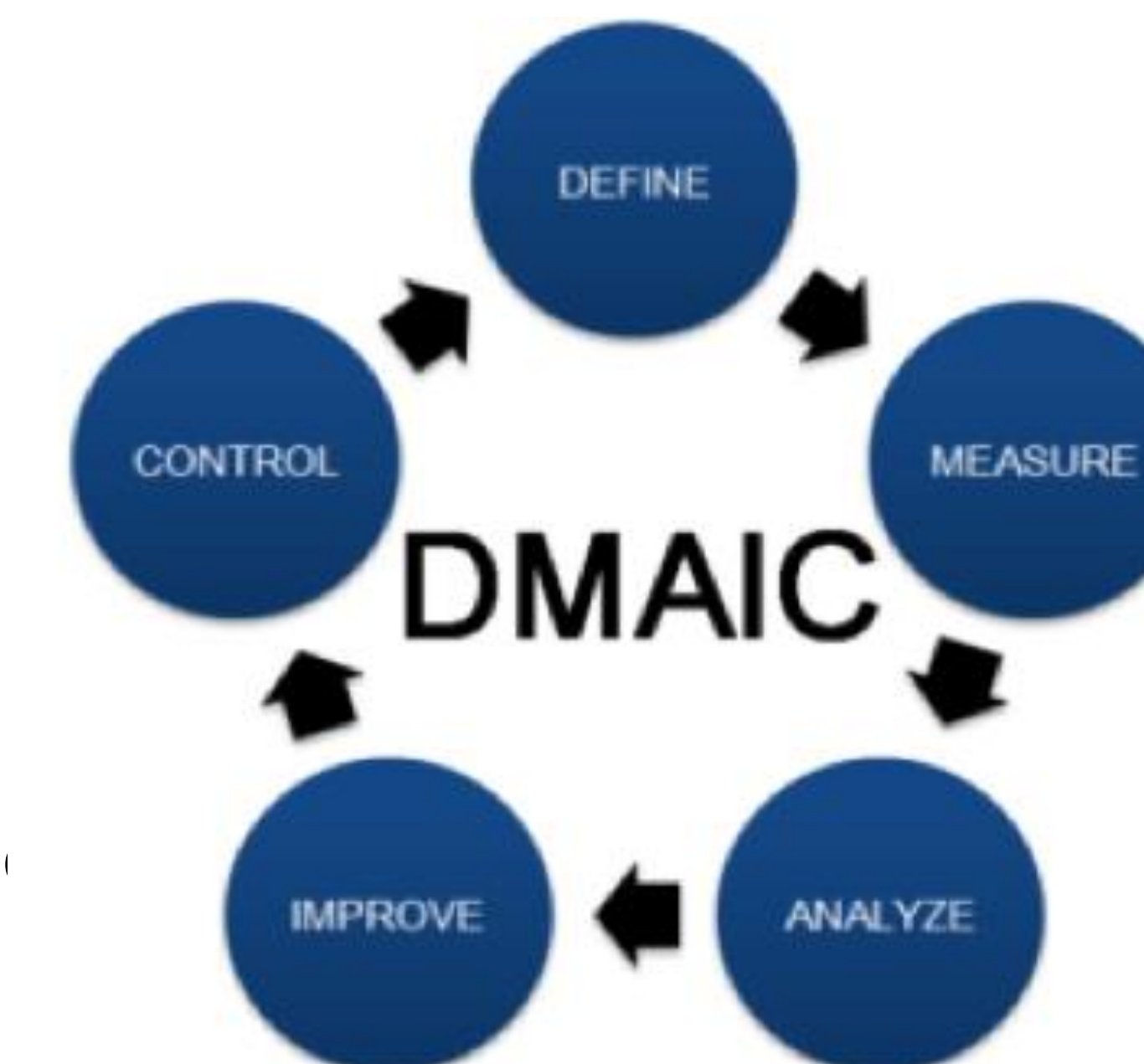
**Define** – Early on in the project, tracking buprenorphine waiver status was identified as a measurable way to help improve access to buprenorphine

**Measure** – A comprehensive review of resident waiver status using confirmation by DEA number on the SAMHSA database was completed to define and track waiver status over time

**Analyze** – Unwaivered residents were asked about barriers to completing a waiver

**Improve** – Targeted communications were sent notifying residents of their status and instructions on how to apply. Later iterations of the communication included screenshots of the application process and protected time for the application

**Control** – In future years, waiver applications will be built into the intern onboarding process to maintain waiver status across the program



**Plan, Do, Study, Act** – PDSA cycles were applied over the course of the project to help improve results in completing waivers for more residents. Effects can be seen in the jumps in progress at the point of each intervention.

## Results and Conclusions

- In March of the 2021-22 academic year waiver completion status had improved to 65% of residents, compared to only 19% at the onset of the year.
- Targeted interventions, explicit instructions, and protected time were effective in increasing the number of residents with a waiver allowing prescription of buprenorphine.
- Next steps planned to help get additional providers waived include implementing the application as a part of onboarding for new residents.

## References

- Drug Overdose Deaths. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/index.html>. Page last updated March 3rd, 2021.
- Statutes, Regulations, and Guidelines. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Accessed at <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/statutes-regulations-guidelines#DATA-2000>. Last Updated: 11/18/2021