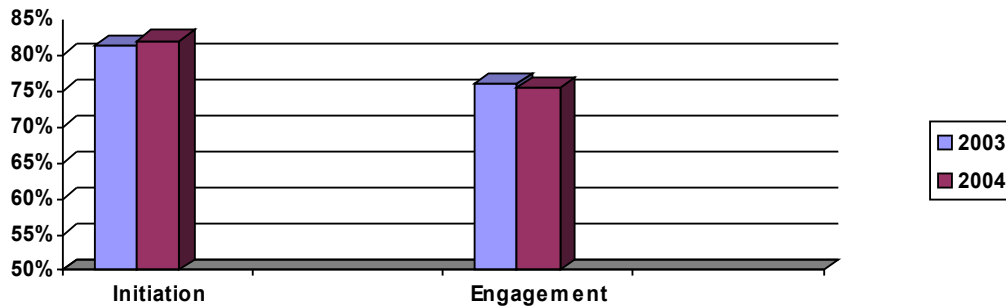


## Monitoring Initiation and Engagement of Alcohol and Other Drug Dependence Treatment

Western Behavioral Health (WBH), in conjunction with UPMC Health Plan, monitors two indicators related to Initiation and Engagement of Alcohol and Other Drug Dependence Treatment. Initiation is defined as the percentage of adults diagnosed with alcohol or other drug dependence (AOD) who initiate treatment through either an inpatient AOD admission or an outpatient service for AOD abuse or dependence and any additional AOD services within 14 days. Engagement is an intermediate step between initially accessing care and completing a full course of treatment. It measures the percentage of members that engage in treatment with two additional AOD treatments within 30 days after initiating treatment. To monitor these rates, WBH uses a standard national methodology contained in the Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS).

Rates for these measures have been as follows:



Calendar Year	Initiation	Engagement
2003	81.37%	76.01%
2004	82.02%	75.51%

Our 2004 calendar year rate for initiation is much higher than the national HEDIS average of 45.94% as well as much higher than the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of 56.76%. Our 2004 rate for engagement is also much higher than the national average of 15.46% and the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile at 26.32%.

WBH and UPMC Health Plan also monitor these rates via HEDIS for the Medicare population. Calendar year 2004 rates for the Medicare population are: 58.02% for initiation and 34.35% for engagement.

Barriers to members starting and engaging in substance abuse treatment may include:

- Member resistance to drug and alcohol treatment
- Fear of the stigma of receiving drug and alcohol services
- Lack of community supports
- Lack of coordination of care between physical and behavioral health clinicians

Medicare specific barriers include: there are less Medicare licensed drug and alcohol providers (however, no access issues have been identified) and the Medicare population not seeing substance use as an addiction and therefore being less likely to seek treatment.

WBH and UPMC Health Plan have implemented the following interventions to improve the rates of initiation and engagement of alcohol and other drug dependence:

- Adoption of the National Institute on Drug Abuse *Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide* treatment guideline approved by the Quality and Care Management Committee on April 18, 2005
- Posting of educational resources on our website for providers and members
- Distribution of a Behavioral Health Resource Guide to providers, which included self-help and support groups available to members; this guide is also available to providers and members on our website, as well as UPMC Health Plan's website
- Screening for co-occurring disorders by Care Managers during utilization management reviews
- Posting substance abuse treatment guidelines that include information about screening and interventions for primary care physicians on the UPMC Health Plan website.

WBH and UPMC Health Plan will continue to monitor initiation and engagement of alcohol and other drug dependence treatment and develop additional interventions as needed. If you have found other techniques that are effective in promoting initiation and engagement, we would appreciate hearing from you. Please call us at 1-888-251-2224 with your ideas and comments.

For additional information regarding the assessment of alcohol problems, please visit the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism website at [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov).