Innovative Methods of SAIS to Improve Substance Abuse Treatments

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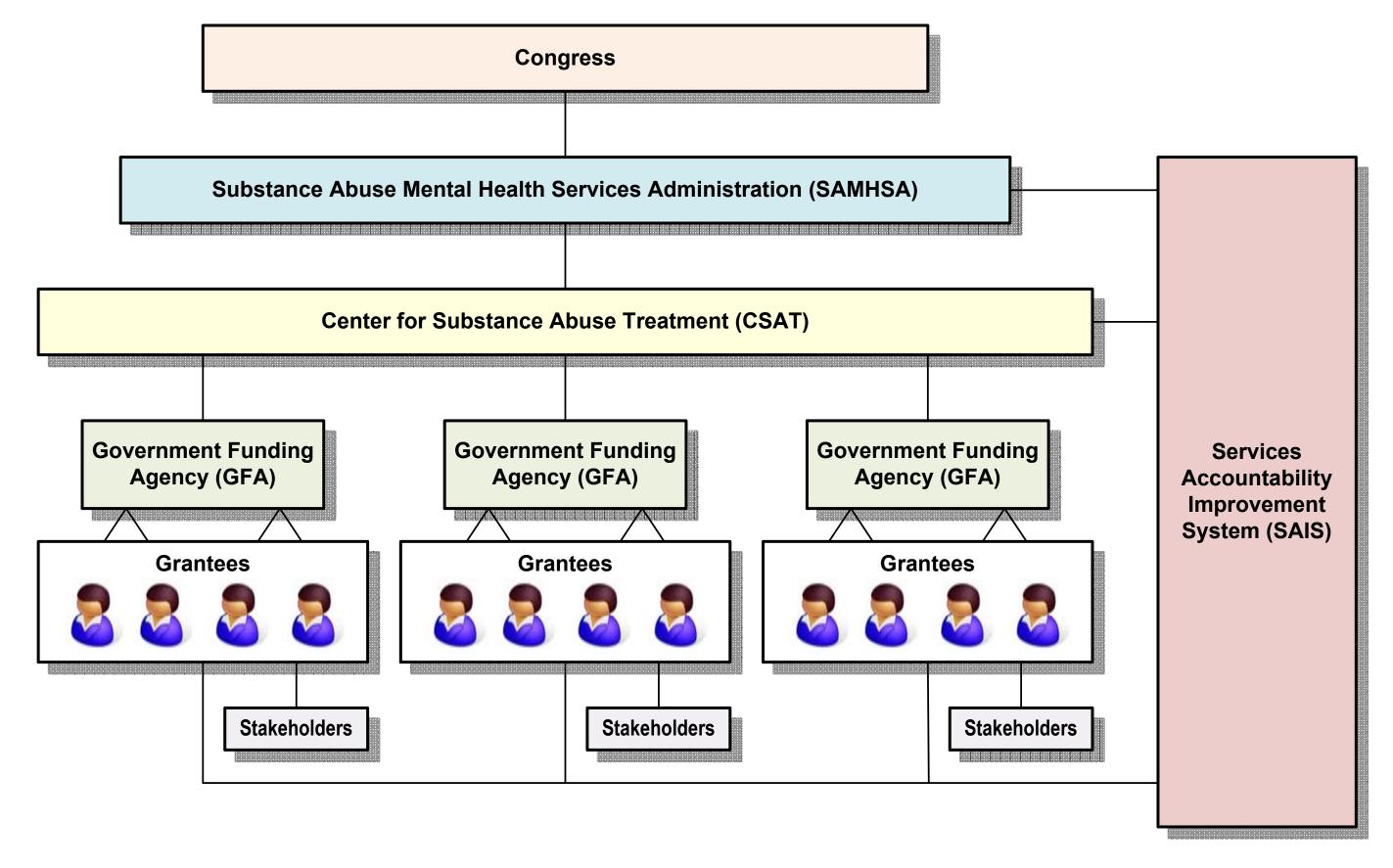
Abstract

