

SUDF Introduces Digital Recovery Standards (DRS) to Guide Government and Insurers to Verified Digital Recovery Platforms

A new third-party certification program establishes requirements for HIPAA, 42 CFR Part 2, clinical quality, patient safety, and technology security.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Substance Use Disorder Foundation](#) (SUDF) today announced the formal deployment of its Digital Recovery Standards ([DRS](#)) certification program, a third-party evaluation system designed to validate the safety, regulatory compliance, and clinical integrity of digital recovery platforms, virtual intensive outpatient programs (Virtual IOP), and virtual counseling services operating in the addiction and behavioral health space.

The announcement comes amid a rapidly changing national treatment environment following the MAHA/HHS policy direction outlined by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., including a public commitment of \$100 million to programs and infrastructure to improve addiction recovery outcomes through scalable, technology-supported systems. As digital recovery tools become a more central component of federal strategy, SUDF's DRS framework establishes a standardized certification model intended to help courts, employers, insurers, and public agencies distinguish between verified clinical platforms and unregulated consumer-facing applications.

Bert Carrol, the Chief Technology Officer of Orbiit Services Inc, stated, "We saw that no certification standard existed for digital recovery platforms, so we built one with real teeth. Orbiit has achieved DRS Certified status and is actively working toward Accredited. The standard exists to push the entire industry forward - including us."



The Substance Use Disorder Foundation

DRS was developed in response to the growing number of digital recovery apps that offer peer support, education, behavioral tracking, and virtual engagement, yet operate without independent validation of clinical quality, crisis response capability, privacy protections, or cybersecurity safeguards. In many cases, platforms operating in the recovery category have collected highly sensitive behavioral health and substance-use data without clearly defined security documentation or documented compliance with HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2, the federal regulation governing confidentiality of substance use disorder treatment records.



Bert Carroll, CTO, Orbit Services Inc.

SUDF officials stated that the DRS certification system was designed to provide a measurable, repeatable audit process for digital recovery programs seeking institutional trust. The program evaluates platforms across regulatory compliance, clinical excellence, technology security, peer support integrity, and user experience safety.

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SUDF reports that DRS certification also provides substantial documentation alignment with major security and compliance frameworks used in healthcare technology procurement.”

Bert Carroll, Chief Technology Officer, Orbit Services Inc.

The [DRS program](#) is structured into three certification levels designed to match platform maturity and target market. DRS Recognized is positioned to support early-stage platforms and court-referral readiness. DRS Certified is intended for organizations pursuing employer contracts, EAP partnerships, and government procurement requirements. DRS Accredited, the highest level, is designed for platforms seeking insurance contracting pathways, research integration, and advanced institutional adoption. Certification validity ranges from 12 to 24 months, depending on tier, and required scoring thresholds range from 62 to more than 90 points across

the standards framework.

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According to SUDF, DRS documentation captures approximately 70% of the requirements commonly needed for SOC 2 Type II and HITRUST preparation, while maintaining a specific emphasis on clinical quality and patient safety standards unique to addiction recovery systems.

The certification process is designed to be completed within 8 to 10 weeks, beginning with application submission and scope review, followed by policy and documentation review, security assessment, clinical protocol evaluation, and platform testing. Platforms that complete the process receive formal certification status, a digital certification badge, and inclusion in SUDF's directory of certified platforms.

As public investment increases and digital recovery systems transition from experimental use into institutional deployment, platforms that have already achieved high-level certification are expected to move quickly into mainstream adoption. One example is the Orbiit Recovery Ecosystem, which has achieved DRS Certified status and is progressing toward Accredited. The platform operates as a continuous digital recovery environment. SUDF officials noted that certification at the Accredited level is intended to signal readiness for high-stakes environments where patient safety, privacy compliance, and outcome credibility are required.

Industry analysts have noted that intelligent technology in behavioral health has often been treated as an optional add-on rather than a core infrastructure layer. Many digital recovery tools have historically operated more like wellness apps, prioritizing engagement over clinical reliability. SUDF's deployment of DRS is intended to shift the market toward formal verification and regulatory readiness, particularly as federal and enterprise funding shifts toward platforms capable of delivering measurable, documented recovery support at scale.

SUDF stated that the DRS framework was developed to reduce regulatory risk for providers and institutions while increasing public confidence in digital recovery systems. The organization reports that certified platforms demonstrate measurable compliance with HIPAA, Part 2 confidentiality standards, and patient safety procedures, and document crisis management protocols, qualified staff oversight, secure infrastructure practices, and peer support governance.

With procurement agencies and institutional buyers increasingly requiring evidence of compliance and risk management, SUDF expects DRS certification to serve as a practical benchmark for recovery organizations seeking contracts, partnerships, and public trust.

The Substance Use Disorder Foundation is currently accepting pilot applicants and certification inquiries from digital recovery programs, virtual IOP services, telehealth counseling providers, and recovery technology platforms seeking third-party validation.

For pilot inquiries, SUDF may be contacted at pilot@sudf.us
For audits and certification inquiries, contact audits@sudf.us

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About the Substance Use Disorder Foundation (SUDF)

SUDF was established to address the absence of third-party certification standards in digital recovery. Orbiit, whose leadership contributed to the development of the DRS framework, has completed certification and continues to advance through the program's tiered standards. The Substance Use Disorder Foundation (SUDF) is an independent organization committed to improving clinical quality, regulatory compliance, and patient safety across addiction recovery and behavioral health systems. SUDF's Digital Recovery Standards (DRS) program provides third-party certification and accreditation for digital recovery platforms, virtual IOP systems, and technology-supported counseling services operating in the substance use disorder treatment space.

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