

Department of Health and Human Services  
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March 2025 | A-09-23-01003

**SAMHSA's FindTreatment.gov  
Contained Some Inaccurate  
Information on Substance Use and  
Mental Health Treatment Facilities**

# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



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## **SAMHSA's FindTreatment.gov Contained Some Inaccurate Information on Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Facilities**

### **Why OIG Did This Audit**

- To assist individuals and families in finding treatment for substance use and mental disorders, [SAMHSA](#) maintains the website [FindTreatment.gov](#). A media article reported that SAMHSA's treatment locators, including FindTreatment.gov, contained inaccurate and outdated information.
- This audit assessed whether SAMHSA reported on FindTreatment.gov accurate, complete, and timely information on substance use and mental health treatment facilities.

### **What OIG Found**

- As of April 20, 2023, for 66 of 100 sampled facilities, some information that SAMHSA reported on FindTreatment.gov was inaccurate, such as inaccurate facility addresses and services information (e.g., incorrect reporting of treatment approaches offered). Based on our sample results, we estimated that 14,283 of 22,106 facilities had inaccurately reported information.
- Selected critical information for facilities was generally reported on FindTreatment.gov (such as facility addresses). However, 11 of the 22,106 facilities listed on FindTreatment.gov did not report some critical information. Also, SAMHSA processed facility and consumer requests to update facility information on FindTreatment.gov in a timely manner.
- SAMHSA relies on facilities to report accurate information when they complete a voluntary annual survey. SAMHSA also relies on facilities, Single State Agencies, and consumers to inform SAMHSA or its contractor of any information changes or inaccuracies. Although SAMHSA had procedures and system edits to validate facilities' responses, the procedures and edits were insufficient to identify inaccurate facility information and prevent the submission of the survey with incomplete critical information fields. Inaccurate facility information may hinder or delay individuals' access to appropriate treatment services for substance use and mental disorders.

### **What OIG Recommends**

We recommend that SAMHSA:

1. work with its contractor to strengthen procedures related to verifying facility information, such as validating a sample of facilities each year;
2. improve the prominence of the statement on FindTreatment.gov about contacting the contractor to report an issue with the information listed for a facility; and
3. work with the contractor to implement additional system edits in the survey to prevent facilities from submitting the survey without completing all of the critical information fields.

SAMHSA concurred with all three recommendations.

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## INTRODUCTION

### WHY WE DID THIS AUDIT

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a treatable mental health disorder that impacts the lives of millions of Americans. People with SUDs may have other mental health disorders, and people with other mental health disorders may also struggle with SUDs. To assist individuals and families in finding treatment for SUDs and mental health disorders, the 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. No. 114-255, § 9006) requires that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) maintain the National Treatment Referral Routing Service. This service must include a website that provides a searchable, online treatment services locator of behavioral health (i.e., mental health) treatment providers and community-based organizations. In accordance with Federal law, SAMHSA maintains the website [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov), an online resource for individuals seeking treatment for SUDs and mental health disorders in the United States and its territories.

In 2022, a media article reported that SAMHSA’s treatment services locators contained “inaccurate and outdated information.”<sup>1, 2</sup> For example, individuals would call a treatment facility’s phone number listed in the locator only to find it disconnected. We conducted this audit to determine whether SAMHSA’s FindTreatment.gov, which is one of SAMHSA’s treatment services locators, provided accurate, complete, and timely information to consumers searching for SUD and mental health disorder treatment services.

### OBJECTIVE

Our objective was to determine whether SAMHSA reported on FindTreatment.gov accurate, complete, and timely information on substance use and mental health treatment facilities.

### BACKGROUND

#### National Treatment Referral Routing Service for Behavioral Health Treatment

Mental illnesses are common in the United States. Among adults aged 18 or older in 2022, 59.3 million people (approximately 23 percent of all U.S. adults) had any mental illness in the past year.<sup>3</sup> In addition, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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<sup>1</sup> SAMHSA officials stated that SAMHSA maintains multiple treatment services locators, including FindTreatment.gov, Buprenorphine Practitioner Locator, Opioid Treatment Program Directory, and Early Serious Mental Illness Treatment Locator. As of Aug. 27, 2024, these treatment services locators were still active.

<sup>2</sup> CNN article [“America’s response to addiction relies on fixing this website,”](#) May 11, 2022. Accessed on Jan. 24, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> SAMHSA, [Highlights for the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#). Accessed on Jan. 17, 2025.

(CDC), there were 106,699 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2021. From 2020 to 2021, the rate of drug overdose deaths increased by 14 percent.<sup>4</sup>

To assist individuals and families in locating mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers, the 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. No. 114-255, § 9006) requires that SAMHSA maintain the National Treatment Referral Routing Service. To maintain this service, this Act stated that this service must include “an Internet website to provide a searchable, online treatment services locator of behavioral health treatment providers and community-based organizations, which shall include information on the name, location, contact information, and basic services provided by such providers and organizations.”<sup>5</sup>

### **SAMHSA’s FindTreatment.gov**

In accordance with Federal law, SAMHSA maintains FindTreatment.gov, which enables individuals to search for substance use and mental health treatment facilities, health care centers, and opioid treatment programs. According to SAMHSA, FindTreatment.gov cannot recommend or endorse individual treatment facilities or types of treatment. In April 2023 (the timeframe of our audit period), FindTreatment.gov had 318,687 page views and 114,263 total users.

