

**Substance Use Treatment Protocol Development and Organization:
Creating Flowcharts to Standardize Care at
The University of Colorado School of Medicine's
Addiction Research and Treatment Services Adult Outpatient Program**



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BACKGROUND

- ARTS provides substance use treatment to over 1,000 Denver residents daily with only three medical providers on staff
- Onboarding of new staff can be complicated, time-consuming and still leave new staff feeling overwhelmed
- Standardization of processes ensures consistent, quality care for patients between providers

OBJECTIVES

- Update existing ARTS treatment and process protocols
- Create new protocols for treatment of substance use disorders where none previously existed
- Organize all protocols into digital, printable flowcharts to enhance ease-of-use for onboarding staff members

METHODS

- Created written, bullet-point style protocols to meet needs of clinic using both expert opinion of current staff and UpToDate, upload into OneDrive folder
- Create flowchart template using software Edraw Max with borders, title, legend and "Start" oval
- Within written protocols, designate each step as a "Process," "Decision" or unnecessary
- Insert each protocol into the template using rules outlined in Figure 1 "Flowchart Creation Legend" while standardizing spacing, font
- Color-code borders appropriately according to use disorder
- Upload flowcharts into OneDrive folder for review and editing

Figure 1. Flowchart Creation Legend

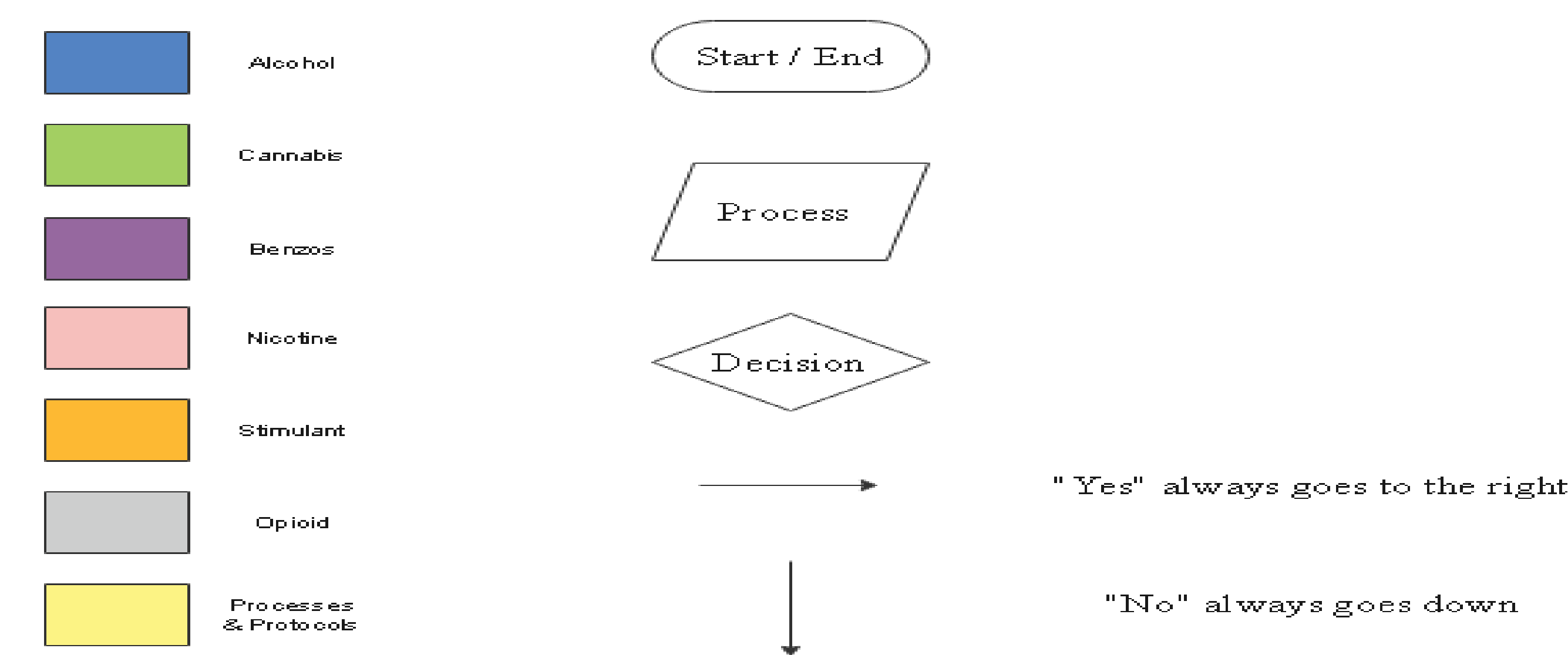
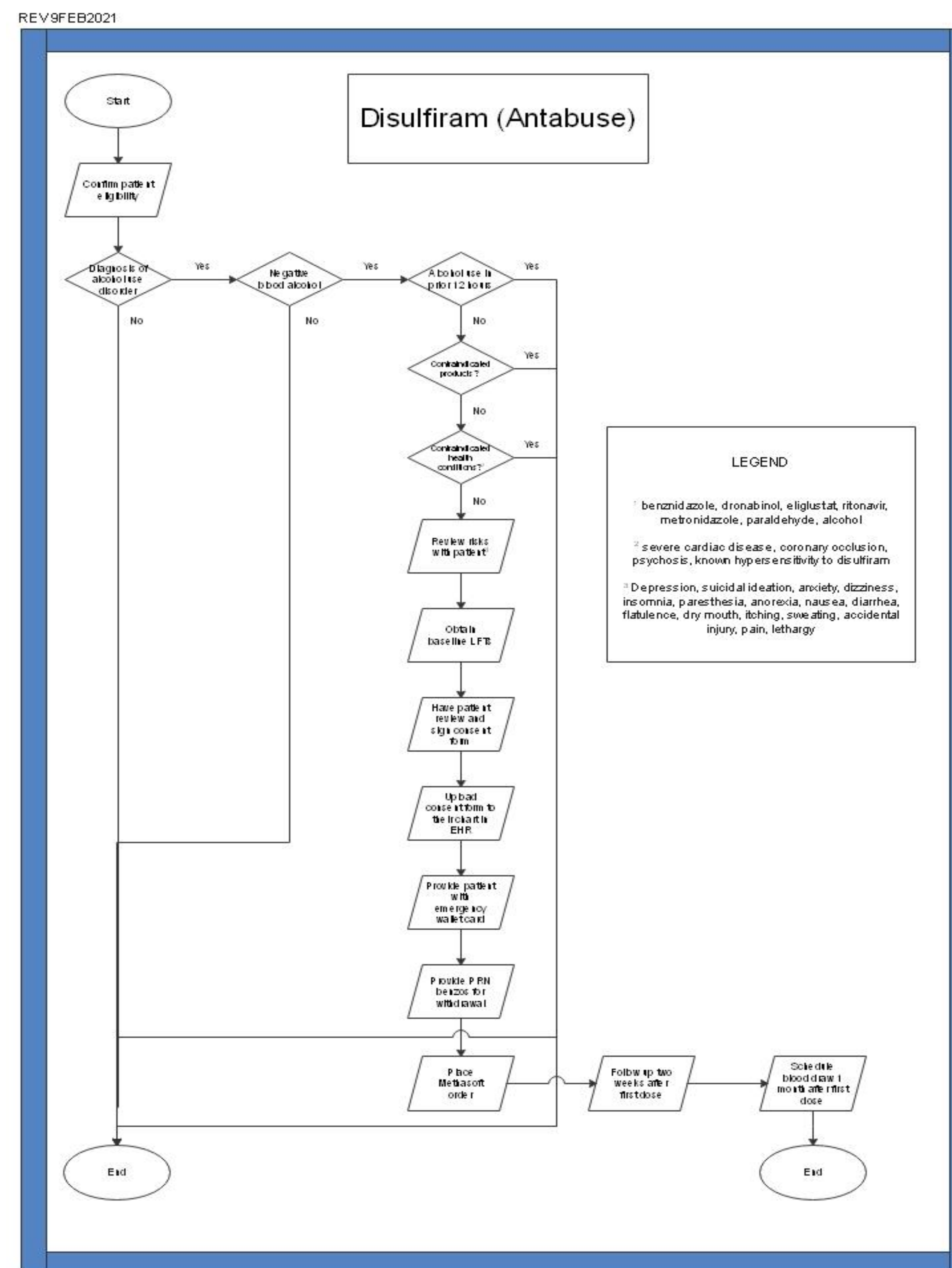


Figure 2. Disulfiram for Alcohol Use Disorder



RESULTS

- Twenty-seven protocols for use in the Adult Outpatient Program
- Opioid substance use: 4
- Benzodiazepine use: 1
- Cannabis use: 1
- Alcohol use: 5
- Nicotine use: 7
- Clinic protocols: 9

LIMITATIONS

- Currently in the "design and test" phase of quality improvement: have not yet studied effects of implementation for onboarding or workflow in office

CONCLUSIONS

- Standardization of evidence-based care improves patient outcomes
- Using protocols improves the onboarding process of new staff
- Future studies measuring patient outcomes with staff using flowcharts will be able to determine efficacy of this quality improvement measure
- Future studies measuring staff's experience can be used to alter flowcharts to meet clinic's needs more appropriately
- If shown to be successful, can publicly disseminate protocol flowcharts to other clinics