Aurora Mental Health & Recovery Reduces Time to Remission by 56% and Increases Access by 30% With Owl

+ Aurora
Mental Health & Recovery

Aurora Mental Health & Recovery (AMHR) is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) with a broad array of mental health services in Aurora, Colorado, operating six outpatient facilities and five residential facilities.

With Owl, Aurora Mental Health & Recovery is committed to using measurement-based care to improve outcomes and expand access for their clients, leading to 87% patient engagement, a 56% reduction in time to remission, and 30% increase in access.

The Challenge

Over the past 15 years, Aurora Mental Health & Recovery has explored a myriad of solutions to collect, report, and track patient outcomes data. From using paper forms to creating in-house measures to creating processes to fulfill grant requirements, each solution resulted in substantial barriers to implementing true measurement-based care.

To support their continued commitment to measurement-based care, AMHR used the CCBHC criteria to "collect, track, and report data and quality metrics as required by the statute and criteria" as a highlighted need in their grant application to advocate for an innovative solution and a systematic approach to track patient outcomes.

"We tried a number of solutions over the years before Owl. We implemented a system on paper, we have measures in our EHR, but what we lacked was consistency and ease of use as well as ease of oversight of the process."

Kathie Snell, MA
Chief Strategy and Operations Officer

Aurora Mental Health & Recovery History of Outcomes Tracking

PROCESS	CHALLENGE
Statewide with CBHC using CCAR, ORS/SRS, PCOMS	Lacked reliability, validity, inconsistency, aggregation
Aurora Research Institute measures	Lacked reliability, validity, low completion rate
AMHR prescriber green sheet (PHQ9 on paper)	Lacked system integration, not trackable
Multiple grant measures	Lacked data aggregation
MyOutcomes	Lacked consistency, aggregation, reliability

The Solution

Next, AMHR created requirements to help choose the best and most comprehensive measurement-based care (MBC) solution for their organization.

Overall requirements of a measurement-based care solution:

- Covers all ages
- Covers all conditions
- Can be implemented flexibly depending on need
- Uses valid and reliable measure(s)
- Uses a MBC approach (i.e. measuring functioning at narrow and regular intervals)
- Actively impacts client care
- Reports overall progress and outcomes
- Easy to aggregate data at multiple levels: client, clinician, team, division, organization
- Able to integrate into EHR
- Has a wide variety of measures so there would be appropriate measures for all of our specialty populations

Ease of use for clients:

- Possible to complete measures on multiple devices, either client owned or center owned
- Ability to see progress regularly

Ease of use for clinicians:

- Ability to see client-completed data within the EHR
- Easy to find and review progress to date on measures
- Ability to review progress or regression with clients in session

Availability of data:

- Ability to access raw data in order to analyze and use for advancing clinical care

> *"Ultimately, we chose Owl as our partner. From high rates of patient and clinician engagement to completely automating measurement-based care to the data insights that help us improve care, Owl offers everything our organization needs."*
>
> Kathie Snell, MA | Chief Strategy and Operations Officer

Better Data.
Better Insights.
Better Outcomes.

Owl

The Roll-Out and Implementation

To start, AMHR chose an internal champion to help implement Owl who is a respected leader throughout the organization, understands assessments, and believes in the power of measurement-based care.

Implementation started with two teams that:

1 Had well-established leadership and staff

2 Were already productive and operating well

3 Included staff who were enthusiastic about the implementation

4 Had fewer complexities among their client communities (i.e. language, specialty population, etc)

By initially starting with two teams, AMHR was able to start training with smaller groups, test workflows, and collect helpful feedback for implementation across the organization. The clinician feedback from the first Owl users was positive--the two initial teams reported Owl is user-friendly and clinicians quickly started to receive good feedback on their client outcomes.

Next, AMHR integrated Owl with their EHR, SmartCare. They went live with the integration with the two initial teams before implementing throughout the organization.

An important factor in AMHR's implementation of Owl was having the internal champion work closely with each clinical team. The champion worked to help each team understand how Owl works, review the Owl measures library, discuss workflow considerations, and act as a consultant. Because Owl can be flexibly configured depending on the needs of each team and the clients they're serving, each clinical team can utilize Owl in a way that uniquely meets their specific needs.

"In my clinical work, I find Owl to be really useful in tracking client progress over time. This has guided my treatment with clients and opened up some positive conversations about treatment, risk, and progress on goals. The graphs are really helpful and easy for clinicians and clients to understand. The screening tools have also been beneficial in determining differential diagnoses."

