

# What Factors Affect Successful Implementation of Digital Contingency Management in Opioid Treatment Programs?

## The Public Health Problem

Contingency management (CM) is the most effective treatment for stimulant use disorder, but it remains underused in opioid treatment programs (OTPs) despite high rates of concurrent stimulant use among patients.

About 50% of OTPs report providing CM, but it is often not delivered with fidelity to evidence-based guidelines. Digital CM platforms offer promise, yet real-world implementation challenges remain poorly understood.

## Background

Digital CM allows patients to remotely complete drug tests and receive incentives electronically. This can reduce staffing burden and improve access, but raises new concerns about technology access, privacy, and ongoing support.

Understanding common and site-specific barriers is necessary for successful scale-up.

## What This Article Addresses

This study examines the barriers and facilitators to implementing a digital CM platform in six OTPs using a structured assessment tool called the IFASIS (Inventory of Factors Affecting Successful Implementation and Sustainment).

## What They Did *(Methods)*

OTP staff teams completed the 27-item IFASIS assessment, rating factors across four domains (external context, organizational environment, intervention characteristics, and patient needs). Discussions were recorded and analyzed using rapid qualitative methods to identify patterns in implementation determinants.

## What They Discovered *(Findings)*



**Funding and Policy Gaps Hinder Sustainability:** All OTPs reported they could not sustain digital CM without external funding.



**Digital CM Reduces Staff Burden:** Staff noted the digital platform reduced clinical workload compared to in-person CM delivery.



**Organizational policies about digital CM are needed:** OTPs identified a lack of organizational policies and clear guidance from leadership about digital CM.

## Opportunities for Action

The study findings highlight opportunities for:

### Health care leaders & providers

- Use the IFASIS early to identify your site's specific barriers and facilitators
- Establish clear CM policies and designate staff champions to support ongoing use

### Policymakers & payors

- Secure sustainable funding streams (e.g., Medicaid, opioid settlement funds)
- Require CM training for OTP leadership and offer reimbursement incentives

### Researchers

- Test the IFASIS across diverse settings to validate usability
- Develop modular, customizable implementation toolkits for digital CM integration

### Patients & families seeking recovery

- Ask whether digital CM is available at your clinic
- Share feedback about technology access needs (e.g. language, smartphone access)