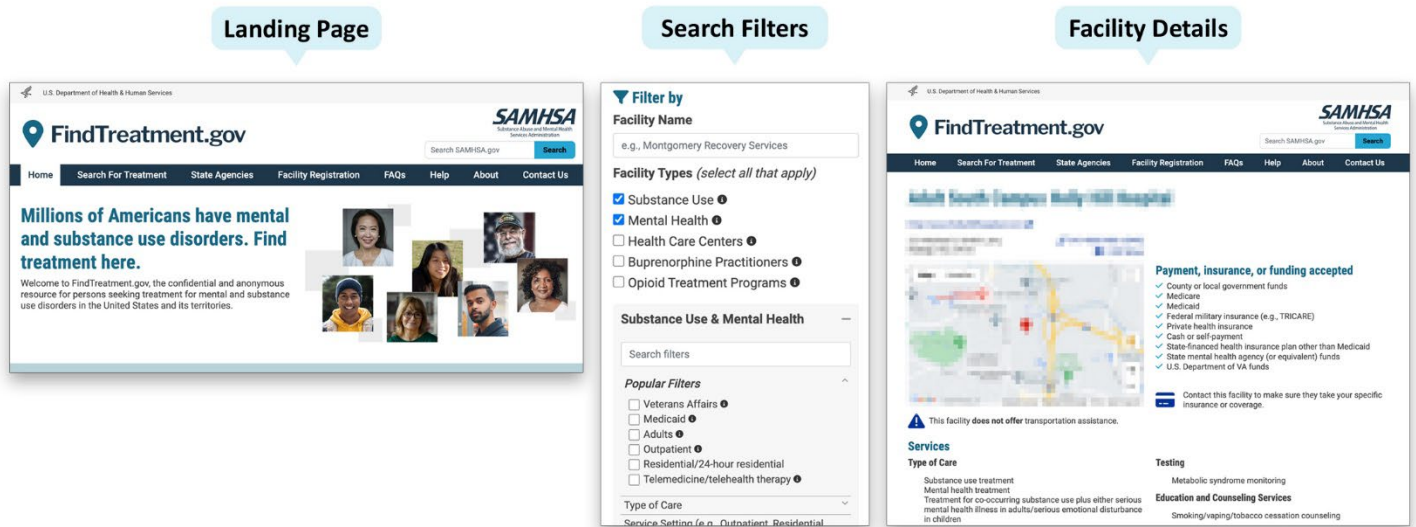
Figure 1 on the next page shows snapshots from FindTreatment.gov, including the landing page of the website, a list of filters that an individual can select when searching for treatment, and the information on a facility selected from the search results.

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<sup>4</sup> CDC, National Center for Health Statistics’ Data Brief [Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 2001–2021](#), No. 457, December 2022. Accessed on Aug. 27, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Section 520E-4(b)(1) of the Public Health Service Act stated that this service must include “a nationwide, telephone number providing year-round access to information that is updated on a regular basis regarding local behavioral health providers and community-based organizations in a manner that is confidential . . . .”

Figure 1: Snapshots from FindTreatment.gov



SAMHSA manages FindTreatment.gov and uses contractor support for system operations and maintenance. Data collection and maintenance tasks for FindTreatment.gov are covered under the Behavioral Health Services Information System (BHSIS) contract that SAMHSA awarded to a non-Federal entity (the Contractor). The BHSIS consists of multiple systems, including the Inventory of Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Facilities (the Inventory), the National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey (the Survey), and FindTreatment.gov.<sup>6</sup>

### FindTreatment.gov's Data Sources

FindTreatment.gov contains contact and services information for eligible substance use and mental health treatment facilities that gave consent to SAMHSA to be listed.<sup>7</sup> Facility contact information comes from the Inventory, and services information comes from facility responses submitted to the Survey.

### *Inventory of Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Facilities*

The Inventory contains all substance use and mental health treatment facilities known to SAMHSA in the United States and its territories. It contains each facility's contact information, such as the facility type (e.g., substance use treatment facility), name, address, and phone

<sup>6</sup> In addition to the Inventory, the Survey, and FindTreatment.gov, the BHSIS includes other systems and databases that are outside the scope of this audit.

<sup>7</sup> Among other criteria, facilities that are active and providing substance use or mental health treatment services are eligible to participate in the Survey. Facilities may choose whether they want to be listed on FindTreatment.gov. Therefore, facilities that were not eligible to participate in the Survey or chose not to be listed were not on FindTreatment.gov and were not included in our audit.

number. Only SAMHSA, the Contractor, and Single State Agencies have access to the Inventory.<sup>8</sup> A Single State Agency or the Contractor can add a new facility or update information on an existing facility in the Inventory after changes are verified by the Contractor.

