

Awards and Media Communications

(links embedded)

- Congratulations to **Dr. Russell Suda** on receiving the statewide *Karen W. Ponder Award*.
- Congratulations to **Karen Calhoun** for receiving the [2021 Anne Lauikaitis Award](#) from the Cabarrus Partnership for Children.
- Check out the [blog post](#) from Atrium Health on the SUN project.
- Excited to share our latest [SUN video](#) featuring Brooke from the SUN project.



- 40 SUN clients served to date
- 91.43% delivered full-term or at 35+ weeks
- 0 infant deaths
- 0 maternal deaths
- CHA is **expanding behavioral health** and substance use disorder (SUD) services to more members in our community
- Behavioral health therapy and **MAT will become available to men and women at CHA**



A note from Dr. Suda



“It has been stated that the opposite of addiction is not abstinence, but rather ‘being loved.’”

I have an update of interest that comes from the NY Times article *“Opioids Feel Like Love. That’s why they’re deadly in tough times”*

Heroin causes the sensation of warmth, safety and love as per Dr. Steven Chang of Yale University’s Department of Neurosciences. Physiologic, internal opioid systems (called endorphins) have evolved to provide internal feelings of social connectedness. This is especially true for connection to family and friends.

Children raised in abusive environments learn to distance themselves from people and this trait makes children from alienating family environments especially vulnerable to the addictive effects of heroin and opioids. The feeling of euphoria experienced by adolescents and young adults from narcotic use is likened to the feeling of comfort that comes from the love of a mother. It has been stated that the opposite of addiction is not abstinence, but rather ‘being loved.’

The SUN Project seeks to promote connectedness to the unborn baby as a natural substitute for the comfort and love sensation that comes from narcotic use. On more than one occasion a SUN patient has pointed to her baby and referred to the baby as her ‘new drug.’

The two foremost goals of the SUN Clinic is to support mother through the pregnancy so she can have a full-term healthy baby and then during the first year postpartum, extending adjunctive medical, behavioral and social service support so that the stress, which all babies present for the mother during that first year, will only result in a bonding love that will keep mother in recovery and baby in a low (ACE) Adverse Childhood Experience family environment through adolescence.

The Opioid Pandemic will be controlled through the promotion of prenatal care, bringing mothers into a bond with their healthy newborns for whom she maintains her intent of recovery without the need for a false sense of warmth, safety and comfort from narcotic euphoria. Thanks to all of you allied with our mission at the SUN Clinic because mothers and babies cannot be brought into this ‘Bond of Comfort and Love’ without a team!

--Dr. Suda





Partner Highlights



- Cabarrus Family Medicine (CFM) now has 6 providers who are waived and 4 of them who are treating clients with SUD.
- Dr. Levy and others at CFM are working closely with the SUN team to address barriers encountered in the treatment of patients with SUD to pave the way for other primary care providers.
- Atrium Health Addiction Services is looking into using grant funds to provide Recovery Support Kits (recreational items that help clients build new skills/activities as part of their recovery process).
- Check out the [blog post](#) from Atrium on the SUN project.

- CHA has received several **new grants** in order to expand behavioral health services.
- **Sonja Bohannon-Thacker** is the Director of the Behavioral Health Department at the Cabarrus Health Alliance.
- Through the ARP funds, three behavioral health clinicians will be hired to provide **mental health services/therapy to any member in our community in need despite ability to pay/health coverage**. One therapist will be bilingual.
- Through the Department of Justice, there will be SUN **expansion efforts providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and behavioral health support services to males and non-pregnant females** in addition to the SUN clients. Services will focus on partners of SUN clients and people recently exiting incarceration or an in-patient treatment program. An MAT provider, behavioral health clinician, and peer support specialist will be joining the CHA team to provide these expanded services.

Research Study Results

The **governance group** has contributed to improving the structure and processes of the SUN project to **improve outcomes for program participants**.

Program participant outcomes demonstrate **high adherence to MAT**: (81%).

Program participants have moderate to **high retention rates** (95.45%) at between 6 and 12 months of treatment.

Direct maternal results indicate that the **average gestational period** for women in the program was 38.37 weeks!

The integrated approach of the program has led to approximately, **61% of program participant needs being met**.

The SUN Project concluded all grant deliverables to close out the 2-year Cross-Sector Innovations Initiative (CSII) through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The UNC School of Government **Research Study on the SUN** project is complete. See highlights under UNC SOG section.

SUN Manager and UNC SOG lawyer presented at the American Public Health Association conference in Denver, CO in October 2021.

SUN is committed to increasing the voice of our community members. A SUN client regularly meets with project staff and is part of the governance committee.

New SUN project **video** with patient story is now available. Check it out [here](#).

Partner Highlights



Rowan County, like many employers, is seeing a large number of staff members leave the workforce. At DSS most of our vacancies are in Economic Services, but we have positions available in Social Work Services as well. We are currently recruiting for Income Maintenance Caseworkers and Child Protective Services Social Workers. Share this link with folks you think may be interested in a career with Rowan County Government. <https://munis-portal.rowancountync.gov/ess/employmentopportunities/default.aspx>

-- Micah Ennis, Director



- **Governance Group Meeting:** May 10, 2022
- **Monthly Care Coordination Meeting:** 2nd Tuesday/month
- **Social Service/POSC/Training Work Group:** 1st Tuesday/month
- **We want to hear from you.**
Please contact Gina Hofert at gina@cabarruspartnership.org with any updates or feedback.

