

County Touchpoints in Access to MAT for Justice-Involved Populations SOR1 Project Activities Background

In the SOR-funded project *Expanding Access to MAT in County Criminal Justice Systems*, the project team quickly learned that persons released from jail and receiving MAT frequently encountered judges, probation officers, child welfare workers, and other justice system personnel who did not consider the person to be “clean” or “drug free” if they were using MAT. Often, clients were encouraged or required by agencies to reduce or terminate MAT in order to qualify for services, be released from probation, or regain custody of their children. Prematurely reducing or terminating MAT places the individual at very high and preventable risk for relapse, overdose and death. In 2019, DHCS created the County Touchpoints in Access to MAT for Justice-Involved Populations project to provide training on addiction and its treatment to six targeted stakeholder groups in criminal justice and human service systems:

- Probation
- Adult Collaborative Courts
- Youth and Dependency Courts
- Child Welfare and Human Services
- Public Defenders
- District Attorneys

County Touchpoints training focuses on the neuroscience of opioid addiction, its treatment, and the role of child welfare and justice system professionals to support their clients in continuation of MAT to sustain recovery. With the help of a seasoned, well-known and recently retired person from each stakeholder group, Health Management Associates (HMA) developed profession-specific workbooks and discussion materials to support the training.

HMA facilitated training sessions across California. Each provided didactic training and profession-specific and county-specific facilitated breakout discussions. Following COVID-19 restrictions, the project converted to virtual training. In all, more than 1,600 people participated in these sessions.

Training content was professionally videotaped and converted into web-based training modules that organizations can use to conduct internal on-going training on addiction and its treatment. Materials are available free of charge through the [project training website](#).