



## In our own words:

### 'PROS helped me fight my addiction to nicotine'

By JCL from Mosaic PROS in New York City

I would've never guessed I'd be a smoker, but only after I admitted I had a problem I needed to address could I put myself on a path in the right direction, toward a life without cigarettes. When I joined the Tobacco and Me group at PROS, I put myself on that path.

Before I started smoking, I knew it was addictive and dangerously unhealthy. Unfortunately, that didn't prevent me from becoming a smoker. Anyone can make bad decisions and mistakes. I figure if you learn from them you can move on and move forward with less stress.

I picked up the habit of smoking when I was 17. I am 25 currently. Smoking was a problem for me before the pandemic, but living through the pandemic made quitting smoking more difficult. The stress from the pandemic and just knowing that I can be sick at any moment led to me starting to quit. Luckily, I started breaking the habit before the pandemic started. At the height of my addiction, I was smoking anywhere from 10 to 15 cigarettes daily. Currently I'm smoking one cigarette a week.

Being a part of the group gave me a safe space, free of judgment and negativity, to speak about what my day-to-day issues were with people such as my group counselor and peers who understand where I'm coming from and what I'm going through. Battling addiction is tough.

Thanks to the Tobacco and Me group I've learned starting off with small victories can lead to bigger victories. This makes it harder to get discouraged and easier to not fall behind. Progress is great but when you don't improve you can feel like a failure.

Every little bit of effort counts, like when you get a craving and try waiting before you give in to the craving and smoke. Putting off smoking when you get a craving for long enough will help you to lower the number of daily cigarettes smoked.



PROS taught me that there are also popular alternatives to smoking cigarettes that provide aid to people who are looking to smoke less or quit entirely. These alternatives include but are not limited to nicotine lozenges, nicotine gum, and nicotine patches, etc. If you don't wish to use nicotine alternatives, then keeping yourself distracted may work as long as you don't give in to temptation.

For example, do something where you know you won't smoke cigarettes such as exercise. Negativity played a part in when I smoked cigarettes – when I started to think negatively or have negative feelings, I would have cravings. When I focus on being positive it puts the odds in my favor to not indulge in smoking.

As I smoke less and less, it is easier to stay positive. The PROS group supported me, and I used and learned all the tools that helped me be more positive.

While I try to quit cigarettes, I learned to hold off on my cravings, my attitude is important, the importance of using alternatives, and holding myself accountable. All of that contributed to where I am today in my progress toward quitting cigarettes permanently.

Without the support of those in my corner I don't know where I'd be today. You shouldn't battle addiction alone, but more importantly **you don't have to** battle addiction alone. If you smoke cigarettes do your best to shake the habit.

**Editor's Note:** *Wow! You really have made a great effort to improve your health and increased your positivity along the way. Impressive! Thanks for encouraging others to give reducing their nicotine use a try!*

## Telehealth Update:

### All PROS are now eligible to apply for Permanent Approval

OMH has issued emergency amendments to Part 596 Telehealth Regulations. The revised Part 596 Telehealth regulations are posted on the OMH website [here](#).

These regulations now allow for audio-only telehealth and broaden the definition of a telehealth practitioner to include paraprofessionals. These changes mean that PROS without Clinic Treatment may now also apply to add telehealth to their license permanently.



If your program has not yet applied for permanent approval to deliver services via telehealth, now is the time to complete an Administrative Action in MHPD to add telehealth services to your operating certificate. See our website for [Guidance on how to apply for permanent approval](#), and contact your Field Office for additional assistance. The Commissioner's Waiver extending COVID disaster emergency telehealth allowances and revised minimum billing flexibilities was reissued on December 7, 2021. It is effective for a period of 60 days. This 60-day period allows providers time to apply for permanent approval to offer telehealth.

## New Trainings: IR-Family Psychoeducation/Intensive Family Support

The Rehabilitation Services Unit is pleased to announce a new Family Psychoeducation/Intensive Family Support training series for PROS practitioners, which has been developed and will soon be available in the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI) Learning Community.

**These online trainings will satisfy the requirements to deliver PROS IR Family Psychoeducation.** Upon completion of these trainings, PROS staff will better understand the importance of working with families to help individuals reach recovery goals and learn how to improve their competency in communicating with consumers and their families of choice about family involvement in recovery and rehabilitation.

Additionally, this training series will provide resources for further information on involving families. Trained staff will be able to help PROS programs enhance their services to better meet the needs of individuals working on goals to reunite or improve relationships with those they care most about.



## Funding for PROS

### PROS Rate Increases

OMH issued a letter to PROS programs in November 2021 notifying them of proposed rate increases. When approved, PROS rates will be permanently increased 10.3%, effective October 7, 2021. This rate increase is intended to strengthen program's fiscal health and support PROS Redesign.

Programs will also receive two short-term rate increases through March 2022: 12% for program enhancement and

13.1% for Workforce Recruitment and Retention. This workforce funding is subject to guidance [posted on the OMH website](#) and can be used by agencies in a variety of ways to retain and recruit staff, for example tuition reimbursement, hazard pay, bonuses, etc.

### Expand Certified and Credentialed Peer Capacity funding opportunity

PROS programs may apply for funding to recruit and retain Peer Specialists. Deadline for agencies to apply for these funds is February 4, 2022. See [here](#) for more information.



