Behavioral health integration in physician practices

Integrating behavioral and mental health care

Many medical conditions are greatly affected by patients' mental health and behavioral choices. Physician-led primary care teams often must address many common mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety and substance abuse. By bringing medical and behavioral health services together within primary care, the team is better able to meet both the mental and physical health needs of the patient.

That’s why the AMA continues to provide physician practices with tools and practical solutions to integrate these two crucial areas of care into one.

BHI Collaborative

The AMA and seven leading medical associations have established the Behavioral Health Integration (BHI) Collaborative, a group dedicated to catalyzing effective and sustainable integration of behavioral and mental health care into physician practices. With a focus on primary care, the Collaborative is committed to ensuring a professionally satisfying, sustainable physician practice experience and will act as a trusted partner to help them overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of meeting their patients' mental and behavioral health needs.

BHI resources for physician practices

The BHI Collaborative has developed a Compendium that serves as a tool to learn about integrating behavioral health care, which includes mental health and substance use disorders, and how to make it effective for your practice and patients. It will provide a helpful framework to help guide your practice through the initial steps and considerations of delivering integrated behavioral care.

The AMA has also created complementary behavioral health how-to guides to provide physician practices and health systems with actionable, evidence-based strategies in key areas of needed
support: pharmacological treatment, substance use disorder, suicide prevention and workflow design.

**Share your story**

AMA welcomes shared stories about implementing behavioral health integration in your practice, and asks for input on what information should be featured in future iterations of the Compendium by emailing Practice.Sustainability@ama-assn.org.

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**

With an increased number of people reporting worsening mental health in recent years, it is imperative that people are aware of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) telephone program.

People experiencing a suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress can call, chat or text 988, and speak to trained crisis counselors. The national hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The previous National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will continue to be operational and route calls to 988 indefinitely.