

IAFT RCT INFO Sheet

Rapid Resource for Families (RRFF) is currently engaged in a research study to learn more about the effectiveness of the Intensive Alternative Family Treatment (IAFT) program on outcomes for youth. RRFF is partnering with researchers at UNC Chapel Hill to design and carry out this study. We want everyone in the IAFT network to be aware of this study including, families, treatment parents, providers, and the LME/MCOs. Leadership at Alliance, Partners, and Vaya are aware of and supportive of this study. You're not being asked to do anything different. The only change during the study period is how some referrals are assigned to services.

Here are some answers to a few questions you might have:

What type of study is this?

The strongest research design for determining if something works is called a randomized controlled trial (RCT). In this RCT we will compare the effects of IAFT to standard therapeutic foster care (TFC). The key to RCTs is that participants are randomly assigned to one group or another, like how a lottery works. We want to study IAFT under "real-world" conditions, so the research team will not contact or interact with families or providers at all. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the UNC Office of Human Research Ethics.

Who is included in this study?

Only youth who are referred to TFC are eligible for this study. Some youth are referred for placement to either TFC or IAFT, and they would also be eligible for the study. Youth referred to IAFT only are not eligible for this study. Eligible participants will be randomly assigned to either IAFT or TFC. The usual referral and placement process will operate the same otherwise.

How long will the study last?

We need to reach a total of 225 youth, with 150 in the TFC group and 75 in the IAFT group. Based on historical trends, we estimate that it will take about 18 months to reach this number.

Do youth or families need to provide consent?

No. Our study does not require informed consent.

What outcomes are you studying?

The study will examine use of higher levels of care 6 months after TFC or IAFT. We will use data from the Medicaid system to determine this outcome so we will not have to contact youth or families for follow-up.

Does this study impact the referral process?

No. Referrals will continue to come in through the CCW database as before.

Does this study impact the placement process?

Yes. The database manager will use the randomization schedule to determine whether an eligible referral will be placed in a TFC or IAFT home.

Does this impact the reimbursement process for providers?

No. The reimbursement process for IAFT and TFC services will be the same as before.

Do providers, treatment parents, or families have to do anything differently?

No. Although we want everyone to know the study is going on, no one will need to do anything differently outside the RRF team.

What if I have questions?

The Principal Investigator for this study at UNC is Dr. Paul Lanier. You can call him at 919-962-6446 or email him at planier@unc.edu. For more information from RRF, you can also contact Meredith Newman, mnewman@ncrapidresource.org.

