



Community Care
of North Carolina

Community Care of Western North Carolina

Behavioral Health Integration Information Sheet

Agency Overview

Community Care of Western North Carolina (CCWNC) is a non-profit, community-based health care delivery system for Medicaid recipients that is organized and operated by community partners. The agency, formerly known as Access II Care of WNC, was established in 1998 as one of 14 Community Care of North Carolina networks serving Carolina Access Medicaid patients. In 2007, its scope expanded to include services for uninsured adults through HealthNet and, in 2010, expanded again to include dually eligible beneficiary recipients via the 646 federal waiver. The network offers care management programs and services to maximize access to health care and to improve its quality and cost-effectiveness for all populations served.

What is Behavioral Health Integration?

Behavioral Health Integration (BHI) is the addition of evidenced-based behavioral health practices into the routine of the primary care environment. Primary care providers and clinical staff can provide biopsychosocial care to their patients by incorporating behavioral health screenings and brief interventions for the most common behavioral health conditions, such as depression and ADHD. In some cases practices may choose to incorporate a behavioral health provider into their treatment team, providing patients and clinical staff with additional resources.

Program Goals:

- Decrease readmissions in community psychiatric inpatient settings
- Increase the number of PCPs who screen and adopt evidence-based pathways for Depression, ADHD, chronic pain, and substance use
- Increase the % of co-located behavioral health providers in practices

Key Accomplishments/Strategies

- An Integrated Care Coordinator and a part-time Psychiatrist are now part of the CCWNC team. They support the behavioral health programmatic needs of network practices and cross-train and support our care managers.
- The goal is to provide practices with technical assistance and support to establish collocated behavioral services and/or to implement behavioral health screening tools and brief treatment interventions.
- Behavioral Health Transitional Care Management: Behavioral Health Care managers are gaining access to local psychiatric inpatient units to ensure a patient's discharge plans are a good fit for community treatment settings.

How will this program help your practice?

- BHI will assist the primary care providers in designing, implementing, and evaluating evidenced-based behavioral health pathways.
- Primary care patients will benefit from BHI through early detection of behavioral health conditions followed by brief interventions, yielding improved outcomes over practices that do not implement BHI.
- BHI improves the quality and scope of the primary care service offered to patients with mild to moderate behavioral health conditions by addressing the needs of whole person. Early detection and evidenced-based treatment will improve the health of patients while reducing the overall cost of patient care.

For more information, please contact:

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CCWNC Technical Assistance for Behavioral Health Integration

A Menu of options for Technical Assistance:

(Examples are not inclusive of all possible topics. Please inquire about other items that are of interest to your practice)

- **Information and/or presentation:** (a) use of antidepressants, stimulants for ADHD or other psychiatric medications, including assistance with incorporating algorithms for care, (b) education and assistance with A+ Kids Registry for safe and effective use of antipsychotic agents with children, (c) assistance in becoming more familiar with resources in the community for behavioral health services.

- **Incorporating a behavioral health screening tool into practice:** development of an algorithm from in-house patient-completed inventories to follow-up after triage, and when needed, to make an outside referral. For example: Use of PHQ 2/9 screenings for depression, CAGE-AID screening for substance use, or implementation of entire toolkits for ADHD or depression.

- **Chronic Pain Initiative (CPI) Toolkit:** Toolkit to aid primary care providers in addressing the needs of patients with chronic pain. Best practice algorithms, implementing policies/patient contracts, and use of the Controlled Substance Reporting System (CSRS) are part of this care algorithm.

- **Integrate a behavioral health provider into your medical practice:** Practices can start small by contracting with an outside provider who provides services part-time on-site. CCWNC has significant experience to offer on the subject of integrating a behavioral health specialist into your primary care practice. Some practices may also need assistance in developing communication and referral workflows with behavioral health agencies.

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