



Department of
**Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

Tennessee Recovery Navigators

FY22 Annual Report

Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

September 2022



Department Introduction

Department Mission

Creating collaborative pathways to resiliency, recovery, and independence for Tennesseans living with mental illness and substance use disorders.

Department Vision

A state of resiliency, recovery, and independence in which Tennesseans living with mental illness and substance use disorders thrive.

Program Overview

Tennessee Recovery Navigators (“Navigators”) are individuals in long-term recovery who are responsible for meeting patients in the hospital when they present due to an overdose, are experiencing active withdrawal, or present with a primary substance use disorder, to connect them with treatment and recovery resources. Navigators are also responsible for following up with each patient they meet at 72 hours and 30 days following hospital discharge to ensure that patients have connected to the resources, are doing well, and to assess for and coordinate additional community referrals.

This program is executed through partnerships with community treatment providers who employ the Navigators. Navigators are Certified Peer Recovery Specialists¹ who function as a resource with lived experience for patients as well as hospital staff. Navigators are not clinicians, law enforcement, counselors, or sponsors for patients they meet in the hospital.

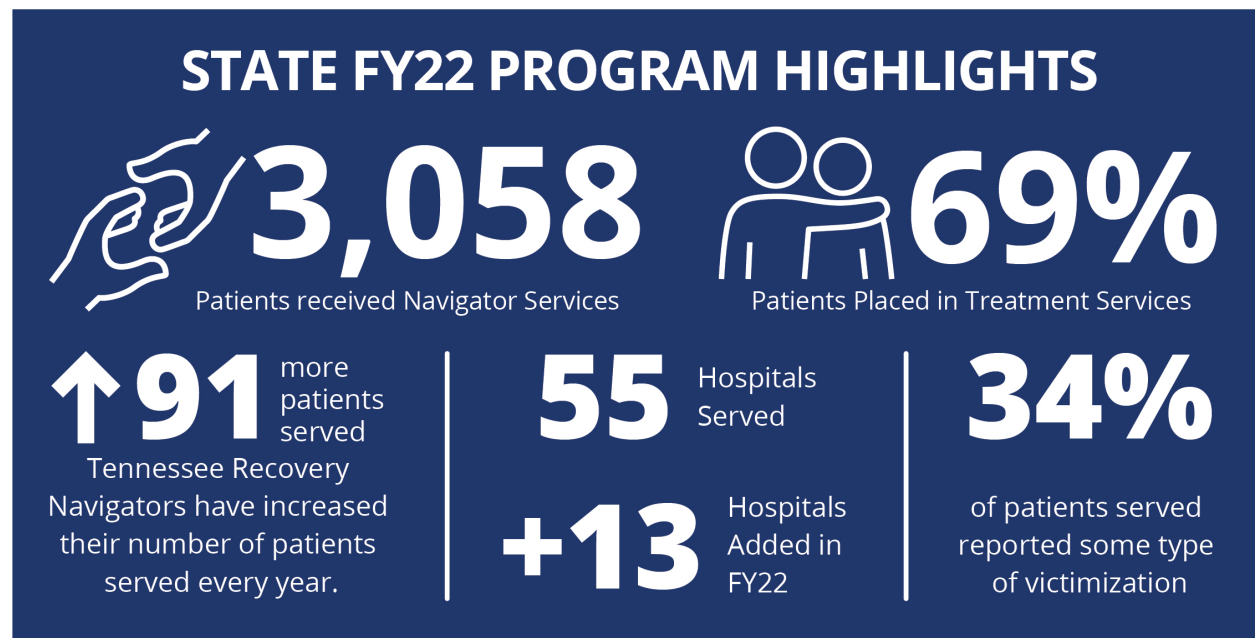
History & Background

The TN Recovery Navigator Program was initially started through the TNTogether Initiative, supported by Governor Bill Haslam and the General Assembly in 2018. In 2019, the Department of Finance & Administration through the Office of Criminal Justice Programs, provided funding to the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to expand the Navigator Program to three (3) other areas of the state that were not originally covered.

