

# Dissemination of a Statewide, Juvenile Justice Program Improvement Initiative Based on Meta-Analytic Findings: Partnerships, Potholes, and Preliminary Data on the Path of Going to Scale

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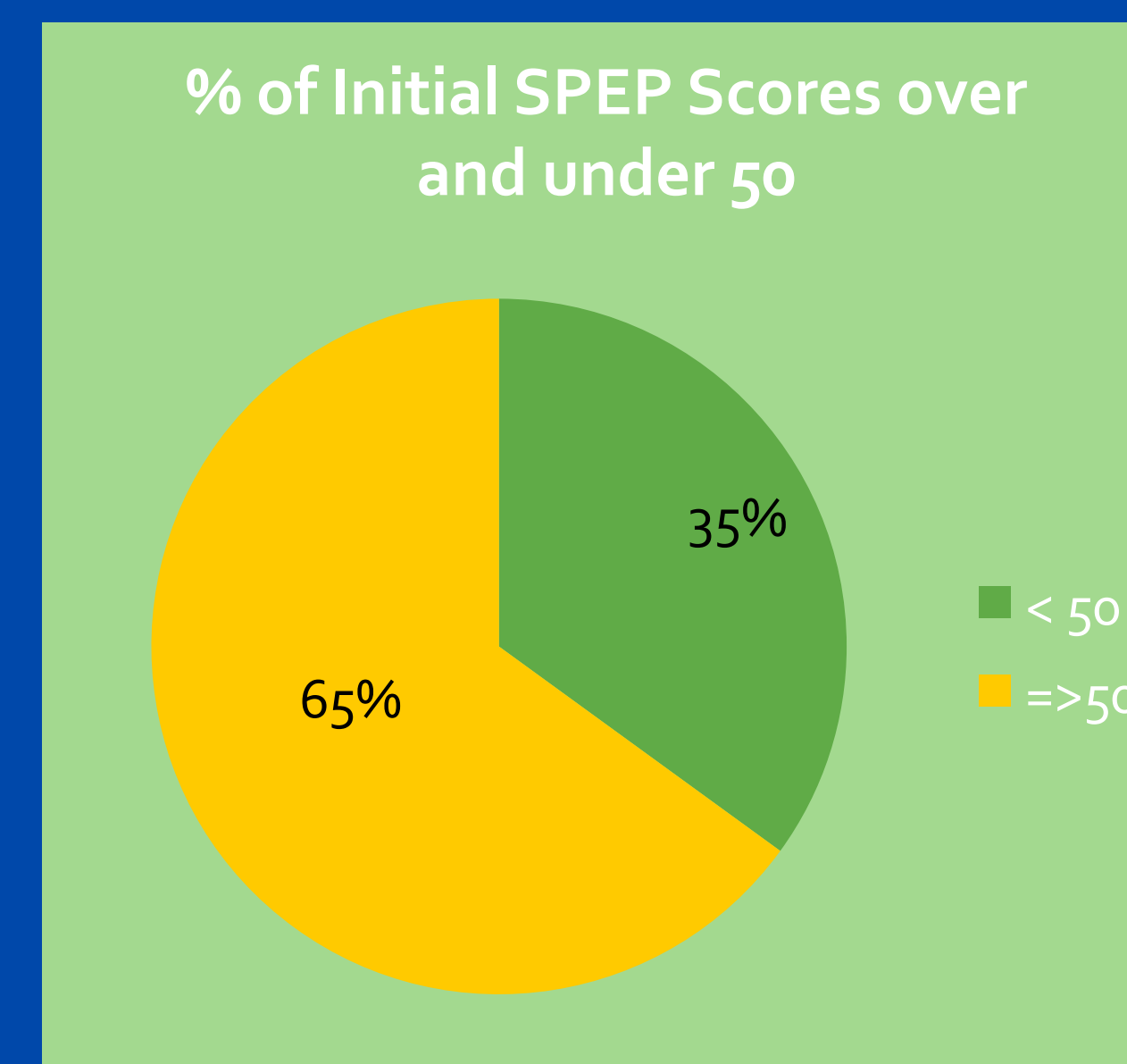
*This research is funded through PCCD grant VP-ST-24368. Brian Bumbarger, Principal Investigator*