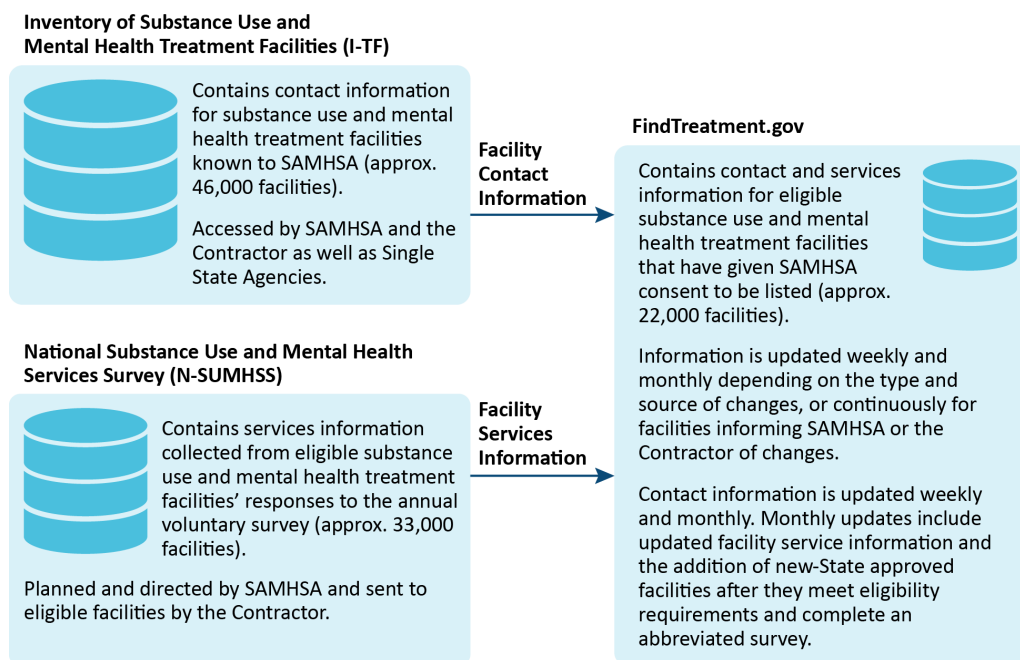
### *National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey*

The Survey is voluntary and is conducted annually from the end of March through the end of December. Although SAMHSA plans and directs the Survey, the Contractor sends the Survey to a list of eligible facilities generated from the Inventory to confirm contact information and to collect services data on SUD and mental health services offered by treatment facilities across the United States and its territories.

The Survey consists of two introductory questions and four separate modules.<sup>9</sup> The introductory questions request information on a facility's primary treatment focus (e.g., SUD or mental health treatment services) and whether a facility is a jail. The responses to these two questions determine which modules each facility is asked to complete.

Figure 2 summarizes the information contained in the Inventory and Survey and on FindTreatment.gov.

**Figure 2: Source and Frequency of Information Updates for FindTreatment.gov**



<sup>8</sup> SAMHSA uses "Single State Agencies" as an umbrella term for State substance use and mental health agencies.

<sup>9</sup> Module A contains questions for substance use treatment facilities, Module B contains questions for mental health treatment facilities, Module C contains questions for all treatment facilities, and Module D contains questions for all treatment facilities on the number of clients.



## Procedures and System Edits Related to the National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey

Substance use and mental health treatment facilities may submit responses to the Survey online, on paper, or by telephone interview. A facility's contact information and its responses to a selected number of questions (e.g., regarding treatment approaches, age groups accepted, and payment or insurance accepted) are pre-filled-in from the facility's responses to a prior Survey, if applicable. The survey respondent has an opportunity to check and update the pre-filled-in information. The survey respondent is required to confirm the facility's contact information at the end of the survey page and may review the responses before submitting the Survey to the Contractor. If the Survey is submitted on paper, the Contractor's data entry staff input the information into the Survey system, and the Contractor's reviewer reviews that information.

Upon receiving a facility's responses to the Survey, the Contractor has procedures and system edits to "validate" the responses and follow up with facilities and Single State Agencies if necessary.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the Survey's built-in system edits perform the following functions:

- Some questions are logically skipped. For example, if a facility responds that it does not offer hospital inpatient SUD treatment services, the next question—on whether the facility offers inpatient detoxification or treatment—is skipped.
- A system edit requires that a respondent answer a required question before proceeding to the next one. SAMHSA identifies these questions as critical items.
- Facility responses are flagged for followup if edits are not passed—for example, if conflicting or incomplete information is detected. In this case, the Contractor makes two attempts (via email or phone, or a combination of both) to follow up with a facility. If the facility does not respond, the Contractor reports on FindTreatment.gov the other available information that is not conflicting—provided that the facility is eligible and gave consent to be listed.

SAMHSA also has internal quality control procedures to test the Survey questionnaire, track the facility response rate, and review the Contractor's procedures and edits. Educational materials and videos about completing the Survey are available to facilities on the Survey's website. SAMHSA officials told us that materials sent to facilities by mail and email also inform facilities that their Survey responses will appear on FindTreatment.gov.

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<sup>10</sup> A system edit is a predefined pattern or rule applied by a system to validate input fields based on specific criteria. SAMHSA describes the Contractor's system edits as logical skips, critical items, and automatic flagging criteria.

## Updating Treatment Facilities' Information on FindTreatment.gov

According to SAMHSA officials, new State-approved substance use and mental health treatment facilities are added to FindTreatment.gov monthly after the facilities meet all eligibility requirements and complete an abbreviated Survey.<sup>11</sup> Information on FindTreatment.gov is updated weekly and monthly, depending on the type and source of the changes: contact information is updated weekly and monthly, and facility services information is updated monthly. SAMHSA has designated representatives in each Single State Agency who are responsible for adding facilities to the Inventory and updating the status (i.e., active or closed) and location information for substance use and mental health treatment facilities in their jurisdictions.<sup>12</sup>

Updates may be made on a continuous basis for facilities informing SAMHSA or the Contractor of changes. A facility may request to update its information by contacting the Contractor or may request to be added to FindTreatment.gov by using the online application form. Consumers may also contact the Contractor to report potential errors.<sup>13</sup> SAMHSA officials stated that upon receiving a request to update a facility's information, the Contractor processes the request with an acknowledgment email, verifies the information, and updates the information in the Inventory, on the Survey, and on FindTreatment.gov.