¹ [TN.gov/behavioral-health/cprs](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/cprs)

In December of 2019, TDMHSAS partnered with the Tennessee Department of Health to expand the Navigator program in Murfreesboro and Chattanooga. This funding provided added five (5) additional Navigators, two (2) in Murfreesboro and three (3) in Chattanooga. The funding from the Tennessee Department of Health also initiated a pilot to explore buprenorphine induction in an emergency department setting. This led to TDMHSAS implementing a medication assisted treatment pilot in three (3) emergency departments across the state in FY22 through FY23. This pilot continues to highlight the need for peers in emergency departments for connection to care after they are treated and are ready to be discharged.

Fiscal Year 2022 Program Highlights



Patient Testimonial

"It's been an amazing journey since I first met the Navigator on January 9, 2022. My life was in shambles...I was penniless & homeless and unable to get the help that I needed. After meeting the Navigator, I was able to complete a program at Buffalo Valley Treatment Center and get my life back on track. I've now been sober for over 8 months and have a sponsor, but also sponsor other men like myself. I'm still in close contact with the Navigator and I will always be forever grateful that the Navigator program saved my life."

Current Tennessee Recovery Navigator Providers

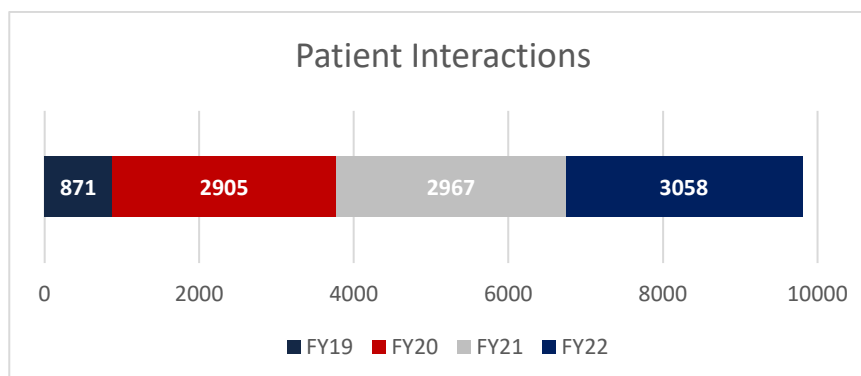
The following providers are currently facilitating the Navigator Program across the state of Tennessee.

Provider	Location
Cocaine and Alcohol Awareness Program (CAAP)	Shelby County
Pathways	Madison County and Surrounding Areas
Buffalo Valley, Inc.	Davidson County and Surrounding Areas
Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Systems	Putnam County
Council for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (CADAS)	Hamilton County
Cherokee Health Systems	Knox County and Surrounding Areas
McNabb Center	Hamblen County and Surrounding Areas
Frontier Health	Tri-Cities

Spotlight on Navigator Data

Patient Interactions

The Navigators continue to see an increase in patient interactions year to year. Since the inception of the program, over 9,800 individuals have been supported by the TN Recovery Navigator program.



In FY22, 3,058 individuals were served by the TN Recovery Navigator Program.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the TN Recovery Navigator program has continued to provide in-person, telehealth, and telephone services to our partner hospitals. This expanded modality

of referral access has afforded us the opportunity to continue to increase the number of referrals the program has seen from the hospitals. Despite nationwide workforce shortages and many providers operating with fewer Navigators, the Navigator program increased the number of patients seen from FY21 to FY22 by 91 patients, exceeding the set goal of 3,000 patients. Furthermore, with the additional Navigators added from the funding from the Tennessee Department of Health the program observed a **141%** increase of patients served in the areas the navigators were added. This increase can be attributed to the expanded number of Navigators, the additional hospitals being served, and specified in-person office hours at the designated hospital emergency departments.

The Navigators capture demographic information on all the individuals they serve. This information includes gender identification, race, and age. As the program continues, the program continues to assess ways to outreach to at-risk and underserved populations.

