



**BOLD
THINKERS
DRIVING
REAL-WORLD
IMPACT**

Behavioral Health

The U.S. faces an unprecedented behavioral health crisis among both youth and adults. While exacerbated by COVID-19, mental health and substance use have been among the most complex yet critical issues that our country has faced for the past 40 years. One in five U.S. adults experience a depressive episode or an anxiety disorder each year, and over 20 million Americans have a substance use disorder (SUD). At the same time, the shortage in behavioral health care staff is at a critical level, with an estimated gap of over 30,000 mental health practitioners.

In recognition of the nation's mental health crisis and the ongoing drug epidemic, the Biden Administration has proposed spending billions of dollars on a comprehensive strategy to transform how we understand, access, treat, and integrate behavioral health in and out of health care settings. As a reflection of the wide-reaching impact of mental health and substance use, programs address these issues throughout the federal government, from housing to education and from the criminal justice system to healthcare. Abt Associates believes the key to our nation's well-being rests on building behavioral health solutions that cross the broad expanse of federal work.

Abt has been a trusted partner to the federal government for over 50 years, informing public policy on behavioral health through a comprehensive suite of solutions.

- **Systems Change:** We devise ways to improve health systems and delivery of behavioral health services to increase their impact on health outcomes
- **Evaluation Design & Implementation:** We perform rigorous evaluations and longitudinal studies to collect critical data for decision making to improve prevention and treatment interventions
- **Health Communications & Education:** We design and implement communications campaigns to alert the public to urgent behavioral health issues
- **Capacity-Building:** We provide technical assistance to help organizations and agencies strengthen their capacity to serve individuals with mental health and substance use disorders

- **Collaboration:** We work with individuals with lived experience to understand how to develop and deliver effective services and advocate for policies and practices that promote recovery and holistic well-being

Our experts bring their backgrounds in social work, clinical psychology, public health, and sociology to examine the complex ways that mental health and substance use issues impact the U.S. today. We offer innovative and integrated solutions to a wide range of federal clients, drawing on our knowledge and expertise from one project to another. The projects below provide a sample of our federal work that addresses behavioral health concerns.



Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA).

Peer support specialists and other paraprofessionals play a critical role in mitigating the behavioral health workforce crisis. Abt provides technical assistance to recipients of the Paraprofessional Apprenticeship Technical Assistance (PATA) Program who are supporting children, parents, and custodial guardians impacted by opioid use disorders and other SUDs in high need areas.



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Abt supports SAMHSA's Office of Behavioral Health Equity in its efforts to reduce disparities in access to mental health and SUD services across U.S. populations. As part of the Achieving Behavioral Health Equity (ABHE) project, we provide policy and program support, network building both nationally and at the community level, compilation of best practices and quality improvement strategies, and capacity building for community-based organizations.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In response to the opioid epidemic, federal, state and local governments issued a wide variety of rules and guidance for prevention, treatment, prescribing practices, and recovery.

To understand the effect of the changes, Abt is conducting a rigorous evaluation of practice guidelines and policies for chronic pain management, opioid prescribing, and medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD). *Abt has an extensive body of work related to opioids for the CDC and other clients; please see the QR code on this page for more information.*



Office of Justice Programs (OJP).

OJP strengthens communities and protects the public through innovative leadership and programs. Abt provides support to states, tribes, and local governments that are part of the

Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP). We help grantees identify, respond to, treat, and support those impacted by the use and misuse of opioids, stimulants, and other substances through data/information sharing, data translation and visualization, and research and evaluation methodologies.



Department of Defense (DoD).

Military deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have been associated with a range of mental health challenges for service members and their families.

To better understand the impact of

deployments on spouses and children of service members, Abt conducted a large-scale epidemiologic survey of 10,000 spouses of married service members.



Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The Integrated Care for Kids (InCK) Model targets care

coordination for beneficiaries with complex physical, behavioral health, and social needs. Abt has a nine-year contract to evaluate InCK. Using qualitative and quantitative techniques tailored to different locales, we will capture information about the model's implementation; provider, staff, beneficiary, and caregiver experiences; and how local model variations affect impacts.



Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Many Americans struggle in the labor market even when overall economic conditions are good. As part of the Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families (BEES) project, Abt

conducts rigorous evaluations of innovative programs that increase earnings of low-income families. We lead work on identifying and evaluating programs that blend employment and SUD recovery and treatment services.



Department of Health and Human Services Program Support Center (PSC).

Jail diversion programs depend on both effective implementation of program components and critical contextual factors, including the availability of behavioral

health services. Abt supports evaluation of these contextual factors through an environmental scan and case studies in jail diversion programs across the country.

The Abt Advantage

The behavioral health landscape constantly changes as new challenges arise. Our research findings have prompted major changes in behavioral health policy and practice. They highlight the need for strategies that are culturally responsive and based on solid data. Abt can keep you up to date on the latest trends and provide innovative solutions to help foster prevention and recovery. **We bring together multi-disciplinary expertise and use scientific evidence, advanced technology, and data analytics to inform our work on prevention and treatment in settings ranging from schools to prisons.** As a results-oriented organization, Abt provides practical, measurable, high-value solutions to problems at all levels of government. The goals of our studies and practice guidelines: heal the whole person and build resilient communities.

For More Information

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Scan the QR code for more information on our opioids-related work.



Bold Ideas. Real Results.

Abt Associates is a global consulting and research firm that uses data and bold thinking to improve the quality of people's lives. From increasing crop yields and combatting infectious disease, to ensuring safe drinking water and promoting access to affordable housing—and more—we partner with clients and communities to tackle their most complex challenges.



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