## HOW WE CONDUCTED THIS AUDIT

We interviewed SAMHSA and Contractor officials and reviewed documentation to gain an understanding of: (1) the BHSIS performance work statement, (2) information listed on FindTreatment.gov, and (3) procedures for reporting and updating facility information on FindTreatment.gov. On April 20, 2023, we downloaded a copy of the database from FindTreatment.gov with information on substance use and mental health treatment facilities.<sup>14</sup> We refer to these as "facilities" throughout the rest of this report.

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<sup>11</sup> The abbreviated Survey contains the same questions as the annual Survey except for questions on the number of clients.

<sup>12</sup> Because facility contact information comes from the Inventory, updating the facility's information in the Inventory will also update the facility's information on FindTreatment.gov, if the facility is an eligible substance use or mental health treatment facility that gave consent to SAMHSA to be listed.

<sup>13</sup> FindTreatment.gov has a statement about how to contact the Contractor to report an issue with the facility listing and shows the Contractor's contact phone number and email address.

<sup>14</sup> We requested a copy of the database as of the date we notified SAMHSA of our audit, but FindTreatment.gov is a live system, and SAMHSA does not maintain historical copies of the database.

We identified 22,106 facilities listed on FindTreatment.gov as of April 20, 2023.<sup>15</sup> We selected a stratified random sample of 100 facilities (consisting of 50 substance use treatment facilities and 50 mental health treatment facilities). In November 2023, we initiated contact with each sampled facility to verify the accuracy of its contact information and selected services information on FindTreatment.gov.<sup>16</sup> The selected services information included but was not limited to the service setting (e.g., outpatient), treatment approaches, age groups accepted (i.e., age groups for which a facility provided services), and payment or insurance accepted (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, or private health insurance). To further validate the information, we verified some of the facility information, where available, using the facility’s website, Medicare or Medicaid claims, and the facility’s written documentation (e.g., the program orientation handbook and policy manual).

To assess the completeness of the information reported on FindTreatment.gov, we analyzed the database of 22,106 facilities to determine whether any of the following critical items were not reported: facility name, facility address, contact phone number, age groups accepted, and sex accepted.<sup>17</sup> To assess the timeliness of the information reported on FindTreatment.gov, we reviewed the requests to update facility information. Specifically, we reviewed the 72 requests that facilities or consumers made from November 2022 through April 2023 to update facility information to determine whether the information on FindTreatment.gov was updated within a reasonable amount of time after the request.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix A describes our audit scope and methodology, Appendix B describes our statistical sampling methodology, and Appendix C contains our sample results and estimates.

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<sup>15</sup> On FindTreatment.gov, facilities are reported separately for each facility treatment type (substance use or mental health treatment) and for location, unit, or program. A facility that provides both substance use and mental health treatment services in multiple locations appears in multiple records on FindTreatment.gov. To identify each substance use or mental health treatment facility location, we grouped the records in the database by combining the facility treatment type, facility name, and street address. For reporting purposes, we use “facility” or “facilities” throughout the rest of this report.

<sup>16</sup> Because information on FindTreatment.gov is from the Inventory and facility responses to the Survey, “verify the accuracy of” means to identify any discrepancies between the information that the facility provided in the latest Survey, which was reported on FindTreatment.gov, and the information provided to us by the facility.

<sup>17</sup> We used SAMHSA’s determination that these fields are considered “critical items.”

## FINDINGS

SAMHSA reported on FindTreatment.gov some inaccurate information for selected substance use and mental health treatment facilities. Specifically, as of April 20, 2023, for 66 of 100 sampled facilities, some reported facility information was inaccurate, consisting of inaccurate contact information for 14 sampled facilities (such as incorrect facility addresses) and inaccurate services information for 62 sampled facilities (such as incorrect reporting of treatment approaches offered).<sup>18</sup> On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that 14,283 facilities had inaccurately reported contact or services information. We also estimated that 3,095 facilities had inaccurately reported contact information and 13,399 facilities had inaccurately reported services information.<sup>19</sup>

However, we found that selected critical information for facilities was generally reported on FindTreatment.gov.<sup>20</sup> For example, most of the 22,106 facilities listed on FindTreatment.gov included their addresses, but 11 of these facilities did not report critical information related to age groups accepted and sex accepted. Furthermore, SAMHSA processed facility and consumer requests to update facility information on FindTreatment.gov in a timely manner.

Although SAMHSA and the Contractor had procedures and system edits to validate facilities' responses, these procedures and edits were insufficient to identify inaccurate facility information and prevent the submission of the Survey with incomplete critical information fields. In addition, officials from many facilities in our sample stated that they did not check the accuracy and completeness of their information on FindTreatment.gov. Inaccurate facility information may hinder or delay individuals' access to appropriate treatment services for substance use and mental disorders.

## FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

The 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. No. 114-255, § 9006) requires that SAMHSA maintain the National Treatment Referral Routing Service, including an Internet website that provides a searchable, online treatment services locator of behavioral health treatment providers and community-based organizations. The website is required to include the providers' and organizations' names, locations, and contact information, as well as information on basic services provided.

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<sup>18</sup> Each of the 66 facilities had inaccurate contact information or inaccurate services information, or a combination of both. "Inaccurate information" was defined as any discrepancy we identified between the information that the facility provided in the latest Survey, which was reported on FindTreatment.gov, and the information provided to us by the facility.

