

# ADVANCING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

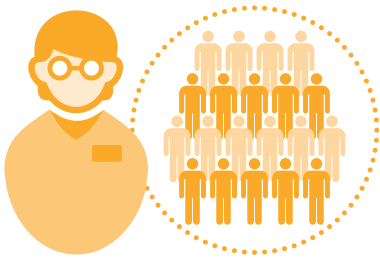
## What Safety Net Providers Can Do

Research shows that integrated behavioral and primary healthcare services have a positive impact on patient experience and outcomes. While there is no single approach to integration, there are three key areas that safety net providers can consider when pursuing changes that would help shrink the gap between patients' behavioral health needs and clinics' ability to meet those needs.

## Key Areas to Address

### CLINICAL

Ensure an accurate ratio of behavioral health clinicians to patients—usually at least one behavioral health provider per 1,000 patients



### PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Develop standardized treatment pathways, encourage all staff members to refer patients to behavioral health services, and empower patients to self-refer for care.



### CULTURE CHANGE

Integrate behavioral health staff into executive leadership realms, ensuring a Behavioral Health Director has parity with Chief Medical Officers and other clinical leaders.



Bring behavioral health clinicians in as integrated and essential members of the healthcare team and fully embrace coordinated care.



Decrease stigma through marketing and on-site educational materials that promote greater awareness and dialogue about behavioral health.



Integrate behavioral health into QI and other data systems by developing meaningful outcome measures for patient experience and improvements in behavioral health conditions.



Increase capacity to provide substance abuse treatment as an integrated care component by training existing behavioral health and primary care clinicians.



Implement communication protocols for the entire staff—from physicians to front office—to ensure that every interaction with patients is clear, respectful, and empathic.



Engage peer specialists, community health workers, and other local partners who can support behavioral health and wellness outside the clinic setting.



Utilize psychiatry resources to enhance primary care providers' knowledge, comfort level, and skill in prescribing & managing psychotropics for those with complex behavioral health conditions.



Hire staff that reflects the patient population and make interpreters available to ensure care is culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate.



See more:

[www.blueshieldcafoundation.org/KeyAreas](http://www.blueshieldcafoundation.org/KeyAreas)



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