

Understanding the Gap in Behavioral Health Resources

There is a nationwide shortage of behavioral health professionals. Patients/members are faced with wait times for appointments.



According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the National Institute of Mental Health, the prevalence and impact of mental health conditions is significant:

- 1 in 5 Americans lives with a mental health condition
- 56% American adults with mental illness did not receive treatment in 2016
- \$100 billion is estimated in lost productivity per year due to untreated mental illness in the U.S.

The U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration estimates that the shortage will become more acute. An additional 10,000 providers are needed for each of 7 separate mental healthcare professions by 2025 to meet the expected growth in demand.

“In Chicago, it’s not unusual to be told you have to wait anywhere from three to 10 months for a psychiatrist appointment.”

Dr. Joanne May, Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center

4 Ways to Accelerate Access to Your Behavioral Health Resources

Given the current and future shortage, a virtual care platform can help your staff accelerate access to your behavioral health support in the following 4 ways:

Consult

By providing quick access to your remote behavioral health resources, a virtual care platform can help your hospital's medical staff facilitate a virtual consult between specialists and patients. Instead of waiting hours in the Emergency Department for an in-person consult, a virtual consult will help your medical team determine if hospital admission (or transport to another facility) is needed in a more timely and more cost-effective manner.

Capacity

By allowing your on-call behavioral health professionals the ability to communicate with patients/members via any device, anywhere, and at any time, a virtual care platform provides your specialists with more convenient options in terms of when and where they provide patient care. Your specialists will have greater flexibility - and more can be available remotely - in providing virtual consults and participating in virtual visits round the clock.

Comfort

By enabling patients/members to use their own devices in the comfort of their own home, a virtual care platform can help your patients/members who hesitate to access care at a known behavioral health clinic or within their own neighborhood. Patients/members will also not be further challenged by the need to arrange for transportation and time to travel to/from the appointments. Travel costs related to follow-up appointments can also be reduced.

Collaboration

By using safe and secure communication platforms, virtual care helps your network of behavioral health professionals better collaborate with the greater care team across the continuum of care. Virtual care technology is evolving the delivery of behavioral health care and can help drive better outcomes for patients and improved satisfaction for healthcare professionals.