<sup>19</sup> Because a facility may have had both inaccurately reported contact and services information, the overall estimated number of facilities does not equal the total of individual estimates of facilities that had inaccurately reported contact or services information.

<sup>20</sup> We did not verify the accuracy of this information, except for those facilities and information selected for our review of accuracy.

The Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (Standards) states that "management should use quality information to achieve the entity's objective" (§ 13.01).<sup>21</sup> The Standards further define quality information as appropriate, current, complete, accurate, accessible, and provided on a timely basis (§ 13.05).

The BHSIS performance work statement requires the Contractor to:

- "develop and implement agile project management methods . . . to ensure work is completed within or before expected timelines and budgets, efficiently, and that quality control procedures are implemented for the best quality products"<sup>22</sup> and
- apply various quality control checks to ensure the validity of underlying data to ensure continued operation and maintenance of FindTreatment.gov.

#### **FOR 66 SAMPLED FACILITIES, SOME REPORTED FACILITY INFORMATION WAS INACCURATE**

For 66 of 100 sampled facilities, some reported facility information on FindTreatment.gov was inaccurate. Specifically:

- For 14 sampled facilities, contact information was inaccurate.
- For 62 sampled facilities, services information was inaccurate.

#### **Reported Contact Information for 14 Sampled Facilities Was Inaccurate**

For 14 sampled facilities, reported contact information (which consisted of facility name, facility address, contact phone number, and facility website) was inaccurate. These 14 facilities consisted of 7 substance use treatment facilities and 7 mental health treatment facilities.

Table 1 on the next page shows the number of facilities with inaccurate contact information by contact information category and facility type.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> GAO, [Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government \(GAO-14-704G\)](#), Sept. 10, 2014. Accessed on Mar. 21, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Agile project management is a project management methodology in which a project is broken up into subprojects. At the end of each subproject, stakeholders and the team review their work, make adjustments for the next subproject, and repeat until complete.

<sup>23</sup> A facility may have reported inaccurate contact information in more than one contact information category. Therefore, the number of facilities in Table 1 does not add up to the total number of facilities with inaccurate contact information.

**Table 1: Number of Facilities With Inaccurate Contact Information  
by Contact Information Category and Facility Type**

<b>Category of Contact Information</b>	<b>No. of Substance Use Treatment Facilities With Inaccurate Contact Information</b>	<b>No. of Mental Health Treatment Facilities With Inaccurate Contact Information</b>
Facility name	0	2
Facility address	4	5
Phone number	3	1
Website	1	1

Examples of inaccurate contact information reported on FindTreatment.gov included the following:

- One substance use treatment facility's reported address was not found on the facility's website, and the reported contact phone number was not in service when we contacted the facility in December 2023. When we called the general phone number listed on the facility's website, the facility's executive vice president responded that the facility was flooded in 2017 and had moved to another location before 2020, and that the contact phone number had been changed.
- Another substance use treatment facility's website reported on FindTreatment.gov was not working when we verified the information in October 2023.
- One mental health treatment facility's director stated that the reported contact phone number was incorrect. The phone number reported on FindTreatment.gov was for a different facility.

### **Reported Services Information for 62 Sampled Facilities Was Inaccurate**

For 62 sampled facilities, reported services information (including treatment approaches, payment or insurance accepted, and age groups accepted) was inaccurate. These 62 facilities consisted of 27 substance use treatment facilities and 35 mental health treatment facilities.

Table 2 on the next page contains the number of facilities with inaccurate services information by services information category and facility type.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> A facility may have reported inaccurate services information in more than one services information category. Therefore, the number of facilities in Table 2 does not add up to the total number of facilities with inaccurate services information.

**Table 2: Number of Facilities With Inaccurate Services Information  
by Services Information Category and Facility Type**

<b>Category of Services Information</b>	<b>No. of Substance Use Treatment Facilities With Inaccurate Services Information</b>	<b>No. of Mental Health Treatment Facilities With Inaccurate Services Information</b>
<b>Type of Care</b> (e.g., SUD treatment, mental health treatment, and treatment for co-occurring conditions)	3	2
<b>Service Setting</b> (e.g., inpatient and outpatient)	5	1
<b>Opioid Medications Used in Treatment</b> (e.g., methadone and buprenorphine)*	1	NA <sup>†</sup>
<b>Type of Opioid Treatment</b> (e.g., maintenance and detoxification)	5	NA
<b>Treatment Approaches</b> (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy, individual psychotherapy, and telehealth)	14	15
<b>Emergency Mental Health Services</b> (e.g., crisis intervention and psychiatric emergency services)	NA	8
<b>Payment/Insurance/Funding Accepted</b> (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurance)	9	22
<b>Transitional Services</b> (e.g., aftercare and discharge planning)	1	NA
<b>Recovery Support Services</b> (e.g., recovery coach and mentoring or peer support)	11	5
<b>Detoxification (Medical Withdrawal) Services</b>	3	NA
<b>Education and Counseling Services</b> (e.g., individual counseling and group counseling)	15	1
<b>Age Groups Accepted</b> (e.g., children, adults, and seniors)	2	1
<b>Sex Accepted</b> (i.e., female and male)	0	NA
<b>Language Services</b> (e.g., sign language and Spanish)	0	2

\* Methadone is a medication used to treat opioid use disorder, and it can be dispensed only through a SAMHSA-certified opioid treatment program. Buprenorphine is another medication to treat opioid use disorder, which can be prescribed or dispensed in physician offices.