Carol Reszka, LCSW | Clinical Manager

Now, AMHR trains all new hires on Owl, including managers and directors who use Owl to track usage and success of the program.

"Choosing a system that will allow us to embed the practice into the work that was already occurring in our clinical teams was a really important aspect. We're seeing amazing results from using Owl, so adoption gets faster and faster."

Kathie Snell, MA
Chief Strategy and Operations Officer

The Results

Not only did clinicians at AMHR provide anecdotal evidence that implementing measurement-based care with Owl helps them provide the most effective and efficient care, but they also have the data to prove it.

✓ Clients are highly engaged

AMHR achieves **87% patient engagement rate**–reaching as high as 95% of clients completing all measures assigned to them. When patients are deeply engaged with Owl, they are also deeply engaged in their own care and get deeper insight and understanding of their symptomatology and progress, improving therapeutic alliance and reducing time to remission.

87% Patient engagement rate

✓ Quick responsiveness to suicidal ideation and self-harm alerts

Owl alerts the AMHR team of patients with suicidal ideation or those at risk for self harm. The AMHR team has a **99%+** acknowledgement rate for first-time patient suicide alerts, and over **90%** of these had a new or modified schedule change within a week of the alert, indicating that AMHR staff immediately responded to maintain the safety and wellbeing of their clients.

99% Acknowledgement rate

> *"The suicidal ideation alerts from Owl are invaluable. Some clients may not verbally report suicidal ideation in session, even when directly asked. The flags from Owl provide another way that we can assess for suicidality and we have found that some clients seem more comfortable disclosing information via Owl. The alerts help us build safety plans for more clients who need them."*
>
> Kirsten Anderson, Psy.D. | Chief Clinical Officer

✓ Clients get better, faster

Clients using Owl consistently experience a faster time to remission. Specifically, they see a **56% faster time to remission**, compared to clients that don't consistently use Owl to report their symptoms and outcomes.

And, to further understand treatment outcomes for their client population, the combination of AMHR clinical care with consistent use of Owl leads to **29%** of incoming clients with a severe risk stratification having clinically-significant improvement by week 6 of treatment.

56% Faster time to remission

CLINICALLY-SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT WITHIN 6 WEEKS	
Severe reduced to lower threshold	29%
Moderately severe reduced to lower threshold	45%
Moderate reduced to below clinical cutoff	36%

* Clinically-significant improvement defined as reaching and maintaining less severe threshold based on PHQ-9 and GAD-7 assessments.

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✓ Expand access with existing resources

Owl not only helps clients get better faster, but it also gives AMHR data insights to help understand patients who have reached remission and recovery and are now potential candidates for stepped-down care or discharge. For example, in August 2022, **30% of visits** were for patients below clinical cut off for four or more months. The data presents an opportunity to discharge or step-down clients from care to open appointments for people on their waitlist.

30% of visits with potential for stepped-down care or discharge

> *"We believe that infusing measurement-based care into our practice with Owl and getting beyond just measuring outcomes gives the clinician the opportunity to actually use the data in real time to impact the outcomes of treatment. We can also now look more broadly across our system and see the results of using measurement-based care in those outcomes."*
>
> Kathie Snell, MA | Chief Strategy and Operations Officer

✓ Improved screening and triage

> *"At our Access Clinic, the use of Owl has helped to increase rapport with the client in that it creates an opening to converse more quickly about their needs. This has a positive impact on the clinical relationship and allows the limited session time to be adjusted more effectively to the client's needs."*
>
> Erin Ralston, LPC | Clinical Director

About Owl

Owl gives behavioral health organizations better data, better insights, and better outcomes with its data-driven, evidence-based solutions.

Leading organizations, including Main Line Health, Ascension, Inova Health, Polara Health, and Aurora Mental Health & Recovery, rely on Owl to expand access to care, improve clinical outcomes, and prepare for value-based care.

Owl makes measurement-based care easy to engage patients, optimize treatment, improve care, reduce clinician burden, and capture data to optimize business performance. For more information on our transformational behavioral health solutions, visit owl.health.

Aurora Mental Health & Recovery

Hear Kathie Snell, MA, Chief Strategy and Operations Officer at Aurora Mental Health & Recovery, talk about measurement-based care and outcomes data in the on-demand webinar:

Expanding Access and Improving Clinical Outcomes with Measurement-Based Care

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Better Insights.
Better Outcomes.**

Owl