

Lighthouse Institute is a part of Chestnut Health Systems, a 501c3 not-for-profit community organization founded in 1973 by an outreach worker, a military veteran, and a new minister with a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration with the goal of moving people with alcohol use disorder out of the criminal justice system and into community-based detoxification and treatment. Subsequently, Chestnut has grown to be one of the major integrated substance use, mental health, and primary healthcare providers in Illinois, Missouri, and Oregon.

Background

After several years as a National Institute on Drug Abuse workforce development trainer, one of Chestnut's founders, Bill White, returned to Chestnut to found the Lighthouse Institute (LI) in 1986. Today, Lighthouse does investigator-initiated community-based research, leads program evaluations for community partners, and operates training centers on evidence-based practices for the field, including clinical practice agencies across the United States, Canada, and in more than a dozen other countries. With more than 110 employees, Lighthouse operates out of three main offices in Bloomington and Chicago, IL and Eugene, OR and has remote staff in 23 states throughout the United States.

Lighthouse is particularly interested in understanding and addressing addiction over the life course, including working with youth, chronic-care models, and supporting recovery. The scientists and staff include those with lived experience with substance use disorders and legal and welfare systems involvement.

Lighthouse is known for its implementation, high rates of recruitment and follow-up, use of service cascades, and advanced analytic methods such as longitudinal and mixed methods analysis. For more information, please visit:

<https://chestnut.org/li>.



Scientific Environment

Lighthouse is a research institute housed within a community-based organization. Lighthouse focuses on substance use, mental health, and integrated health services, implementation and evaluation research, and how patients intersect with various points of the public systems including but not limited to public health, criminal justice, and child welfare. The mission is to help communities and practitioners improve the quality of services through research, program evaluation, training, and publishing to advance understanding of achievement of health equity and social justice.

Since inception, Lighthouse has conducted more than 70 rigorous research projects, as well as evaluations including:

- Five major longitudinal studies spanning two to 19 years
- 19 clinical trials of substance use interventions
- 18 coordinating centers working with four to 178 sites
- Eight national surveys on topics of opioid-related services and needs, best practices, and substance use and mental health services in the justice system and community supervision programs.

In 2023, Lighthouse added five scientists, launched a National Native Center of Excellence, a Center for Implementation Science, and two national initiatives—the Pathways to Wellness Recidivism Reduction Initiative in collaboration with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services, and Screening for Success in collaboration with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. More information about staff, alumni, and open access publications can be found at:

<https://www.researchgate.net/lab/Lighthouse-Institute-of-Chestnut-Health-Systems-Michael-L-Dennis>.

Clinical and Program Resources

Lighthouse operates multiple training centers for evidence-based practices and collaborates with agencies across the country. This includes advances in measurement-based diagnosis, placement and treatment, as well as creating clinical decision support levels for individual care, program planning, and policy.

Featured Programs

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Center

(<https://chestnut.org/li/centers/evidence-based-practice-center>) The EBP Center trains and certifies clinicians in evidence-based treatment models (Community Reinforcement Approach [CRA], Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach [A-CRA], Assertive Continuing Care [ACC]) and recovery support workers in evidence-informed approaches (Recovery Monitoring and Support [RMS]). The EBP Center has trained and certified providers from over 700 organizations in the U.S. and abroad.

Family Coaching Center (FCC)

Based in Eugene, OR, FCC staff support training and implementation of family coaching models primarily targeting people involved with child welfare or self-sufficiency. The services are provided directly in collaboration with the Oregon Outreach Clinic and indirectly via training/technical assistance to other clinics around Oregon and Pennsylvania.

Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN)

Coordinating Center (<https://gaincc.org/>)

Since 1995, GAIN has supported Lighthouse's internal research and evaluation work. In 2003, grantees and the public were given access to GAIN instruments, software infrastructure, workforce development, and analytic capabilities. Since then, more than 5,600 entities in all 50 states, 10 provinces of Canada and 15 countries have been licensed by GAIN. More than 1.2 million assessments by 22,000 staff from 1,700 agencies have been given.

Justice-Involved and Emerging Adult Populations

(JEAP) Initiative (<https://www.jeapinitiative.org/>)

The aim of JEAP is to advance the research on recovery support services for people recovering from substance use disorder. Focusing on two under-researched populations: public system-involved emerging adults and individuals who are justice-involved, the JEAP Initiative aims to advance research on the effectiveness specifically of peer recovery supports and recovery residences for emerging adults and justice-involved adults with substance use.

William White Library

The William White Library, A Substance Use and Recovery Archive including the William White Papers, opened in 1998. Originally named the Illinois Addiction Studies Archive, it is the largest collection of its kind in Illinois and an exceptional resource on the history of addiction treatment. The collection consists of approximately 1,500 volumes from 1834 to present. Artifacts include antique medicine bottles, labels, photographs, manuscripts, memorabilia, and historic advertising material.

LI-Chicago Regional Office

The quality of the studies conducted by the research team largely depends on a sound and experienced field operations team with strong expertise. The LI-Chicago office has developed a follow-up model that has consistently produced over a 90% follow-up rate in over 20 studies involving more than 70,000 follow-up interviews—ranging from 3 months to 19 years post-study enrollment.

The National Native Center of Excellence (NNCOE)

The NNCOE is a Native centered research, training and technical resource center that utilizes strength-based ways to serve Tribal Nations and Native Communities. The NNCOE prioritizes community and tribally specific knowledges, value systems, and cultural practices in their work in the areas of substance misuse and addiction, suicide prevention, domestic violence prevention, the prevention of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People events, and service to the Native veterans' community. With the leadership of NNCOE's National Native Advisory Council, the Center's work is focused in the intersecting fields of health utilizing Native concepts through a public health lens.

The Center for Implementation Science at Lighthouse Institute (CISLI)

Created in 2024, CISLI investigators develop tools, strategies, and designs to support the implementation of new health innovations. With expertise in measurement and facilitation of implementation process, research, and practice, the Center provides collaborative support to researchers, communities, systems, and organizations. CISLI investigators conduct their own research to develop new innovations in implementation science.

Institutional Review Board

Chestnut operates its own Institutional Review Board (IRB) that focuses on community-based research. The IRB is registered with OHRP and has obtained a Federal Wide Assurance. The IRB includes patient and legal-involved representatives, and oversees all Lighthouse research studies including those involving youth, pregnant women, drug use, illegal activity/incarceration, and HIV risk behavior.

Offices

CHICAGO, IL | 221 W. Walton St., Chicago, IL

- Main location of the recovery management checkup (RMC) research program
- Illinois Health Survey Laboratory—conducts more than 15,000 interviews a year

EUGENE, OR | 1255 Pearl Street, Ste 101, Eugene, OR

- Family Coaching Center

BLOOMINGTON, IL | 1003 MLK Dr., Bloomington, IL

- EBP Center
- GAIN Coordinating Center
- William White Library