Background

- Over 81,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12 months ending in May 2020.¹
- In Maryland, estimated 90% of drug overdose deaths in 2018 involved opioids².
- As of March 2020, 5,083 PAs hold waivers for 30, 100, or 275 patients, for a total of 3.6% of PAs. Both MOUD and telehealth enabled care are effective for treating OUD⁴.
- Various initiatives on the use of telehealth and Medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) have been developed and shown to be effective in treating opioid use disorder (OUD) patients.
- In consideration of current limitations to SUD treatment complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential and timely for health professionals including physician assistants (PAs) to be familiar with telehealth enabled treatment practices.

Project Objectives

1) To create an innovative evidence-based, patient-centered, culturally sensitive, and sustainable MOUD telehealth course that can be adopted and incorporated into the curriculum of health professionals
2) To disseminate evidence-based information on telehealth enabled MOUD practices within the four Maryland PA programs and associated clinics
3) To increase the number of buprenorphine waivered PAs particularly in underserved settings of Maryland

Methods

Phase I
- Development of a scoping review on the current evidence of opioid treatment and telehealth-enabled MOUD

Phase II (Mar-May)
- Needs assessment for PA students and instructors, acquired by online survey
- Resulting data used for curriculum mapping

Phase II (May-Dec)
- OUD and telehealth-enabled course developed
- Implementation through virtual modalities using standardized patients simulations
- Participant’s evaluation of curriculum

Results and Anticipated Impacts

- Project iM.A.T.T.E.R. needs assessment noted a scarcity of clinical sites and resources for the instruction of MOUD.
- Addiction health assessments and standardized patient activities have been scheduled for PA students in a University of Maryland PA program.
- Pending data acquired via future learning event(s), additional resources will be disseminated providing supplementation with service-learning modules bolstering learner’s knowledge, skills and attitudes about managing OUD patients utilizing a telehealth model.
- Curated MOUD course materials have been made available on a public database for self-paced student centered instruction

References