The Services Accountability Improvement System (SAIS) is a web-based performance management system that captures information on the substance abuse treatment services delivered in the United States, as mandated by the Government Performance Reporting Act (GPRA). A wide range of client and program information is captured through SAIS for over 600 grantees. Grantees submit their data on daily, weekly, and monthly cycles to ensure that SAIS is an accurate, up-to-date reflection on the scope of services delivered and characteristics of the treatment population. SAIS is used to collect, validate, store, and analyze these data and also to generate reports for Grantees and Agency managers, who rely heavily on SAIS data for analysis and evaluation of program effectiveness. Data analysis and reporting are derived primarily from client service-level data stored in a dimensionally modeled data warehouse. Use of business intelligence methods and tools yields high-quality results for research and reporting activities such as the Performance Management Dashboard Portal, which helps grantees to track their performance against key Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicators. The SAIS Online Learning Center (SOLC) provides access to

different types of training resources (on-demand courses online, live webinars, recorded webinars, and instructor-led training courses) to meet grantees' learning needs. An online Technical Assistance (TA) module allows Grantees to request in-person help from nationally known consultants. This paper describes advanced data collection, computation, and reporting methods used to produce accurate and actionable information for Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) administrators and grantees and also for the SOLC and the automated TA system. Collectively, these capabilities provide CSAT administrators and grantees with innovative tools to achieve program-specific performance targets, thus advancing the efficiency and quality of substance abuse treatments. More broadly, SAIS innovations enable CSAT administrators to improve services and service availability to the substance abuse population. By the end of the session, the participant will be able to (1) understand why the various data collection methods benefit SAIS users, (2) describe the advantages of an automated TA system, (3) understand how an online learning center provides efficient training, (4) describe how dashboards make reporting useful.

1. Client and Project

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

SAMHSA's CSAT provides funding to over 600 discretionary services grantees nationwide. These grants support its mission to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug abuse by ensuring access to clinically sound, cost-effective addiction treatment, thereby reducing the health and social costs to our communities and the nation. Data on clients served, the types of problems they are encountering, and the services planned for such clients are captured on a GPRA data collection tool and submitted via the web-based SAIS.

