



WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A RESIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE FLETCHER GROUP

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Recovery Management Systems (RMS) are essential tools for rural Substance Use Disorder (SUD) recovery residences because they support effective, person-centered recovery services while ensuring operational efficiency, accountability, and compliance. These systems help recovery housing providers track resident progress, document services, manage admissions and discharges, monitor outcomes, maintain required records, and generate reports for funders and stakeholders. By centralizing information and standardizing processes, an RMS enables recovery residences to provide higher-quality support, demonstrate program effectiveness, and make data-informed decisions that strengthen long-term recovery outcomes for residents.

This guide outlines key considerations to help rural recovery residences choose an RMS and define data outcomes tailored to their recovery housing programs.

For more information on Recovery Management Systems, or if you would like additional SUD recovery related resources, please contact the Fletcher Group RCORP-Rural Center of Excellence on SUD Recovery at 606-657-4662 or at www.fletchergroup.org/contact/.

A Recovery Management System (RMS) helps rural recovery residences demonstrate accountability, track outcomes, and strengthen recovery support services.



Choosing a Recovery Mgt. System

Choosing an RMS that matches your recovery house's unique structure and goals can improve efficiency, compliance, and resident support. No single RMS fits every recovery residence; the best choice is the one that meets your program's current needs while allowing for future growth. Below are some considerations to guide your RMS selection.

Consideration: Recovery House Characteristics

- Staff size & technical capacity
- Resident capacity
- Single or multiple houses
- Regulatory requirements
- Budget constraints
- Technical equipment
- Internet bandwidth availability
- Partner organizations

Consideration: Compatibility & Integration

Consider the level of technical support a vendor is willing to offer to facilitate integration.

- Ease of integration with electronic health records (EHR) and accounting software
- Internet requirements, particularly in rural areas
- Offline functionality and data syncing capabilities
- Data import/export capabilities
- Customization options for your workflow and future regulatory changes



Consideration: Functionality

Prioritize functions according to your specific needs to ensure the most critical needs are met and costs and administrative burden are minimized.

- Data management: resident records, demographics, and progress tracking
- Medication tracking
- Resident progress tracking – recovery capital
- Data-sharing with external providers – clinical, other partners
- Bed management: assign, transfer residents
- Resident intake - user-friendly entry designed for residents to complete
- Case management tools - case notes
- Financial modules - rent payments, financial tracking, invoicing
- Billing & invoicing - Medicaid, state/local contracts
- Regulatory compliance - certification, licensure
- Integration with recovery house registries
- File uploads – to integrate historical data
- Reporting interface

CONSIDERATIONS, CONT.

Consideration: Reporting

Many RMS systems come with reporting features which summarize collected data and allow for customization. Reporting quantifies your organization's efforts and illustrates its effectiveness. Robust outcomes can inform program enhancement and investment and serve as a critical fundraising tool. Success stories of residents are impactful, and when this is accompanied by data it is powerful.

- Dashboards for easy data review
- User-friendly report generation
- Robust data tracking
- Data tracking customization options
- Export format

Consideration: Data Security and Compliance

Prioritize systems that adhere to healthcare privacy regulations such as HIPAA. (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

- HIPAA compliance for data storage
- Data encryption
- Access controls
- Regular backups



Consideration: Training and Support

A well-supported RMS will include technical training and assistance support, both during initial set up and continued use.

1. Comprehensive training programs
2. Easily accessible user guides and tutorials
3. Designated account representative
4. Reliable customer support with direct contact details

CONSIDERATIONS, CONT.

Consideration: Cost Structure

Cost structure should be clear, utilize written communication and documentation to prevent miscommunications.

- Initialization costs
- Monthly versus long-term agreements
- Per-user (house operator) or per-client pricing models
- Annual cost increases
- Support and maintenance fees
- Future system modifications and enhancements
- Data export fees and other feature-based additions
- Minimum charges – if activity declines or is inactive

Data Ownership

Review contract terms carefully, don't hesitate to ask questions. One of the most important points to address is data ownership. Some RMS systems contractually own all data once it is entered into the system. Lacking ownership of your own data can create access limitations, and unforeseen costs and delays in the future.

RMS Success Strategies

By assessing your rural recovery house's specific needs and researching available solutions, you can implement an RMS that enhances efficiency and enables data-driven decision-making. Setting clear objectives, tracking key metrics, standardizing data collection, and utilizing reporting tools will help you continuously improve the quality of care and support for your residents.



Additional Considerations

- Check RMS vendor references
- Evaluate experience of the vendor in the recovery space
- Are trial or test periods available?
- Review vendor acquisition and ownership changes
- What are the minimum charges and add-on costs?
- Review system upgrade policies and downtime notifications
- Data breach response procedures
- Data transfer process in case of system migration
- Contract termination policy and costs
- "Uptime" guarantees (99% recommended)