Celebrate National Public Health Week with SOAR

It’s National Public Health Week (April 2-8, 2018) and, like our partners and providers around the country, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is helping to raise awareness of how homelessness impacts public health. This year’s annual theme, coordinated by the American Public Health Association, is “Changing Our Future Together.” The theme focuses on how we can work together to make sure that the places where we live, work, worship, and play are healthy and safe.

The great work you do each day in using the SOAR program to increase access to income and health insurance has a dramatic impact in our efforts to end homelessness so we can change our future together. The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center encourages you to use National Public Health Week as a catalyst for taking one extra step towards ending homelessness in your community. No matter how big or small, if we all take a single step together, we’ll get there!

It’s National Social Security Month!

By Everett Lo, Social Security Administration’s Regional Public Affairs Office in the New York Region

National Social Security Month is celebrated in April and is dedicated to educating you about Social Security programs and services. From programs that help support you through life’s journey, to services that help put you in control, to systems that help protect what’s important to you, Social Security is committed to helping secure today and tomorrow for you and your family.
During National Social Security Month, we encourage people to take control of their future with my Social Security. Create a my Social Security account to check your earnings history, confirm you have enough credits to retire, see an estimate of future benefits while still working, or manage your monthly benefits once you begin receiving them. You can also check the status of your claim or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card, and get an instant benefit verification letter.

For more than 80 years, Social Security has changed to meet the needs of our customers. During National Social Security Month, and throughout the year, Social Security puts you in control with secure access to your information anytime, anywhere. From estimating or managing your benefits, requesting a replacement Social Security card, to retiring online, visit SocialSecurity.gov today, and see what you can do online.

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**Sharing Our Success**

**Washington, D.C.**

**DDS Approval in 4 Hours!**

Miriam’s Kitchen is thrilled to share this recent SOAR success. The Department of Disability Services (DDS) decided a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) claim for us in 4 hours, and the number of days from application submission to decision was 35! Here’s how it happened: New SOAR Leader, Angela Owczarek received an approval from DDS in 4 hours, when she took a few extra hours to read through a claimant’s medical records prior to submission. We’re especially proud of Angela’s work because this was her first SOAR claim. Congratulations, Angela and Miriam’s Kitchen!

*Stay tuned for an upcoming SOAR Voices post on this incredible case!*

**A Day in the Life of a SOAR Lead**

Ashley Moore, Washington, D.C.’s SOAR co-lead based at Bread for the City (BFC), wrote a blog for National Social Work Month, *A day in the life of a social worker: BFC’s SOAR Manager and DC SOAR Team Lead*. Her detailed descriptions of a typical day highlight how flexible, creative, and persistent our SOAR Leads are! Thanks for sharing, Ashley!

**Disability Determination Process Small Grant Program Grantees Publish Paper on Housing and SSI/SSDI, Note SOAR Program**

Zachary Glendening and Erin McCauley, two recipients of the Disability Determination Process Small Grant Program (DDP), have published the paper they developed under their 2017 DDP grant in the Disability and Health Journal. The paper, *Long-term housing subsidies and SSI/SSDI income: Creating health-promoting contexts for families experiencing housing instability with disabilities*, explores the relationships between disabilities and SSI/Social Security Disability Insurance income reported when families enter emergency shelters. In the paper’s conclusion, the authors note that expanding the SOAR program may be one way to improve income assistance for eligible individuals. Congratulations, Zachary and Erin!

Do you have a success story that you would like featured in a SOAR eNews? Use our form to submit it to the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center!
Events

**SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls**

*April 10, 2018; 1:00 p.m. ET*

The next SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call will take place April 10 at 1:00 p.m. ET! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center hosts this series of informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country. Participants can login to ask about any SOAR-related question they may have.

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**SOAR Webinar Series on Completing Quality SOAR Applications**

Over the coming months, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center will host a webinar series on completing quality SOAR applications. This series will walk SOAR providers through two different aspects of a quality SOAR disability application—documenting work history information and using Social Security’s Listings. Save the dates for these two webinars:

- **Work History Information**: *April 25, 2018; 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET*. This webinar will discuss strategies for obtaining accurate work history information. The presenters will review how vocational evaluations and assessments are useful when assisting an individual with a SOAR application. You will hear from SOAR providers and a DDS representative who will share a variety of vocational resources to improve disability applications.

- **Using the Listings**: *June 27, 2018; 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET*. Save the date for the next webinar in this series! More information, including registration details, will be released soon.

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**Register for the April 25 webinar on work history information!**

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**Recent Stories from the SOAR Voices Blog**
Federal Updates

Social Security's Ninth National Disability Forum

April 18, 2018; 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. ET

The Social Security Administration is hosting its ninth National Disability Forum on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET. Attendees may participate in the forum via teleconference in listening mode only.

In this forum, SSA will explore ideas to enhance its instructions for the Representative Payee program. Your input is needed on how SSA can best assess a beneficiary’s ability to direct the management of his or her benefits. SSA is also interested in feedback on what role a supporter may play for such beneficiaries.

Submit your feedback to SSA on IdeaScale by April 6, 2018. Issues for comment that may be of interest to SOAR providers include:

- How should SSA assess a beneficiary’s ability to direct the management of his or her benefits?
- Should SSA consider a beneficiary’s disability or age when making a decision about his or her ability to direct the management of benefits?
- Are there indicators that a beneficiary is not able to direct the management of his or her benefits? If so, please explain.

Campaign for Disability Employment

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, the Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE) is a collaborative effort among several disability and business organizations that is working to change attitudes about disability and employment. The newly re-vamped website has numerous resources for jobseekers and employees, including resume writing tips, information about job accommodations, and job search tools. For employers, the
CDE provides toolkits on recruiting and hiring people with disabilities and creating an inclusive workspace.

**Partner News**

**HHRN Webinar: Support our Heroes: Overview and Clinical Interventions**

*April 12, 2018; 12:30-2:00 p.m. ET*

SAMHSA’s Homeless and Housing Resource Network (HHRN) is launching a new webinar series, *Support our Heroes: Overview and Clinical Interventions*. This series will provide an overview of the specialized needs of Veterans and individuals with military experience who are experiencing homelessness and behavioral health conditions. Content will include: characteristics of Veterans and other individuals with military experience who experience or are at risk of homelessness, and the clinical interventions, support services and collaborations that benefit them. Topics will include: traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, domestic violence, re-integration challenges, health concerns, substance use, serious mental illness, as well as strengths/assets, common among individuals with military experience.

This series will be moderated by Pat Tucker, a national expert, speaker and trainer on empowering individuals experiencing homelessness. Join us for presentations and lively discussions with:

- Gregory Leskin, Ph.D., Program Director for Military and Veteran Families Program for UCLA/Duke University’s National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.
- Angela Wright, J.D., Assistant Director for SAMHSA’s Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance Center at Policy Research Associates, Inc.
- Donna Aligata, Project Director for SAMHSA’s Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance Center at Policy Research Associates, Inc.

*Registration is required for participation.*

**National Center for Homeless Education Webinars**

The National Center for Homeless Education is hosting a series of webinars in April, which may be of interest to SOAR providers. Topics of interest to SOAR providers include:

- Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Homeless Students under Every Student Succeeds Act
- McKinney-Vento 101: Understanding the Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness
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