<sup>†</sup> “NA” indicates that the category of services information does not apply to this type of treatment facility.

Examples of inaccurate services information reported on FindTreatment.gov included the following:

- One substance use treatment facility reported housing services as recovery support services provided by the facility. However, when we contacted the facility in

November 2023, the facility's vice president stated that this location does not provide housing services.

- One mental health treatment facility reported Medicare as one of the insurance options that it accepted, but when we contacted the facility in November 2023, the facility's director stated that the facility does not accept Medicare.
- One substance use treatment facility reported that it provided services to children, adolescents, and adults, but when we contacted the facility in December 2023, the facility's program manager stated that the facility provides services to only adults.

### **Procedures Were Insufficient To Validate Facilities' Responses to the Survey**

SAMHSA relies on facilities to report accurate information when they complete the Survey. SAMHSA also relies on facilities, Single State Agencies, and consumers to inform SAMHSA or the Contractor of any information changes or inaccuracies. Although SAMHSA and the Contractor had procedures to validate facilities' responses, these procedures were insufficient to identify inaccurate facility information. SAMHSA officials said that after contact and services information is reported on FindTreatment.gov, SAMHSA and the Contractor do not reach out to a facility to verify its information until the following year's Survey starts or until being informed of changes by the facility, a Single State Agency, or a consumer.

In addition, SAMHSA officials said that educational materials, including videos, are provided to facilities informing them of how to complete the Survey and informing them that their responses will appear on FindTreatment.gov. However, officials from many facilities in our sample stated that they did not check the accuracy and completeness of their information on FindTreatment.gov.

### **An Estimated Two-Thirds of Facilities Had Some Inaccurately Reported Information**

On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that 14,283 facilities (of 22,106 facilities in total) had inaccurately reported contact or services information on FindTreatment.gov. We also estimated that 3,095 facilities had inaccurately reported contact information and 13,399 facilities had inaccurately reported services information.

Inaccurate facility information may hinder or delay individuals' access to appropriate treatment services for substance use and mental disorders.



## **SELECTED CRITICAL INFORMATION FOR FACILITIES WAS GENERALLY REPORTED ON FINDTREATMENT.GOV**

Selected critical information for facilities was generally reported on FindTreatment.gov.<sup>25</sup> For example, most of the 22,106 facilities listed on FindTreatment.gov included their addresses. However, 11 of these facilities had some critical information fields that were incomplete. Specifically, the information for the services information categories Age Groups Accepted and Sex Accepted was not reported on FindTreatment.gov.

Although SAMHSA and the Contractor had system edits in the Survey, the edits were insufficient to prevent the submission of the Survey with incomplete critical information fields. These 11 facilities submitted the Survey online without responding to the questions related to the critical services information fields for Age Groups Accepted and Sex Accepted. A system edit required that a respondent answer the required question before proceeding to the next question. However, despite this system edit, respondents were able to submit the survey without answering all of the required questions.

Incomplete facility information may hinder or delay individuals' access to appropriate treatment services for substance use and mental disorders.

## **REQUESTS TO UPDATE FACILITY INFORMATION WERE PROCESSED IN A TIMELY MANNER**

SAMHSA processed requests to update facility information on FindTreatment.gov in a timely manner. Specifically, upon receiving a facility or consumer request to update a facility's information, the Contractor processed the request with an acknowledgment email within 24 to 48 hours and updated the information on FindTreatment.gov after validating the information.

## **CONCLUSION**

In accordance with Federal law, SAMHSA maintains the website FindTreatment.gov, which enables individuals to search for substance use and mental health treatment facilities. However, inaccurate facility information may hinder or delay individuals' access to appropriate treatment services for substance use and mental disorders. Our audit found that FindTreatment.gov contained some inaccurate and incomplete information on substance use and mental health treatment facilities, such as inaccurate facility addresses and inaccurate services information. SAMHSA relies on facilities to complete the voluntary Survey using accurate information. Although SAMHSA had procedures and system edits to validate facilities' responses, these procedures and edits were insufficient to identify inaccurate facility information and prevent the submission of the Survey with incomplete critical information fields.

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<sup>25</sup> See footnote 20.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:

- work with the Contractor to strengthen procedures related to verifying facility information, such as validating a sample of facilities each year;
- improve the prominence of the statement on FindTreatment.gov about contacting the Contractor to report an issue with the information listed for a facility, such as placing the statement at the top of the page on the website and using a larger font size and a different color; and
- work with the Contractor to implement additional system edits in the Survey to prevent facilities from submitting the Survey without completing all of the critical information fields.

## SAMHSA COMMENTS AND OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL RESPONSE

In written comments on our draft report, SAMHSA concurred with all three of our recommendations and provided information on actions that it planned to take to address them. Specifically, SAMHSA stated that it would: (1) work with the Contractor to strengthen procedures related to verifying facility information; (2) improve the prominence of the statement on FindTreatment.gov about contacting the Contractor to report an issue with facility information by the end of January 2025; and (3) work with the Contractor to implement additional system edits to prevent facilities from submitting the Survey without completing all of the critical information fields, and implement the new system edits in the upcoming Survey starting at the end of March 2025. In addition, SAMHSA stated that it had identified concerns with our statistical sampling methodology. The following sections contain SAMHSA's comments on our sampling methodology and our responses.

After SAMHSA provided written comments on our draft report, we confirmed that SAMHSA addressed our second recommendation by improving the prominence of the statement on FindTreatment.gov. Therefore, we consider this recommendation implemented.

