



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES  
Division of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities and  
Substance Use Services

NC-  
TOPPS

# NC-TREATMENT OUTCOMES AND PROGRAM PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

## QUICK-START GUIDE



# NC-TOPPS QUICK START MANUAL

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## What is NC-TOPPS?

NC-TOPPS is a web-based system for gathering outcome and performance data on behalf of consumers with mental health and substance use disorders in North Carolina's public system of treatment services. NC-TOPPS provides reliable information that is used to measure the impact of treatment and to improve service and management quality throughout the service system.

NC-TOPPS was launched in 1997 as a partnership between the federal government and the state to implement a system for monitoring and evaluating substance use disorder treatment services. In 2005, mental health services were added and the system was moved to a web-based format.

NC-TOPPS is managed by the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services (NC DMH/DD/SUS). A Task Force representing consumers and families, Tailored Plans, and providers was established in 2011 to guide NC DMH/DD/SUS in planning and implementing changes to the NC-TOPPS system.

## Why it's Useful

NC-TOPPS measures the quality of substance use disorders and mental health services and their impact on individuals' lives. The program provides benefits at a variety of levels.

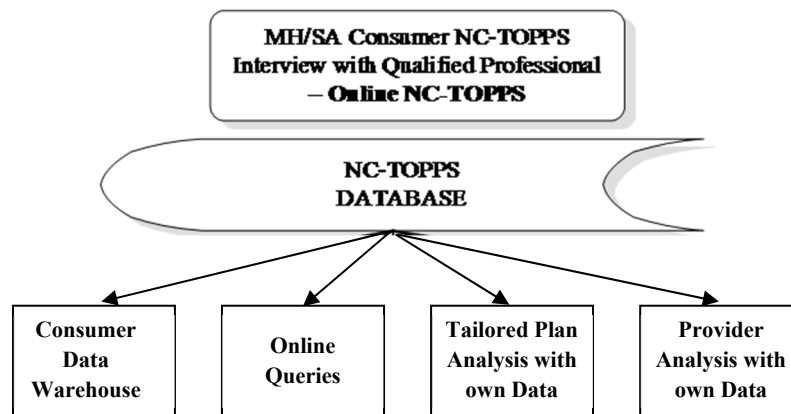
- ❖ **Qualified Professionals (QPs) and Provider Agencies:** Information generated through NC-TOPPS offers individual QPs and local provider agencies a means of tracking consumer outcomes and progress, planning changes to services and treatment plans.
- ❖ **Consumers:** Consumers benefit from tracking their own progress over time. Consumers can work with QPs to plan achievable goals based on that progress.
- ❖ **Tailored Plans:** NC-TOPPS provides decision-makers with reliable data on progress consumers are making in treatment and program outcomes in relation to other comparable programs. NC-TOPPS supports Tailored Plans in their responsibility for monitoring services in their catchment areas.
- ❖ **State Level Decision Makers:** Information generated through NC-TOPPS provides data for meeting federal performance and outcome measurement requirements, which allows North Carolina to evaluate its treatment system in comparison to other states.

## How it Works

NC-TOPPS is based on face-to-face interaction between a consumer and a QP with the objective of augmenting the clinical assessment process and providing information for the consumer's treatment plan. NC-TOPPS information is gathered through a series of interviews over the course of an episode of care: the period that begins with the initiation of services and ends with the termination of services, as defined in the consumer's treatment plan, or by a lapse in services of more than sixty days.

Initial, Update and Episode Completion Interviews are designed to assist in assessing the effectiveness of treatment. QPs conducting interviews use the NC-TOPPS web-based system to compile data on consumer outcomes such as symptom reduction, employment, education, retention, housing, family support and criminal justice. Recovery Follow-Up Interviews are optional, but available to conduct an interview with a consumer at any time after an episode of care.

The Initial Interview is designed to gather information on consumer demographics and pretreatment behaviors. Update Interviews (conducted at three, six, twelve months, and bi-annually thereafter) gather information on consumer behavioral or status changes and treatment outcomes. The NC-TOPPS interview instruments were built on research findings and field practice. Although they do not cover all consumer problems that may warrant clinical intervention, they do cover a majority of standard problems known to affect the treatment populations. The diagram below shows the flow of NC-TOPPS information from the submitted interviews, to the various programs and parties that make use of the data.





