

## Spotlight on Wood County

Wood County Unified Services, located in central Wisconsin, is one of the 10 original STAR-SI participants. They offer inpatient, outpatient, and community-based AODA and mental health services to residents of Wood County and the surrounding area.

The Wood County Change Team identified the high number of clients who failed to attend the first four treatment sessions as a serious problem at their agency. Research has shown that attending the first four treatment sessions is linked to successful program completion, but only 31% of their AODA clients attended all of the first four appointments with their counselor. The change team's goal was to increase the show rate to individual sessions from 31% to 41% over the next year by placing reminder calls to clients 48 hours before their appointments. Wood County's Change Leader provided a script for the Crisis Hotline staff that not only reminded the client when their appointment was, but also asked "How do you plan on getting to the appointment?" and ended with, "We look forward to seeing you."

In order to track the impact of reminder calls, the Wood County Change Team monitored the show rate to the first four appointments by counting the total number of individual sessions and dividing it by the number of no-shows each month. At the end of the first three weeks, 95% of clients made it to their individual sessions. The Change Team continued to monitor the show rate on a monthly basis and after 15 weeks was still averaging 89% attendance! Wood County Unified Services adopted reminder calls as a standard practice, and will continue monitoring the show rate to sustain the change.