Figure 1. SAIS Shown in the Context of CSAT and CSAT Grantees

Services Accountability Improvement System

SAIS is a secure website and uses an architecture that serves direct data entry, web services data uploading, data downloading, reporting, maps, training, Help Desk, TA, and a knowledge repository. Grantees and their service providers submit data on the scope of services delivered and characteristics of their client population within 7 days of the client interview. The SAIS system tracks grantee performance on intake and follow-up targets and types of services planned and delivered. To make this rich data set useful to both grantees and CSAT, the system has created innovative tools to facilitate data entry, reporting, and analysis.
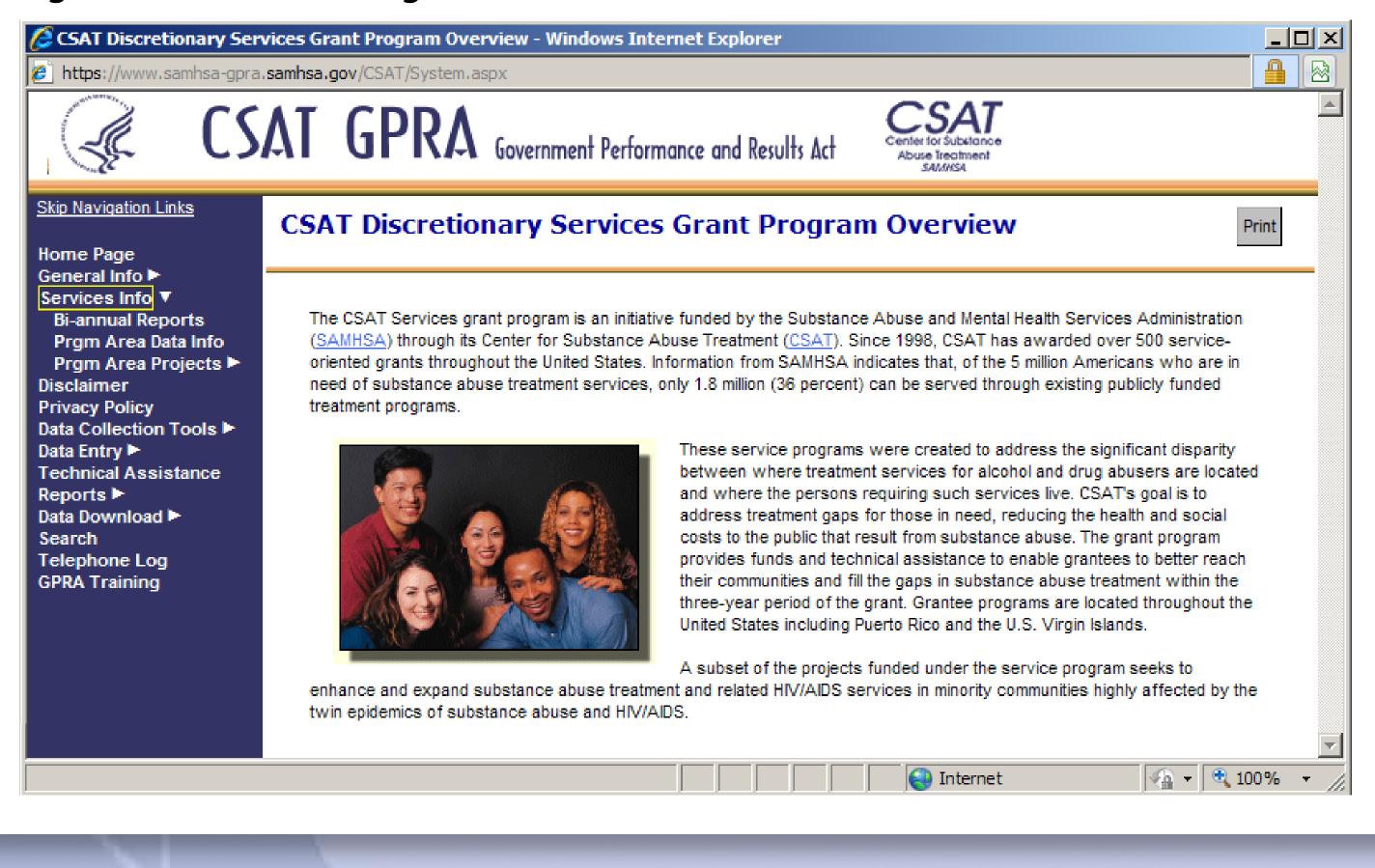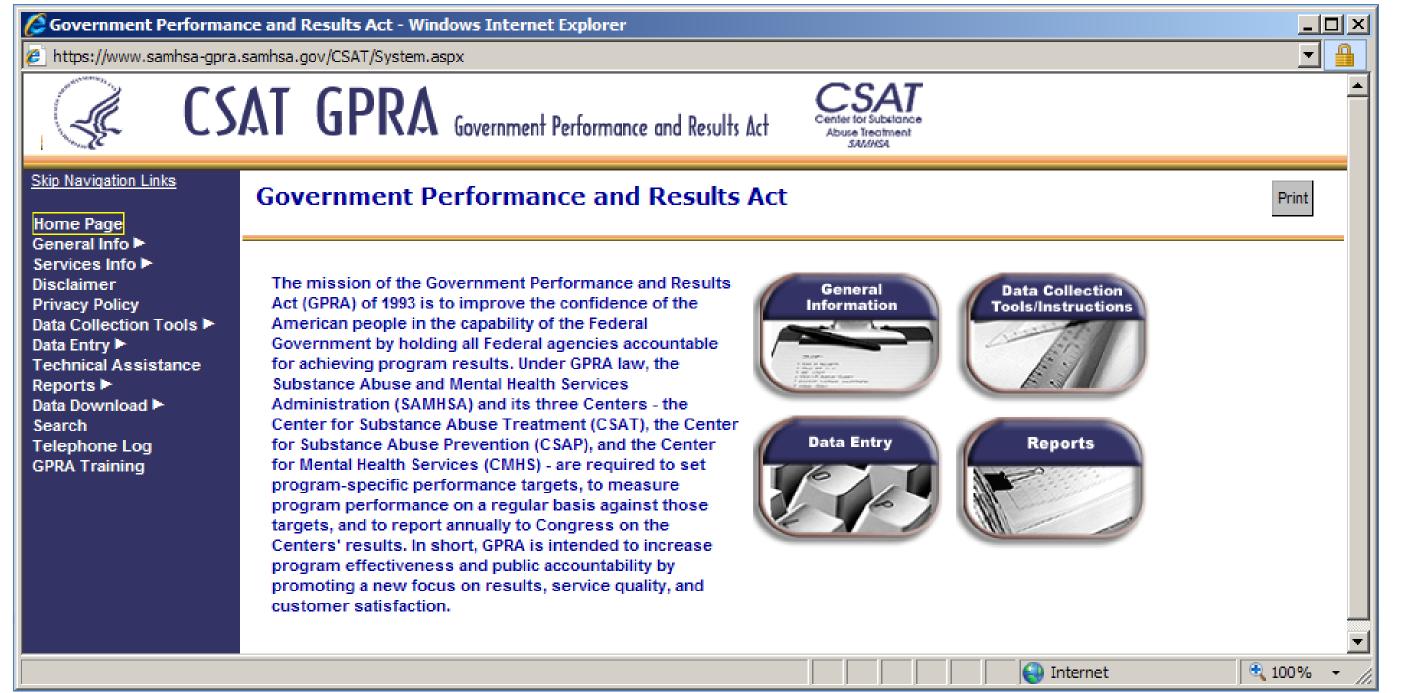
Figure 2. CSAT Grant Program Overview