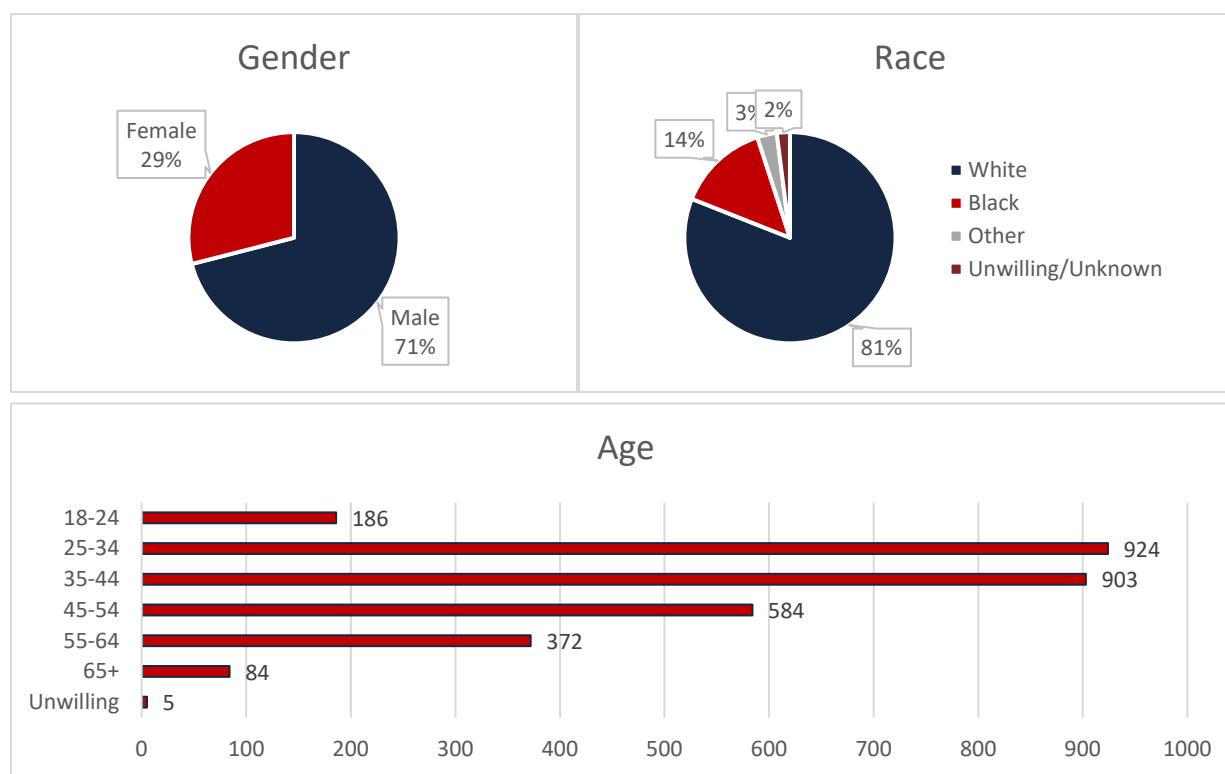


Figure 1. Demographic Data of Clients Served

Patient Placements

In FY22, the Navigators were able to connect 2,095 individuals to treatment or a recovery resource – this is a **69%** placement rate. Patient choice and willingness is key to placement and of the remaining 31%, 27% of patients either refused treatment or did not require a level of care higher than reengagement with recovery resources. When the Navigators meet with the individuals in the hospitals, they recommend levels of care that may best fit the person's needs, wants, and insurance type. The Navigators always try to find an available resource for the individual. Figure 2 shows the recommended levels of care for patients in FY22, Figure 3 shows the top placement locations across the state, and Figure 4 shows the reasons for referral to the Navigators (overdose, withdrawal, etc.)

69% of individuals seen by a Navigator were connected to treatment or a recovery resource.