SAMHSA also provided technical comments on our draft report, which we addressed as appropriate. SAMHSA's comments, excluding the technical comments, are included in their entirety as Appendix D.

## SAMHSA COMMENTS

SAMHSA stated that it had identified several significant concerns with our methodology used to generate estimates (such as overlapping facilities in both strata with unequal probabilities of selection, omission of weighting, and small sample size). SAMHSA stated that it believed that the estimates for our report were inaccurate and that they were based on a

“non-representative convenience sampling of the FindTreatment.gov universe.” Furthermore, SAMHSA stated that we did not implement an appropriate weighting methodology for the generalizability of the findings to the broader universe of facilities included in FindTreatment.gov.

#### **OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL RESPONSE**

We used a statistically valid sampling and extrapolation methodology to generate the estimates in this report. We properly executed our statistical sampling methodology in that we defined our sampling frame and sample unit, randomly selected our sample (selected according to our valid sample design, i.e., weighted appropriately), applied relevant criteria in evaluating the sample, and used statistical sampling software to apply the correct formulas for the extrapolation.

In addition, our sample size was sufficient to be statistically valid. Our sample units were not overlapping because we stratified our sample by facility location and treatment type (substance use or mental health treatment), and we verified only the information related to either substance use or mental health treatment, depending on which stratum the sample was selected from.

Finally, our findings and recommendations are valid even without the extrapolations in this report.

## APPENDIX A: AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

### SCOPE

We identified 22,106 facilities listed on FindTreatment.gov as of April 20, 2023. We selected a stratified random sample of 100 facilities (consisting of 50 substance use treatment facilities and 50 mental health treatment facilities). In November 2023, we initiated contact with each sampled facility to verify the accuracy of its contact information and selected services information on FindTreatment.gov. The selected services information included but was not limited to the service setting, treatment approaches, age groups accepted, and payment or insurance accepted. To further validate the information, we verified some of the facility information, where available, using the facility's website, Medicare or Medicaid claims, and the facility's written documentation (e.g., the program orientation handbook and policy manual).

To assess the completeness of the information reported on FindTreatment.gov, we analyzed the database of 22,106 facilities to determine whether any of the following critical items were not reported: facility name, facility address, contact phone number, age groups accepted, and sex accepted. To assess the timeliness of the information reported on FindTreatment.gov, we reviewed the requests to update facility information. Specifically, we reviewed the 72 requests that facilities or consumers made from November 2022 through April 2023 to update facility information to determine whether the information on FindTreatment.gov was updated within a reasonable amount of time after the request.

We did not assess SAMHSA's and the Contractor's overall internal control structures. Rather, we limited our review of internal controls to the processes that SAMHSA and the Contractor used to determine whether the facility information reported on FindTreatment.gov was accurate and complete and updated in a timely manner. To determine the effectiveness of the design and implementation of these internal controls, we interviewed SAMHSA and Contractor officials and reviewed documentation to gain an understanding of the BHSIS performance work statement, information listed on FindTreatment.gov, and procedures for reporting and updating facility information on FindTreatment.gov. Our verification of the facility information, analysis of the FindTreatment.gov database, and review of the requests to update facility information allowed us to evaluate the operating effectiveness of internal controls.

We conducted our audit from April 2023 through November 2024.

### METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our objective, we:

- reviewed applicable Federal laws;
- reviewed GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*;

- reviewed the BHSIS performance work statement between SAMHSA and the Contractor;
- interviewed SAMHSA and Contractor officials and reviewed documentation to gain an understanding of the processes used to collect data from substance use and mental health treatment facilities and to report and update facility information on FindTreatment.gov;
- downloaded a copy of the database from FindTreatment.gov on April 20, 2023, listing 22,106 substance use and mental health treatment facilities;
- selected a stratified random sample of 100 facilities from the database (Appendix B);
- for each sampled facility: (1) contacted the facility to verify the accuracy of its contact information and selected services information on FindTreatment.gov and (2) verified some of the facility information, where available, using the facility's website, Medicare or Medicaid claims, and the facility's written documentation (e.g., the program orientation handbook and policy manual);
- analyzed the database downloaded from FindTreatment.gov to determine whether any of the selected critical items (i.e., facility name, facility address, contact phone number, age groups accepted, and sex accepted) were not reported on FindTreatment.gov;<sup>26</sup>
- reviewed the 72 requests that facilities or consumers made from November 2022 through April 2023 to determine the timeliness of the Contractor's response to the requests and whether the requested changes were made on FindTreatment.gov;
- estimated the number of facilities with: (1) inaccurate contact or services information, (2) inaccurate contact information, and (3) inaccurate services information (Appendix C); and
- discussed the results of our audit with SAMHSA officials.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 20.

## APPENDIX B: STATISTICAL SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

### SAMPLING FRAME

Our sampling frame consisted of 22,106 substance use or mental health treatment facilities (facilities) that were listed on FindTreatment.gov on April 20, 2023. To identify each facility location, we grouped the records in the database by combining the facility treatment type (i.e., substance use or mental health), facility name, and street address.<sup>27</sup>

### SAMPLE UNIT

The sample unit was a facility.

### SAMPLE DESIGN AND SAMPLE SIZE

We used a stratified random sample, consisting of two strata. We selected 100 sample units for review. See Table 3 for the details of each stratum.