## Background

- Pennsylvania has adopted a data-driven, evidence-based approach in improving the juvenile justice system to reduce youth recidivism rates. The statewide average rate of recidivism from 2007-2009 was 22 percent, with a range of 6 to 33 percent (PA Juvenile Court Judges Commission, 2013).
- Five medium-sized urban counties self-selected to participate in adopting and piloting the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP; Lipsey, 2010) which is embedded in a larger statewide Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (2012). These counties' recidivism rates ranged from 12 to 24 percent.
- The SPEP is a scoring scheme based on four areas of services provided to youth
  - Service type
  - Quality of service
  - Duration & dosage
  - Youth risk level
- SPEP scores can range from 0-100, and scores of 50 or more have been shown to be predictive of reduced recidivism at 6 and 12 months from end of program (Howell & Lipsey, 2012).
- A key element of the SPEP requires the use of a validated instrument of risk to reoffend. PA has adopted the Youth Level of Service (YLS; Andrews, Robinson, & Hoge, 1984).

## Preliminary and Emerging Themes\*

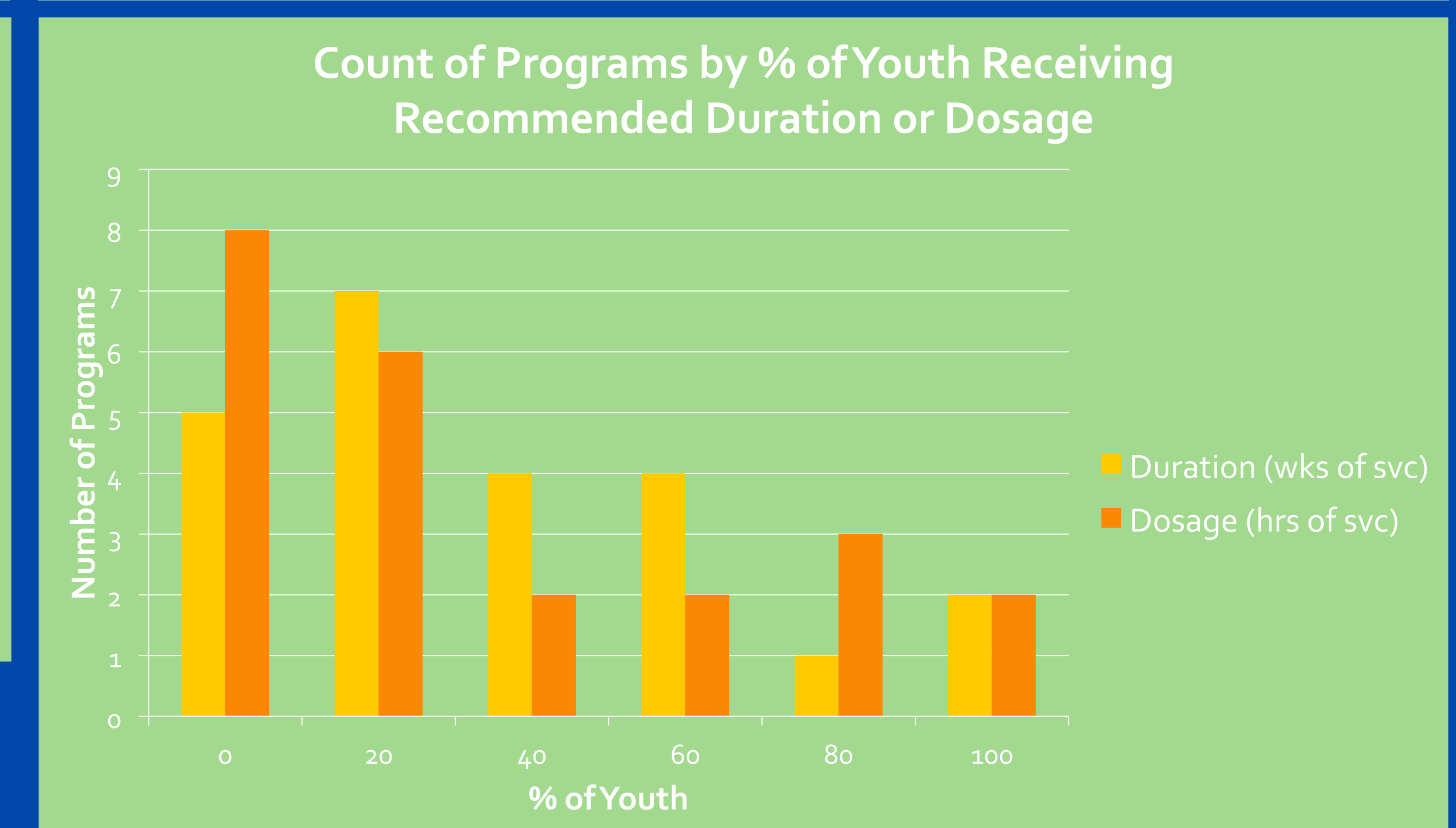
### Most services score $\geq 50$ :