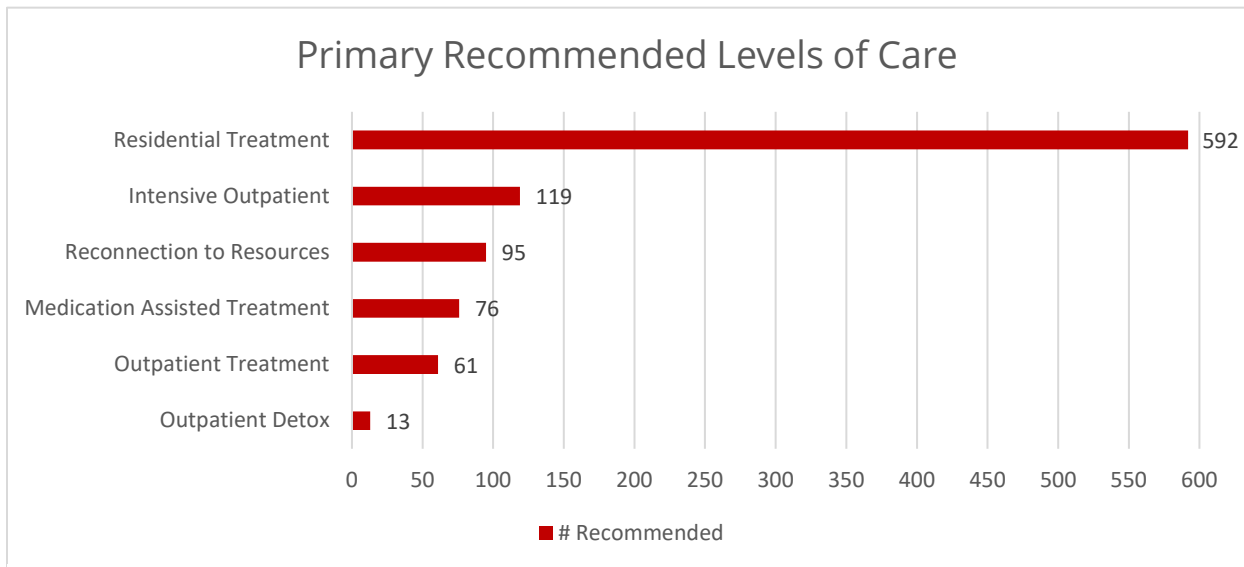


Figure 2. Primary Recommended Levels of Care

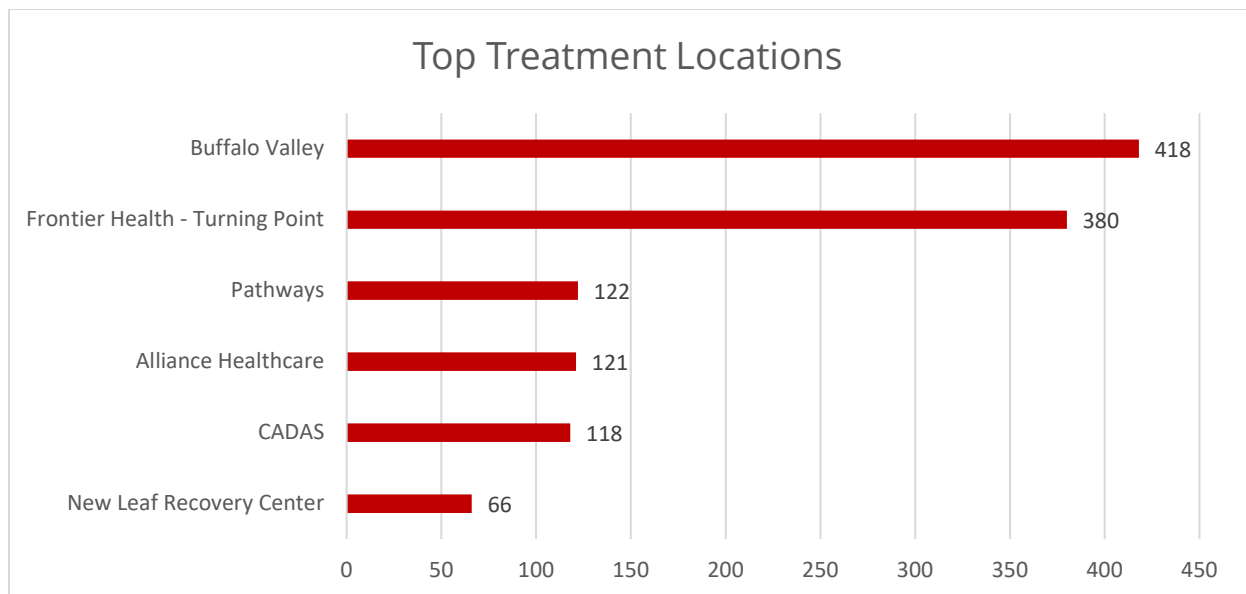


Figure 3. Top Treatment Locations

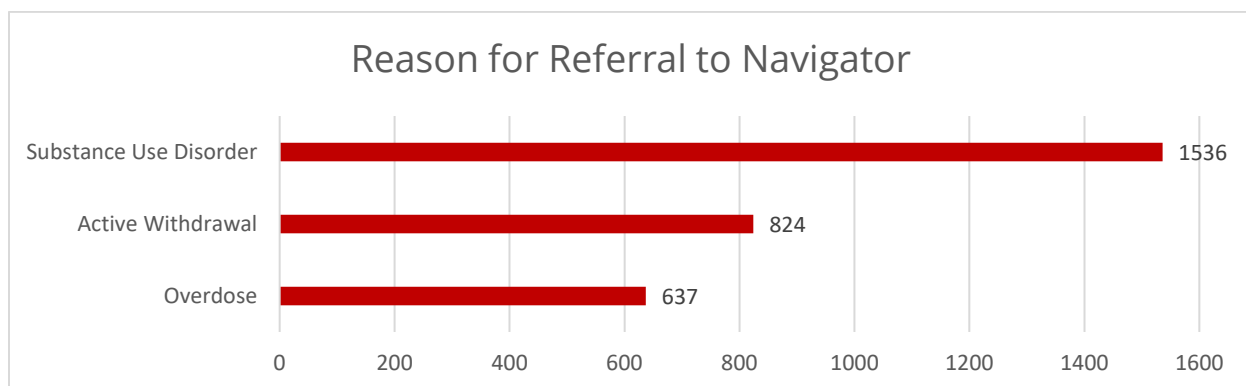


Figure 4. Reason for Referral to Navigator

Patient Testimonial

A Navigator reported they received a call from a patient's mother stating that her 19-year-old daughter who was connected to the Navigator program last year following a non-fatal overdose had completed a year-long program and was now enrolled to start nursing school in the fall.

Patient Insurance Type

The Navigators will serve any person who is seen at the hospitals if they were admitted due to an overdose, are currently experiencing active withdrawal, or have been identified as having a substance use disorder. The type of insurance a person has helps the Navigators find treatment options best suited for the individual. Figure 5 shows that most of the individuals served are uninsured or covered by TennCare.

84% of the individuals served by the Navigators were uninsured or noted having TennCare.

Hospital Testimonial

"I can't stress enough the importance of the recovery navigator presence at Ascension St. Thomas Rutherford. The Navigators are kind and build relationships at the hospital. They have impacted the emergency room by making connections to care and reducing stigma".