2. SAIS Data Entry Systems

SAIS GPRA data are submitted by service providers through website data entry forms and bulk upload data through web services. The website has role-based security, where users are provided access to different parts of the system based on their login credentials. Users with an administrative role can access data reports for all grants, but users of a particular grant can access only their own data/reports. All data entered into the system are validated and stored in the relational database.

Figure 3. Landing Page of the SAIS Website

Benefits to the Grantees

- Using the data entry screens, a user can
  - enter/modify their data for any grant programs, and
  - validate the GPRA data immediately.
- Using data upload, a user can
  - upload bulk GPRA data, and
  - receive response files automatically.

3. Performance Management Dashboard Reports

Once GPRA data have been entered into the system and validated, they can be viewed using the Performance Management Dashboard Reports. Dashboard reports are being rapidly adopted by health care providers who oversee fiscal accountability. By presenting information in an easy-to-read graphical format, dashboards enable grantees to understand quickly and routinely how they are performing against their key performance indicators.

Benefits to the Grantees

- Presents information visually through graphics such as charts, gauges, maps, and tables.
- Provides an "at-a-glance" view of daily monitoring of information so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Micrographs on the main page allow for quick selection while the graphical display of detailed reports provides a simplified view of critical information.
- Users are easily able to identify areas in need of improvement and chart successful initiatives.
- Delivery of clinic al services in a cost-effective manner that has been improved by allowing users to quickly review outcomes of their treatment populations.
- Reports can be exported to different types of format (e.g., print, slideshows).

Figure 4. Dashboard Showing Available Micrographs

4. SAIS Online Learning Center (SOLC)

After reviewing the Performance Management Dashboard Reports, grantees may decide they need assistance meeting their grant targets and goals. Any Grantee or SAIS user can learn about the GPRA tool and SAIS system by using SOLC, a web-based component of the SAIS system that provides users with a feature enabling them to browse and enroll for face-to-face or online courses. SOLC provides full training enrollment, participation, management, on-demand training courses, and reporting functionality.

Benefits to the Grantees

- Allows participants to browse and enroll for courses offered either face-to-face or online on topics such as the GPRA tool, reports, follow-up, and data entry.
- Anytime access to course enrollment, online course participation, course information, and participant training records.
- Cost-efficient online learning environment that is available at participant's convenience.

Figure 5. Landing Page of SAIS Online Learning Center (SOLC)

5. Technical Assistance Request System (TARS)

After viewing courses in the SOLC, grantees may decide they need additional TA to meet their program goals. In this case, grantees can receive TA by using the Technical Assistance Request System (TARS). TARS is a web-based application that allows users to enter requests to receive TA.

Benefits to the Grantees

- Grantees can enter and track requests online for TA in TARS.
- Grantees can request assistance with gathering and reporting their GPRA data and meeting their GPRA targets.

Figure 6. Landing Page of Technical Assistance Request System (TARS)

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