CPCPracticeSpotlight34

Comprehensive Primary Care is an initiative of the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation

Behavioral Health Integration: The View from the BH Provider

Providence Medical Group, Milwaukie, Oregon —Multi-Specialty, 138 providers, 45,089 patients

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This strategy addresses this driver:

CPC Change Driver 1: Comprehensive Primary Care Functions

- 1.2: Planned Care for Chronic Conditions and Preventive Care
- 1.4: Patient and Caregiver Engagement

For more information about the CPC initiative, visit http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/Comprehensive-Primary-Care-Initiative/.

So, there was some discussion in our clinic about whether or not we would choose to really focus on behavioral health as one of the ways in which we're really rolling CPC work into our clinic workflows. But it wasn't a very long discussion, because our clinic loves behavioral health. We've been easing behavioral health into the way that we do work there for a number of years, since about 2011, but at this point, our providers are so used to having a behavioral health provider full-time that it's absolutely one of the things we want to invest in more, and get better at doing. We did a survey recently of the medical providers in our clinic, and asked them a number of things related to burnout and how they feel about working in our clinic, and how effective or not they think behavioral health integration has been. And one of the things we learned in that survey is that after having a full-time behaviorist in their clinic, medical providers will select their next job based on whether or not there is a behavioral health provider, 99 percent of our physicians said that they will choose their next job, in part, based on whether or not they have a behavioral health provider. They love it.

The physicians in my clinic haven't been really resistant to learning a lot more about mental health. They have been, almost without exception, really welcoming and sometimes have specific questions about, for instance, if I fill out this form about behavioral health, what's our next step? But more often than not, they are really eager to find, to, to use me on a day-to-day basis to either change the way that they behave in a treatment room. So a provider might ask me, how can I assess for suicidal risk in five minutes, or three questions? And just come to me, and since I'm right done the hall, be able to kind of up their mental health service provision game in the exam room. How do I decide if we need to refer this person out for specialty prescribing or if I can maybe do some things here in primary care, and to have another voice and another brain to kind of think through these questions with. More often than not, the providers have been really eager to ask those specific questions, to either use me in a separate treatment space, or to absolutely, you know, up what they can do in their exam rooms. One of the things we're hoping to be able to measure in a really concrete fashion over time is whether or not our patients who are diabetic, who see a behaviorist, have better A1Cs than the, the diabetic patients who don't see a behaviorist. We're hoping that we can compare and find a real benefit, the service, in that way. We have also been collecting, since the outset of the behavioral health integration in our clinic, the PHQ-9, the depression screening scores, and so far we've just collected whether or not we have that data or not, and we haven't looked at any trends over time of whether or not that number is changing. We should. We should see if that number indicates that our patients who are receiving behavioral health services are less depressed. Our clinics also collect patient activation measure data, it's a general screen of how involved and empowered the patient feels in his or her healthcare. We have that data, but again, we haven't looked at whether or not patients who have behavioral health integration have been able to move their scores one way or the other. We don't have hard data yet about the specific benefit of behavioral health integration to our patient panel. We do do some patient satisfaction surveys, specifically about my service provision, and whether or not they value me being part of their primary care experience, and resoundingly, that answer is yes.

Across the board, their responses have been that they really value the experience and they love it that we are in the clinic where they're already used to asking for help. [Laughing] Working in primary care has been the most fun that I ever had at work. It is really rewarding because I get to do many different things in one day. I get to do treatment, I get to do consultation, I get to be on the phone, I get to hear good news, I get to hear bad news, I get to follow entire families and see how the whole family is developing over time. I get to see kids, I get to see grandmas, all in one day. And compared to other places where mental health providers practice, I get to see people get better, which doesn't always happen, and I get to be part of a team of service providers that is actually functioning and we are all in one place and we share a treatment plan, which doesn't happen anywhere else in service provision. I can think in the last week that I've been seeing patients of two times when it's been really important to have the family involved in, in office visits, certainly, and then also in coordination and implementation of the care plan. So, just this week, I have worked with a man who has a severe and persistent mental illness and lives with his family. And we would not be able to serve him nearly as well if we didn't have his family members present during office visits, to get everyone's perspective on how his care is progressing. And also, then to be able to talk about the plan of care, to go back into the setting in which this man lives. And that's a really wonderful thing about providing holistic care in primary care, people are used to bringing their, their family to the doctor. But if I, as a psychologist, saw someone in a therapy office, they wouldn't bring their family. And so this setting provides a really welcoming way to get families involved.