**Table 3: Stratified Sample Design**

Stratum	Facility Treatment Type (as Identified on FindTreatment.gov)	Frame Size	Sample Size
1	Substance use treatment facilities	12,971	50
2	Mental health treatment facilities	9,135	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>22,106</b>	<b>100</b>

### SOURCE OF RANDOM NUMBERS

We generated the random numbers using the OIG, Office of Audit Services (OAS), statistical software.

### METHOD OF SELECTING SAMPLE UNITS

We sorted the items within each stratum alphabetically (ascending order) by facility name and street address, and then consecutively numbered the items in each stratum in the sampling frame. After generating the random numbers for our sample according to our sample design, we selected the corresponding frame items for review.

### ESTIMATION METHODOLOGY

We used the OIG-OAS statistical software to estimate the number of facilities with:  
(1) inaccurate contact or services information, (2) inaccurate contact information, and

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<sup>27</sup> See footnote 15.

(3) inaccurate services information. We used this software to calculate the point estimate and the corresponding lower and upper limits of a two-sided 90-percent confidence interval.

## APPENDIX C: SAMPLE RESULTS AND ESTIMATES

**Table 4: Sample Results**

Stratum	Frame Size	Sample Size	No. of Facilities With Inaccurate Information Reported on FindTreatment.gov		
			Inaccurate Contact or Services Information *	Inaccurate Contact Information	Inaccurate Services Information
1	12,971	50	29	7	27
2	9,135	50	37	7	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,106</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>62</b>

\* The number of facilities with inaccurate contact or services information represents the number that had inaccurate information reported in at least one category of contact or services information.

**Table 5: Estimated Number of Facilities in Our Sampling Frame With Inaccurate Information Reported on FindTreatment.gov  
(Limits Calculated at the 90-Percent Confidence Level)**

Estimate Description	Point Estimate (No. of Facilities)	Lower Limit (No. of Facilities)	Upper Limit (No. of Facilities)
Facilities with inaccurate contact or services information	14,283	12,512	16,054
Facilities with inaccurate contact information	3,095	1,804	4,386
Facilities with inaccurate services information	13,399	11,593	15,205



## APPENDIX D: SAMHSA COMMENTS



Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

5600 Fishers Lane • Rockville, MD 20857  
www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)



January 14, 2025

TO: Office of Inspector General

FROM: Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use

SUBJECT: Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Report engagement "SAMHSA's FindTreatment.gov Contained Some Inaccurate Information on Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Facilities," A-09-23-01003

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has reviewed the subject document and offers the attached general and technical comments for consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Delphin-Rittmon".

Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.

Attachments

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Behavioral Health is Essential to Health • Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover

**GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION ON THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL'S DRAFT REPORT TITLED "SAMHSA'S FINDTREATMENT.GOV CONTAINED SOME INACCURATE INFORMATION ON SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT FACILITIES" A-09-23-01003**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Office of Inspector General (OIG) draft report, *SAMHSA's FindTreatment.gov Contained Some Inaccurate Information on Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Facilities A-09-23-01003*.

SAMHSA agrees that having accurate information on FindTreatment.gov is critically important for the public health, in particular for those who are seeking treatment for substance use disorders or mental health conditions. SAMHSA is working, in conjunction with its contractor, to improve the self-reporting of information on FindTreatment.gov as recommended by OIG in the audit.

Additionally, SAMHSA has reviewed the OIG methodology report and identified several significant concerns (such as overlapping facilities in both strata with unequal probabilities of selection, omission of weighting, and small sample size) with the methodology used to generate estimates. SAMHSA believes the OIG estimates for this report are inaccurate. They are based on a non-representative convenience sampling of the FindTreatment.gov universe. Further, no appropriate weighting methodology was implemented for the generalizability of the findings to the broader universe of facilities include in FindTreatment.gov. SAMHSA believes it is critical that the estimates generated by OIG are accurate and truly reflective of FindTreatment.gov when presented to the public in the final report. Thus, we have provided technical comments to articulate our concerns with the methodology and draft estimates (See technical comments).

OIG's recommendations and SAMHSA's responses are below.

**Recommendation 1:**

We recommend that SAMHSA work with its contractor to strengthen procedures related to verifying facility information, such as validating a sample of facilities each year.

**SAMHSA Response:**

SAMHSA concurs with the recommendation to work with the Contractor to strengthen procedures related to verifying facility information.

**Recommendation 2:**

We recommend that the SAMHSA improve the prominence of the statement on FindTreatment.gov about contacting the Contractor to report an issue with the information listed for a facility, such as placing the statement at the top of the page on the website and using a larger font size and a different color.

**SAMHSA Response:**

**GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION ON THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL'S DRAFT REPORT TITLED "SAMHSA'S FINDTREATMENT.GOV CONTAINED SOME INACCURATE INFORMATION ON SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT FACILITIES" A-09-23-01003**

SAMHSA concurs with the recommendation to improve the prominence of the statement on FindTreatment.gov by placing the statement at the top of the page on the website and use a larger font size and a different color. SAMHSA will implement this change to all Facility Detail pages on FindTreatment.gov by the end of January 2025.

**Recommendation 3:**

We recommend that SAMHSA work with the Contractor to implement additional system edits in the Survey to prevent facilities from submitting the Survey without completing all of the critical information fields.

**SAMHSA Response:**

SAMHSA concurs with this recommendation and will be working with the Contractor to implement additional system edits to prevent facilities from submitting the Survey without completing all of the critical information fields. Any potential errors or additional system edits identified will be corrected, developed, and tested by the end of March 2025. New system edits will be implemented in the upcoming 2025 Survey, starting at the end of March 2025.

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