Ascension St. Thomas Rutherford
(Murfreesboro, TN)
John Grady, RN, ER Director

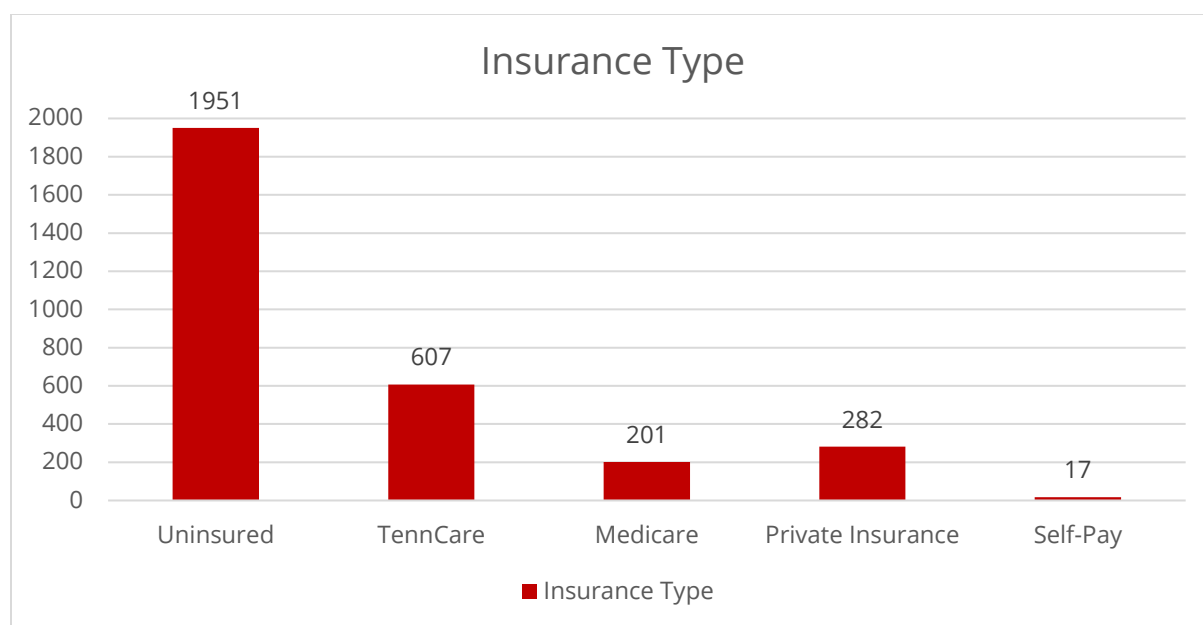


Figure 5. Patient Insurance Type

Hospital Testimonial

"The Navigator Program is a lifesaver! Literally. There are so many patients that could fall through the cracks that these skilled individuals are able to reach out to, connect them to the

right services, and continue to journey with them. They are dedicated, tireless, caring, brave, timely, consistent, and hopeful. We are grateful for their service!"

Gilia Minnich-Angelin, RN
CHI Memorial Hospital (Chattanooga, TN)
RN Case Manager

Top Substances of Use

Primary, secondary, and tertiary substance of use is documented for every individual served. This helps the Navigator identify the most appropriate treatment type. Figure 6 shows the top 5 overall substance choices for the individuals served through the navigator program in FY22.

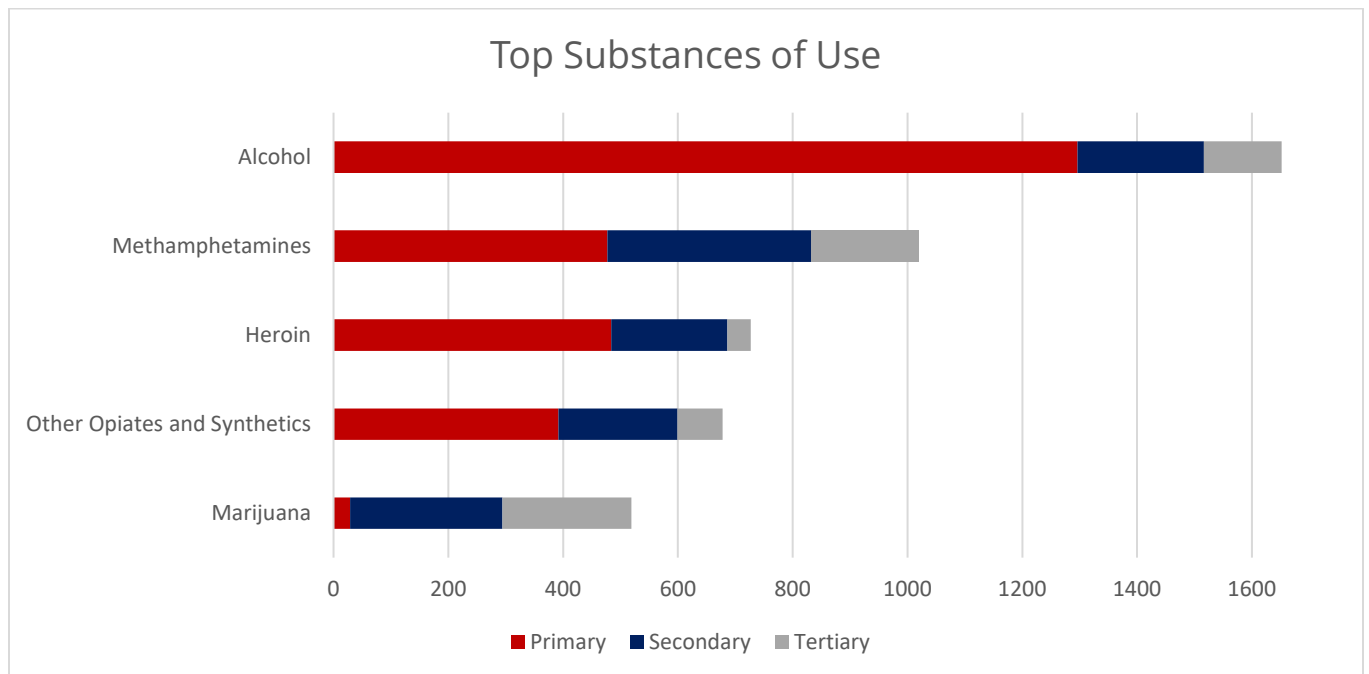


Figure 6. Top Substance of Use

These substances of use are consistent with what was seen in FY21. This information coupled with other program data collected by The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services helps identify the areas of need across Tennessee. This data allows TDMHSAS to ensure that the programs being funded by the department are efficient and serving the most vulnerable Tennesseans.

