Improving Access to Behavioral Health Services: Care When You Need It
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Results

Deployment

Key Activities

Value Propositions

Lessons Learned

Limited access

Buy-in & Support

- Problem solved ways to improve access to Behavioral Health Services.
- Keep asking what is the problem you are trying to solve and who is the beneficiary.
- Key insights: 1. You can ask for help. 2. You do not have to solve every problem. 3. You can look for solution to a part of the problem.
- Implementation at other organizations - share resources, don’t reinvent the wheel.

Implementation Plan:

Testimonials:

I have had the most helpful curbside consults. We reviewed history, discussed cases, and the BHP gave very specific and actionable advice. This was extremely helpful and the patients did much better.

I am extremely grateful for the help I received from my care team. You made my weekend.

I was so thankful to be able to get an appointment with a psychiatrist within a week from when I first called.

The parents and patients are so happy with the treatment they received. I have never had such a positive response to a psychiatrist before.

Mission Budget/Cost

- Patients: Behavioral Health Promotion/Prevention: Reduce the amount of time patients wait for care for behavioral health needs.
- Primary Care Clinicians: Improve Accessibility. Promote Network of Support provide E-Consults: for questions regarding patients with mild-moderate symptoms.
- Allows moderate to severe patients to be referred to same week behavioral health appointments

Buy-in & Support

- Provide education regarding the use of screening tools
- Offer Primary Care Providers tools to guide them when managing patients with behavioral health needs

Deployment

- Primary Care Team will use screening tools when referring patients
- Behavioral Health Teams introduce new Behavioral Health 101 Collaboration, E-Consults & Same Week Appts

Mission Achievement/Impact Factors

- Behavioral Health 101 Collaboration
- Offer E-Consults
- Offer Same Week Appointments
- Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services

I wanted to address poor access to behavioral health services while helping to improve the experience of patients and Primary Care Providers (PCPs). I believed I could do this by creating an E-Consult Service and providing Educational Support to help PCPs better manage their patients mild to moderate behavioral health symptoms. Partnering with PCPs and using standardized screening tools for behavioral health would help to make available more Same Week Appointments with a Behavioral Health Provider for patients with moderate to severe behavioral health symptoms.

Problem Statement:

Limited access to behavioral health services at Palo Alto Medical Foundation leads to frustration for PCPs, delays in care for patients with moderate to severe mental health symptoms, and a poor patient experience.

Discovery:

62 Interviews with administrators, providers, and patients across Sutter and PAMF within each of the five divisions.

Interviews:

- "These patients take up a lot of our time."
- "Long wait times require that we stand in."
- "We have a lack of resources to help these patients."

Survey Question:

How satisfied are Primary Care Providers with current access to Behavioral Health Services at PAMF?

Goal:

Improve access to Behavioral Health Services by providing educational outreach to primary care teams and implementing consistent use of screening tools.

Outcome-oriented Objective:

Improve 3NA for follow up appointments for existing patients to one week or less. Provide appointments for new patients within two weeks of referral.