

Today's Health with CMT

Integrated Holistic Approach Important to Treating Mental Health Patients

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For years mental health was sidelined when it came to a patient's overall health. Too many times in the past, patients were either too afraid to come forward with mental health issues due to stigmas attached or doctors were not provided the correct training in order to treat patients when they showed up with mental health symptoms.

Recently that picture has changed, with the emergence of social media and the push to de-stigmatize mental health issues, doctors and patients alike are more willing and able to not only be open about mental health well being, but also are able to tackle them through a more comprehensive network of available education, training, and treatment.

There is still a long way to go. Mental Health America recently published results from its annual State of Mental Health Report, illuminating the fact that while rates of mental illness are on the rise in the U.S., more than half of the adults diagnosed are not receiving treatment. The study analyzed government data through 2014 and found that 44 million Americans suffer from mental illness, up from 42 million in 2012 and more than 20 million of those adults — 56.5 percent of the total — did not receive any treatment in the past year.¹

This picture is far from ideal but there is another issue that is plaguing those patients who present with mental health issues – the impact those issues have on their overall health.

'No physical health without mental health: lessons unlearned?' a World Health Organization bulletin stated that "Patients suffering from mental illness are twice as likely to smoke cigarettes as other people, and in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease mental illness is linked to poorer clinical outcomes. Up to 50% of cancer patients suffer from a mental illness, especially depression and anxiety, and treating symptoms of depression in cancer patients may improve survival time. Similarly, in patients who are depressed, the risk of having a heart attack is more than twice as high as in the general population; further, depression increases the risk of death in patients with cardiac disease. Moreover, treating the symptoms of depression after a heart attack has been shown to lower both mortality and re-hospitalization rates."²

This evidence is backed up by a study published by The Chicago School of Professional Psychology³, one of the leading universities devoted exclusively to psychology and related behavioral health sciences.

The study supports the need to treat individuals and families with a holistic approach that integrates the medical diagnosis with a psychological evaluation. It contains four real-life stories that show the impact mental health has on physical health and examines "three promising approaches embedded in the Affordable Care Act (ACA)." They claim that each area has the potential to be "a game changer" in how mental and physical health issues are addressed.⁴

The report, published last week, is aimed at focusing care givers on prevention. It backs the need for community services, and the leveraging of the benefits of technology in health care delivery.

Care Management Technologies, Inc. (CMT), A Relias Learning Company, has long held the opinion, backed by data, that our mental and physical health is not mutually exclusive of each other. Our own data shows that those with behavioral health disorders are, on average, 3x more likely to have poorer health outcomes while experiencing higher costs of care. Evidence of behavioral health disorders is costly and indicative of poorer health outcomes. We offer a thoughtful, cost-effective, and compliant solution that uses an information technology platform allowing payers and providers to deliver healthcare interventions that improve the lives of individuals with behavioral and physical health conditions while lowering costs.

Jeff Chang, of PCE Systems said of CMT: "In an industry where most analytics companies have been attempting to "tack" behavioral health components onto physical-health-focused analytics, CMT is the only population health analytics company that I know of that really has had an integrated physical and behavioral health focus since the very beginning. CMT brings real-world expertise and experience from both sides of the fence to help their clients address the whole-health of consumers. This is particularly important given that consumers with combined physical and behavioral health conditions are some of the highest need individuals in the entire healthcare system."

For more information about CMT/Relias Learning and the data analytic/population health management resources that are available, please contact John Tote, Senior Director of Strategic Development, Analytics at 919-219-3944 or jtote@reliaslearning.com.

Additionally, please see the CMT web site at www.cmthealthcare.com for past Intelligence Reports and its social media/Twitter feed.

References:

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