

# Succeeding in Behavioral Health Integration: Strategies and Experiences from Hunter Health



HUNTER  
HEALTH

# Introducing our speakers

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# Hunter Health Clinic

## About Hunter Health Clinic



# Integrated Care program

## Beginning

- Began March 2017 with Director of Integrated Care
- Now staffed with one full-time BHC for each location plus the Director of Integrated Care that meets with patients 50% of her time
- Plan to hire two new additional full-time BHCs



# Outreach

Native peoples outreach via community health representatives



# The Role of community health workers in tribal communities

- Education of available services at Hunter Health Clinic and other IHS clinics to connect patient needs to available partners
- Advocacy on a per-patient basis to address unmet needs



# Integrating traditional practices into behavioral health models

- Referrals from BHCs to community health worker and vice versa to address patient needs
- Referrals to community health worker to address cultural needs



# Improving community health outcomes through cultural teachings

- Improving community health outcomes through cultural teachings





# Patient story

Traditional approach  
+  
Integrated care  
=  
a win for this patient



# Screening

## Screening patients for risk factors

- Native patients
- Patients with history of alcohol/substance abuse
- Patients with history of mental health treatment
- Patients that meet criteria for additional screening per two question evidenced based screening tools during vitals



# Screening

Identifying patient needs and desire for treatment or change

- Suicide prevention and assessment of suicide risk are paramount
- Identifying diagnosis of mental health or substance abuse condition
- Discussing with patient the potential risks of treating versus not treating their condition
- Motivational interviewing to determine patient's level of desire to make changes
- Planning with patients how they can work with their provider to make changes and reduce their symptoms and increase their functioning



# Medication-assisted treatment

- BHCs can quickly screen for appropriateness of this treatment
- BHCs can educate patient about the treatment and their substance abuse condition during initial assessment
- BHCs can participate in the ongoing maintenance of MAT by providing supportive individual and group sessions



# Integration at Hunter Health Clinic

## Making Behavioral Health Consulting “worth it” to providers (part 1)

- Optimizing and maximizing provider’s time by collecting necessary mental health and chronic disease management information prior to the provider’s visit to the room
- Identifying patients on provider schedules that may benefit from BHC assessments or interventions
  - This includes identifying these patients during the daily “huddle” so that provider, BHC, nurse, and medical assistant are prepared to facilitate BHC intervention with patient



# Integration at Hunter Health Clinic

Making Behavioral Health Consulting “worth it” to providers (part 2)

- Visiting patients before/after/with provider to provide the best care and doing what works with a providers particular style
- It is important for BHCs to discuss with providers what works best for their schedules/style and be adaptable to provider needs — most providers see high volumes of patients and it should be the BHC’s goal to optimize provider time



# Integration at Hunter Health Clinic

## Making Behavioral Health Consulting “worth it” to providers (part 2)

- Brief summaries of patient conditions including diagnosis and BHC recommendations for treatment
- Brief summaries of patient risk factors, symptoms, and areas of primary concern
- Saves providers time in the room with patients, allowing them to spend more time with all their patients
- Provider and BHC should plan behavioral, mental health, and substance abuse treatment plan together with patient



# Integration at Hunter Health Clinic

## Providers love it!

- Providers listed having behavioral health consultants on their teams as one reason they enjoy working at Hunter Health.
- It removes the burden of mental health diagnosing from providers.
- It helps the providers know that they are providing excellent, comprehensive care to their patients.





# Follow-up care

Patients can follow up with provider, BHC, or both for their next appointment

- When does follow up happen?
- Continued BHC presence on patient's primary care team.



# Utilizing BHCs for chronic conditions

## SMART Goals

- Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-limited
- For Example:
  - Reduce soda intake from five sodas per day to two sodas per day within the next month
  - Go walking for 30 minutes per day three times per week, up from no walking at all. Do this every week for the next month
  - Check blood sugar levels twice per day, up from not checking at all.



# Using BHCs for “difficult” situations

- Complaints
- Managing the lobby or agitated patients
- Tough conversations with patients



# Versatility and sustainability of BHC role

- In Kansas there are already several codes that are billable to insurance for BHC services
- More codes are expected to open to allow BHCs to bill for their assessments and interventions
- BHC services, if implemented efficiently, can optimize provider's time and improve provider productivity.



# Patient story

Undiagnosed bipolar disorder, PTSD, and substance abuse in 40yo male



# Challenges/Pitfalls

- Scheduling
- Availability of BHCs to answer or return phone calls
- Patients' experience when receiving multiple services in one visit
- Patients with mental health conditions requiring referral to outside psychiatry



# Questions

It would be normal to have questions! What can we answer for you?