Patient Testimonial

One of the Navigators reported they had been speaking with a patient and his family for about 6 months after his overdose experience and he finally agreed to try the MAT

program. The Navigator received an emotional call from him shortly after agreeing to enter the MAT program. He called just to tell her, for the first time in 6 years he has HOPE for his recovery. He wanted to thank her for always being a phone call away and not forgetting his name.

Participating Hospitals

The following **55** hospitals have partnered with the Navigator Program, either with a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a verbal agreement. With the additional Navigators funded through the Tennessee Department of Health the program has been able to onboard **11** hospitals in the Southeast Region of Tennessee.

- Erlanger Bledsoe Hospital*
- Blount Memorial Hospital
- Sycamore Shoals Hospital
- HCA, TriStar Skyline
- Tennova Healthcare – Cleveland*
- HCA, Southern Hills
- HCA, Summit
- HCA, TriStar Centennial
- HCA, Stonecrest
- Ascension, St. Thomas Midtown
- Ascension, St. Thomas West
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center*
- Nashville General*
- WTH Dyersburg Hospital
- Southern Tennessee Regional Health System – Sewanee*
- Milan General Hospital
- Greeneville Community Hospital East
- Morristown/Hamblen County Medical Center
- CHI Memorial
- CHI Memorial – Hixson
- Erlanger Baroness
- Erlanger East
- Erlanger North
- Parkridge East Hospital*
- Parkridge Medical Center*
- Parkridge North Hospital*
- Hancock County Hospital
- Hawkins County Memorial Hospital
- Johnson County Memorial Hospital
- UT Medical Center
- Jackson-Madison County General Hospital
- Parkridge West Hospital*
- Starr Regional Medical Center – Athens*
- Starr Regional Medical Center – Etowah*
- Cookeville Regional Medical Center
- Rhea Medical Center*
- Ascension, St. Thomas Rutherford
- Erlanger Sequatchie Valley*
- LeConte Medical Center
- Methodist North
- Methodist South

- Methodist University
- Regional One
- St. Francis
- Holston Valley Medical Center
- Indian Path Medical Center
- Bristol Regional Medical Center
- Sumner Regional Medical Center
- Tristar Hendersonville
- Unicoi County Memorial Hospital
- Creekside Behavioral Health
- Franklin Woods Community Hospital
- Johnson City Medical Center
- Woodridge Psychiatric Hospital
- WTH Volunteer Hospital

**Hospitals onboarded this fiscal year.*

Hospital Testimonial

"Prior to the Navigator, the resources given to many patients were very minimal. We were working with an outdated resource list and not many personal contacts to assist outside of the hospital. When a patient would arrive on the floor with drug and alcohol needs, I would panic. Now when I receive a patient, I breathe a sigh of relief and call, text or email the Navigator."

Diane Stupp, MSSA
Cookeville Regional Medical Center
(Cookeville, TN)
Medical Social Worker

Final Thoughts

The TN Recovery Navigator program continues to make strides to meet patients in the emergency departments across the state of Tennessee and break the cycle of overdose. Year over year they continue to exceed the goals of serving more patients, and as more funding comes to the program, the ability to try new things has shown how impactful peers in the workplace can be. The trust the Navigators can build with each patient provides a new opportunity for that individual to find their road to recovery. The dedication of our provider network makes all this work possible.

TDMHSAS is always looking for ways to expand the program and expand our reach to different hospitals throughout Tennessee.

If you would like to learn more about the TN Recovery Navigator program, please visit [TN.gov/recoverynavigators](https://tn.gov/recoverynavigators). If you have any further questions or if you would like your hospital to start participating in the TN Recovery Navigator program, please reach out to Jessica Youngblom at Jessica.Youngblom@tn.gov.