



**ACTION III Project Summary:  
The Academy for Integrating Behavioral Health and Primary Care**

**Prime Contractor:** Westat, Inc.

**PI/Project Lead and Project Director:**

- Lois Olinger, M.C.P. and Garrett Moran, Ph.D. (*Co-Principal Investigators*)
- Joshua Noda, M.P.P. (*Project Director*)

**Key Personnel and Subcontractors:**

- Glynis Jones, M.S. (*Ongoing Portal Maintenance; Portal and Product Enhancements*)
- Rebecca Noftsinger (*NIAC Lead*)
- Monique Thornton, M.P.H. (*Ongoing Portal Maintenance*)
- West Virginia University
- Informatics Studio

**Project Period:** September 30, 2019- September 29, 2024

**Total Cost:** \$2,499,525.00

**AHRQ COR:** Parivash Nourjah

**Project Purpose, Goals and Objectives:** The goal of this project is to provide continued support for the existing AHRQ *Academy for Integrating Behavioral Health and Primary Care (the Academy)*, a web-based national resource and coordinating center for people committed to delivering comprehensive, integrated behavioral healthcare and primary care, including, but not limited to substance use disorder (SUD), such as opioid use disorder (OUD).

Specific objectives include:

- convening an expert panel to provide input and guidance on the work of the Academy;
- maintaining the web platform that supports the Academy;
- updating guidance, tools, resources available through the Academy Portal (e.g., online community (“Commons”); playbooks, literature collection;), and;
- development of new tools or resources as needed.

**Background and Significance:** Since the Institute of Medicine’s reports in 2001 and 2005 and the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health report in 2003, it has been apparent that America’s health care delivery systems need to undergo fundamental changes to increase access to integrated, coordinated care and to recognize the importance of a whole-person approach to addressing an individual’s health needs.



In September 2010, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) created the [Academy for Integrating Behavioral Health and Primary Care \(The Academy\)](#) to function as both a coordinating center and a national resource for people committed to delivering comprehensive, integrated behavioral healthcare in primary care settings. The purpose of the Academy is to analyze, synthesize, and issue actionable information for a variety of audiences, including providers, policymakers, investigators, and consumers. These users need readily available information and tools to increase the use of best practices in integrating behavioral health and primary care, and to increase the number of providers capable of doing so, with the ultimate goal of increasing patient access to behavioral health services.

A new need that has arisen since the Academy was first launched is the dissemination of effective strategies such as medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for addressing the needs of the increasing number of people battling OUD and other substance use disorders. This will be a particular focus of the updates that will be provided in this iteration of the Academy.

**Target Audience/s:** The primary target audiences in this phase are the providers, primary care practices, health systems, and AHRQ-funded grantees who are working to integrate behavioral health and primary care, as well as patients, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

**Methods and Key Tasks:**

- Expert Panel. The work of this project will be guided by the insight of the expert panel, the National Integration Academy Council (NIAC), as well as the evolving needs of AHRQ.
- Ongoing Maintenance of the Academy Portal. The existing platform of *the Academy* will be leveraged to support continued coordination and dissemination activities. The Commons – the on-line community for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange -- will be maintained, as will the Literature Collection.
- Portal and Product Enhancements. The team will continue to update, enhance, and add to the large volume of Academy products and resources. A particular focus of new or enhanced products and resources will be emerging evidence on effective strategies for addressing SUD in primary care and other ambulatory care settings. For example, the MAT Tools & Resources Collection (a searchable database of tools and resources available to help those who offer or use MAT services) will be updated, and guidance on how to integrate MAT for OUD into primary care or other ambulatory care settings will be provided through enhancements to the MAT Playbook. In addition, there will be ongoing efforts to identify and assess any newly emerging needs of the target audiences, and to consider new or enhanced products to address these needs.



The Academy

Integrating Behavioral Health & Primary Care

### **Deliverables**

- NIAC Meetings
- Academy Portal Maintenance
- Academy Portal and Product Enhancements