## Reminder: Have you submitted the Peer Survey for OCA?

OMH's Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) is conducting two surveys (one for Program Directors and one for Peer Specialists) to better understand how Peer Specialists are utilized in PROS programs, the barriers PROS programs face in hiring and integrating Peer Specialists into their programs, and the experience of Peer Specialists currently employed by PROS programs in order to gather important feedback from PROS providers and Peer Staff to inform technical assistance and training efforts to further the development of Peer Support in PROS. Your input is crucial! If your program has not yet submitted a response, please take the time to do so. These surveys are anonymous. If you have questions about either survey, you may contact [Cory.Muraglio@omh.ny.gov](mailto:Cory.Muraglio@omh.ny.gov) or [Amanda.Saake@omh.ny.gov](mailto:Amanda.Saake@omh.ny.gov).



## Rehabilitation and Recovery Academy 2021 'Moving Forward Together'

The New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS) hosted the annual Rehabilitation and Recovery Academy virtually, November 16-18, 2021, in collaboration with the Coalition for Behavioral Health and OMH. Eight PROS programs from across the state presented workshops on topics ranging from virtual skill building to workforce development and retention, along with a variety of other topics.

A highlight of this year's conference was the keynote address, "Becoming a Changemaker," by **Samantha Clarke**. Ms. Clarke, author of *Love It or Leave It: How to Be Happy at Work*, discussed many ways to help retain staff during these challenging times.

Some strategies to support retention and reduce burnout include:

- Opportunities for staff development, including time and support to attend trainings or conferences that will build their skills and foster curiosity.
- Offer personalized supervision. Supervisors may benefit from becoming familiar with each staff's stress symptoms, so they are better able to offer ways to support staff. Staff can show stress in a wide variety of ways, from eating junk food to micromanaging.
- Foster an environment where each staff member feels like a co-creator of a quality program.

You can view archived workshops from the Rehabilitation and Recovery Academy [here](#).

*"If you want to go far, go alone. If you want to go further, go together."*

– Shared by *Samantha Clarke*  
as her favorite proverb.

## Welcome Amanda and Shokri!

Please join us in welcoming **Amanda Pullmain** and **Shokri Enbawe**, LMSW, to the Rehabilitation Services Unit at OMH Central Office.

Amanda joins our team from the Care Coordination Unit, where she worked closely with Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams and Health Home Care Management. She will be supporting the implementation of Community Oriented Recovery and Empowerment (CORE) Services.

Shokri joins OMH with both recent PROS and clinical experience. He will be working primarily on PROS redesign and modernization. Both are wonderful additions to our team, promoting rehabilitation and recovery statewide.

# Data Clean-up: Tips for the New Year

Please take a moment to enter MHPD and check that your PROS program has the most current information listed; this will ensure that the general public can find the most up to date information through the OMH website's "Find a Provider" tool.

**CAIRS Tip:** It's a perfect time to ensure that you have an accurate Client Roster list in CAIRS to start the new year. Keeping discharged individuals on your Client Roster can negatively impact their ability to enroll in services elsewhere. When you discharge an individual, it is appropriate to use the actual date of the last service provided; for this reason, it is recommended that you complete discharges from CAIRS promptly.

**Reminder:** You can view the CAIRS PROS Users' Manual and the full Adult CAIRS Users' Manual through the Help tab in CAIRS.



## Resources



### Community Technical Assistance Center ([ctacny.org](http://ctacny.org))

[Documentation Done Right](#) is a set of workbooks designed to share best practices in documentation and provide users with exercises that provide an opportunity to practice these skills. Additional new resources in this series include:

[Introduction and Overview](#) - Describes how to use these workbooks and resources and provides assessment questions to help users identify their own strengths and weaknesses in documentation.

[Supervisory Companion Guide](#) - Offers best practice tips for supervisors to maximize the effectiveness of their supervisees' documentation and assess which workbooks may provide the most benefit for staff members.

### IPS Resources through CPI

The Center for Practice Innovations (CPI) provides free access to all PROS programs to three online staff training modules focusing on Individual Placement and Support, an evidence-based model of supported employment. To access the CPI IPS modules: <http://www.practiceinnovations.org> - Go to the "Quick Links" tab - Select "How to access trainings and tools" tab/complete the registration form. Look for the following CPI resources: The "**Individual Placement and Support**" and the "**IPS Job Development**" as well as the "**Using the Employment Resource Book**" modules. In addition, on the CPI home page, go to the "Resources" tab and select "School or Work" to find a "**Considering Work**" video graphic, which is designed to inspire people who may be considering employment.

### PROS Curriculum Clearinghouse

Resources from the PROS Curriculum Clearinghouse are once again available online at: <https://pros.nyaprs.org/>. Some of these curricula have been developed by NYAPRS and many have been generously shared by PROS programs. We encourage all programs to continue submitting curricula, along with lesson plans, that you have found successful in engaging your participants. To request a curriculum or to submit a new one, or request an inventory list of curricula, please contact **Ruth Colon-Wagner** at: [ruthcw@nyaprs.org](mailto:ruthcw@nyaprs.org). Watch for a redesigned NYAPRS website coming later this year.



Office of  
Mental Health

This newsletter is written by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and Care Coordination at the New York State Office of Mental Health.

**Please distribute to all PROS staff.**