### Most services are delivered with medium or high quality:



### Most youth in programs are not receiving recommended duration or dosage of service:



- Data presented are from 23 fully scored services.
- Average score was 58, with a range of 37-100.
- Most services score well on staff training and supervision.
  - Mean of 3.30 and 3.09 respectively on scale of 5.0.
- Most services need to strengthen written protocol and response to drift.
  - Mean of 2.39 and 2.57 respectively on scale of 5.0.

- Qualitative interviews lead JPOs to learn what programs “really” offer.
- JPOs are increasingly sending YLS risk score to providers.
- Ongoing juvenile court system education on dosage and duration.
- Improved relations between probation and providers.

\* Data presented here are based on a small sample size of programs within the state, from counties who self-selected into adopting SPEP. These data should not be considered representative of the “state” of all or most services.

## From Research Articles to Practice

### Building a Learning Community (LC)

- Develop PA expertise in SPEP for sustainability and training.
- Representative group includes Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs), technical assistance (TA) providers, juvenile justice consultants, service providers, state policymakers.

### Resource Development

- Produce high quality, informative materials to support SPEP roll-out, including resources for training, education, communication and those that support actual SPEP activities.

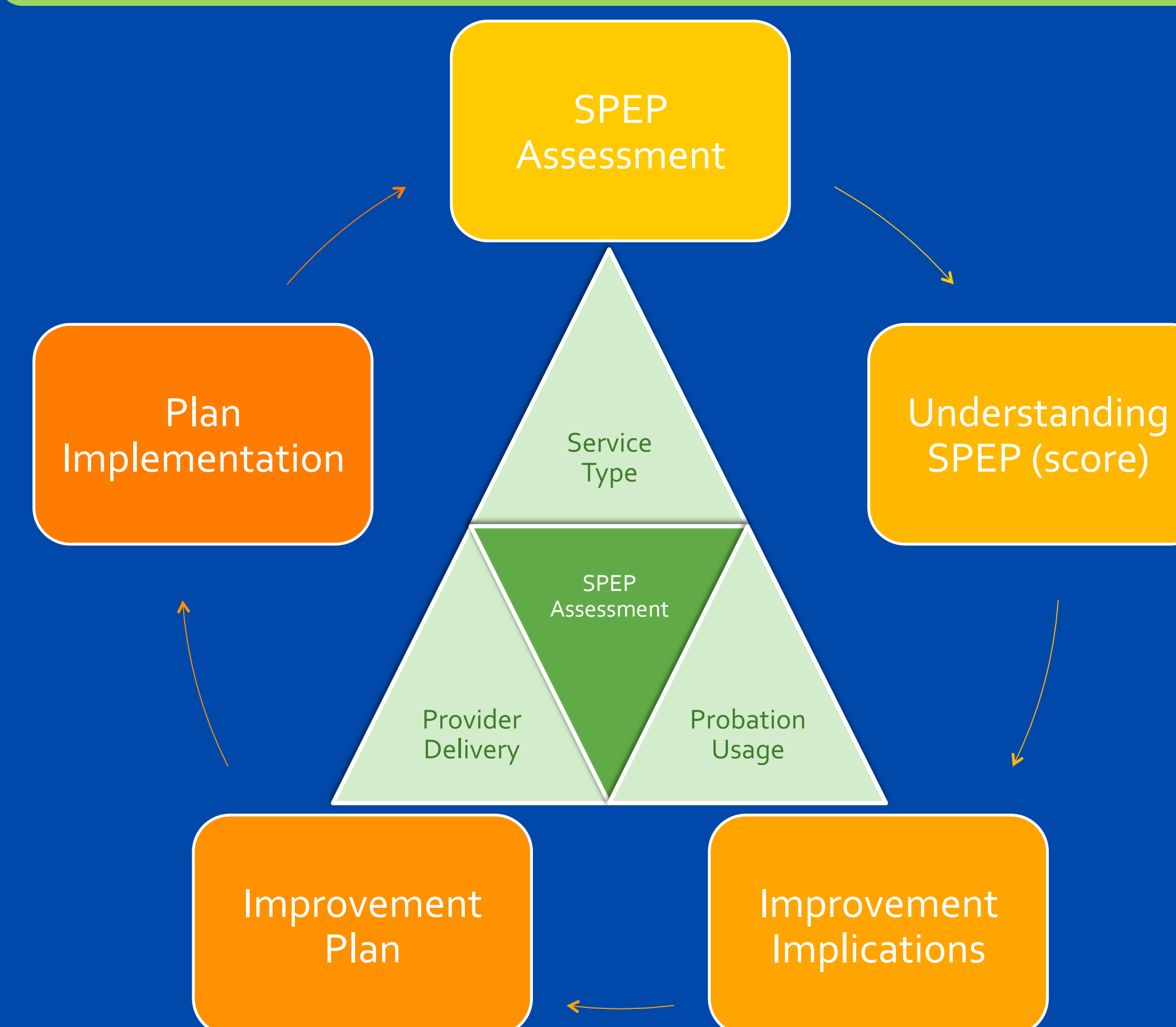
### Piloting & Evaluation of Processes and Resources

- Test and refine for practicality, usability; alignment between method and message.
- Evaluations of SPEP trainings, interviews, and webinars for value and collaborative tone.

### Communication Strategies

- Build buy-in for SPEP, inform current/future stakeholders, address stakeholder concerns.
- Regularly occurring webinars, social media outreach, and newsletters.
- Updates on SPEP pilot project through multiple meeting, training, conference venues.
- Key leader orientations and community “kick-off” events for probation and providers within each pilot county.

## Crafting the Message



- Emphasis on probation & provider partnership to facilitate program improvement.
- Managing expectations due to limitations in research on service types and special populations.

## Limitations & Next Steps

Due to self-selection process, data are likely positively biased. “True” state of the field may be in worse shape than what is depicted here.

SPEP research base only differentiates scores at cut-point of 50. Unclear implications of scores between 50 and 100, consequent impact on establishing metrics of success.

Stakeholders demonstrate a mix of buy-in and uncertainty about what SPEP means for providers long-term. PA will need to determine whether or how SPEP will influence policy and service utilization.

Develop and pilot program improvement process and training, including technical assistance provision for this phase of the improvement cycle.

Returning to providers to rescore services post-improvement implementation to assess program improvement.