

# Clinician Attitudes Regarding the Treatment of Substance Use Disorder in the COVID-19 Environment

## A survey of 100 addiction-treatment professionals

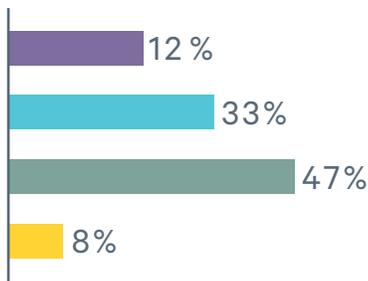
The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting both the occurrence and treatment of substance use disorder (SUD). Alcohol consumption is reported to have increased 55% over last year. *Newsday* reports that in Suffolk County, Long Island there has been a 40% increase in fatal overdoses over the same period in 2019 and in Nassau County, fatal overdoses increased 50%.

In April 2020, we surveyed healthcare professionals who treat patients suffering from substance use disorders to understand how their approach to addiction treatment has evolved in the COVID-19 environment. Eighty percent of the 102 respondents, who treat individuals primarily in an outpatient practice, refer between one to ten patients per year to inpatient facilities and 20% refer greater than 10 patients annually.

### Findings from Survey

There has been a significant increase in virtual therapy for patients suffering from addiction. **Eighty percent of healthcare professionals indicated that telephone and video treatment sessions have increased, with only 23% indicating that the frequency of in-office sessions has remained the same.**

### During COVID-19, the likelihood for clinicians to refer patients to inpatient facilities remains steady



In terms of referring patients to residential addiction treatment centers, 47% indicated their likelihood to refer is the same and 12% said higher during COVID-19 than it was prior to the pandemic.

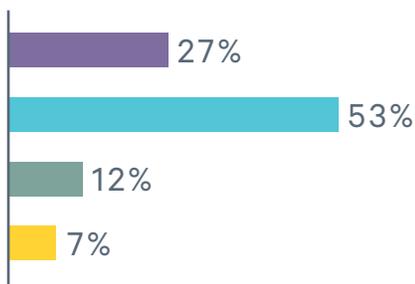
- > More likely to refer to inpatient therapy
- > The pattern or frequency of my recommendations has not changed
- > Less likely to refer to inpatient therapy
- > Other—write in

### Factors that influence facility selection

Factors that influence facility selection	Overall Rank	Score
Excellence of clinical staff	1	499
Excellence and breadth of clinical programs	2	486
Adherence to current guidelines for COVID-19	3	374

The top three factors to influence a clinician's choice of inpatient rehab centers are excellence of clinical staff, excellence and breadth of clinical programs, and adherence to current guidelines for COVID-19.

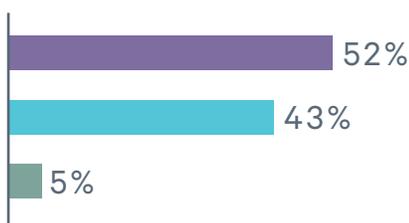
## Clinicians are open to considering new inpatient facilities during COVID-19



For inpatient referrals, 53% of clinicians were open to considering new residential treatment centers during COVID 19.

- > I am staying with the centers that I've always known and trusted
- > I am willing to consider new facilities
- > I am not referring to inpatient treatment centers at this time
- > Other—write In

## An affiliation with a major health system would influence a clinician's selection of an inpatient treatment facility



Clinicians also indicated that an affiliation with a major health system is an influencing factor (52% of clinicians) in their selection of an inpatient addiction treatment facility for their patients.

- > Yes
- > No
- > Other—write In

## Wellbridge, A New Residential Addiction Treatment Facility

As the demand for addiction treatment rises during the COVID-19 pandemic, Wellbridge, a new inpatient facility, opened its doors early to respond to the needs of patients and their families.

Wellbridge is the first addiction treatment facility specifically designed to inspire seamless collaboration between scientists and clinicians, where together they can apply the latest discoveries in addiction research to the most advanced addiction care for a sustainable recovery. Affiliated with Northwell Health, Wellbridge provides OASAS-approved levels of care, treating mind and body, giving people their best chance at a sustainable recovery from addiction.

### Wellbridge offers a safe environment with strict COVID-19 protocols in place. A few of our COVID-19 policies include:

- > Every patient and an accompanying family member will receive a personal COVID-19 test at their home prior to admission and will receive the results within 24 hours
- > At present, every patient will be housed in a private room with bathroom
- > All individual and group treatment sessions will require social distancing and wearing of masks

Learn more at [Wellbridge.org](https://www.wellbridge.org).