## Let's Get Started

The NC-TOPPS online system is designed for use by QPs in mental health and substance use disorder provider agencies. The system is self-guided and provides a “one-stop” format that allows users to register with NC-TOPPS, enter consumer data, and create and manage personal information. QPs can add and change provider agencies online with approval from the provider agency or Tailored Plan Superusers.

The steps below should be followed when starting to use NC-TOPPS.

### 1) Request a New User Account

- ❖ Go to the NC-TOPPS main website:  
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/provider-info/mental-health/nc-treatment-outcomes-and-program-performance-system> and click on “NC-TOPPS 2.1 Website”
- ❖ Click on “Create NEW NC-TOPPS User Profile”
- ❖ Enter your name, unique email address, phone number, and password. A username will be assigned to you at this time. You will need your username and password for all future interactions with the NC-TOPPS system.
- ❖ Follow on-screen instructions to select Tailored Plan (s) and provider agency(ies).

### 2) Wait for Approval

**Your new user request will be emailed to your provider agency Superuser or Tailored Plan Superuser. The Superuser will approve or deny your request and you will be notified by email.**

### 3) Change User Account

**If you have previously had an NC-TOPPS user account, you can register with your new provider agency by following the steps below:**

- ❖ Go to the NC-TOPPS main website:  
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/provider-info/mental-health/nc-treatment-outcomes-and-program-performance-system> and click on “NC-TOPPS 2.1 Website”
- ❖ Enter your most recent username and password. Follow on-screen instructions to add or remove Tailored Plan (s) and provider agency(ies).
- ❖ If you cannot remember your password, you will need to use the Password Recovery Tool by going to the NC-TOPPS website, click on “NC-TOPPS 2.1 Website,” and then select “Recover Password.” You will need to contact the NC-TOPPS Help Desk ([nctopps@ncsu.edu](mailto:nctopps@ncsu.edu)) if you can not remember your username or you can not recover your password because your current email address is not in the system.

### 4) Request Data Entry User Status

**Data Entry Users (DEUs) are persons within provider agencies who are allowed to enter NC-TOPPS interview data on behalf of QPs. Users may request DEU status while adding provider agencies. All requests for DEU status are emailed to the Superuser, who will subsequently approve or deny requests.**

## 5) Request Superuser Status

Every provider agency is required to have a Superuser. Superusers are individuals who have oversight responsibilities for their Tailored Plan or provider agency. Superusers are able to track NC-TOPPS submissions and due dates for their Tailored Plan or provider agency, change a consumer's QP, remove users when needed, manage user enrollment requests, and access outcomes data. Users needing to become Superusers should follow the same process for enrolling in the web-based system as a QP (see previous steps). Users who have been approved, should contact the NC-TOPPS Help Desk ([nctopps@ncsu.edu](mailto:nctopps@ncsu.edu)) to request a Superuser Enrollment Form.

## NC-TOPPS Interview

The web-based NC-TOPPS interview is required for consumers who have been formally admitted to the Tailored Plan and are receiving qualifying mental health and/or substance use disorder services from a publicly-funded source. For more information, look at the *NC-TOPPS Guidelines* (<https://nctopps.ncdmh.net/dev/GettingStartedWithNCTOPPS.asp>).

To submit an interview, go to the NC-TOPPS main website:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/provider-info/mental-health/nc-treatment-outcomes-and-program-performance-system> and click on “NC-TOPPS 2.1 Website.” Login with your username and password, go to the Locations tab and select the appropriate Tailored Plan and provider agency location. Once a location has been selected, the Website Submission tab will appear and you can select “Start Initial Interview” to start an Initial Interview or “Manage Episodes of Care” to start an Update, Episode Completion, or Recovery Follow-Up Interview.

## NC-TOPPS Outcomes at a Glance 2.0

NC-TOPPS consumer outcome data for age-disability groups and special populations are made available for use by the public, Tailored Plans, provider agencies, and QPs. The *Outcomes at a Glance 2.0* online query system provides easy access to aggregate data on a variety of outcomes for factors such as mental and physical health, substance use, family support, etc. Data are available for the state, individual Tailored Plans, and providers, if they have at least ten cases.

Functions that can be conducted for a specific age/disability group include:

- ❖ Build a Custom Report for one Tailored Plan or provider agency for all or selected outcome measures.
- ❖ Build Custom Aggregate Report for a specific provider agency across locations, or Tailored Plans, or combining provider agencies data for all or selected outcome measures.
- ❖ Compare Locations - Tailored Plans and/or provider agencies. Up to five can be selected at a time, for one outcome measure with each query.

The charts for each of these queries provide comparable State level data. Additionally, users can print the chart and/or export the CSV file to Excel for further analysis. NC-TOPPS Outcomes at a Glance 2.0 can be found on the NC-TOPPS main website: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/provider->

[info/mental-health/nc-treatment-outcomes-and-program-performance-system](https://www.nc-topps.org/info/mental-health/nc-treatment-outcomes-and-program-performance-system). Click the NC-TOPPS Outcomes at a Glance 2.0 icon.

## Online Features Available to System Users

### Available to Qualified Professionals

- ❖ Updates Needed: Assists in tracking the date that Updates are due for a consumer.
- ❖ Interview Search: Search for interviews by various criteria (location, consumer information (consumer record number, CNDS ID Number, provider internal consumer record number, QP username, DOB, consumer initials), gender, episode status (open episodes, closed episodes, all episodes, incomplete interviews), date started and submitted range, consumer group (Adult MH, Adult SUD, Adolescent MH, Adolescent SUD, Child MH), and interview type (Initial, 3 month, 6 month, 12 month, Other Bi-Annual Update, Episode Completion, and Recovery Follow-up)) and print or export for analysis.
- ❖ Individual Report: Displays select NC-TOPPS items from the Initial Interview and the two most recent Updates, if completed, for a consumer. The Individual Report can be shared with the consumer and used in Person Centered Planning/treatment planning.

### Available to Superusers

Superusers (individuals who have oversight responsibilities for their Tailored Plan or provider agency) have access to the same features as QPs, but also have access to the following:

- ❖ User Search by User Information and/or Provider Agency Location
- ❖ Online Codebook: Detailed documentation of the NC-TOPPS database showing all questions, responses categories, and type variable. Items can be sorted by age/disability group and other criteria to show questions that apply to each consumer grouping.
- ❖ Manage User Requests (Approve/Reject New Users)
- ❖ Change Consumer's QP (provider agency superusers only) and Change Consumer's QP and/or Provider Agency (Tailored Plan superusers only)
- ❖ Remove Users
- ❖ Simple Query Report: Generate graphs for questions in the interviews by selecting criteria such as location(s), date range, age/disability group, interview type and service (optional). The Simple Query Report can be used to support outcome requirements for accreditation and monitor service outcomes. Reports can be printed in chart form and/or export the CSV file to Excel for further analysis.
- ❖ Advanced Query Report: Generate cross-tabular reports for questions in the interviews by selecting criteria such as location(s), date range, age/disability group, interview type, service (optional) and up to 3 variables. The Advanced Query Report can be used to

support outcome requirements for accreditation and monitor service outcomes. Reports can be exported as a CSV file to Excel for further analysis and/or printing.

❖ Interview Method

## **NC-TOPPS Additional Information**

A number of resources are available to those who want additional information on NC-TOPPS.

<https://nctopps.ncdmh.net/dev/GettingStartedWithNCTOPPS.asp>

- NC-TOPPS Guidelines
- NC-TOPPS Superuser Tools Guide
- NC-TOPPS Frequently Asked Question
- NC-TOPPS Printable Interview Forms
- NC-TOPPS Resource Guide

## **NC-TOPPS Contacts**

### ***NC-TOPPS Help Desk:***

Center for Urban Affairs & Community Services,  
NC State University  
919.515.1310

Help Desk: [nctopps@ncsu.edu](mailto:nctopps@ncsu.edu)