



Challenge Team

Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills

**Adolescent Behavioral Health (ABH)
Project**

Thursday, October 10, 2013

Adolescent Behavioral Health (ABH) Project

- **Who:** Group of primary care physicians, psychiatrists, other health care providers, and researchers
- **What:** Project to expand behavioral health care for adolescents (age 12-19th birthday)
- **Where:** Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) Pediatrics and Family Medicine clinics
- **When:** January 2014 (some locations)
- **Why:** Despite living in an area rich with health care resources, many adolescents with behavioral health needs are not being treated due to systems issues

Defining the Problem: Adolescents at Risk

- Adolescence is a critical period for mental and social development
 - *brain develops enduring neural and behavioral patterns*
 - *many mental illnesses first present during this time*
(half of lifetime cases by age 14)
- Behavioral (mental and substance-related) disorders contribute significantly to the 3 leading causes of death in teens:
 - *accidents*
 - *violence*
 - *suicide*

Adolescents at Risk (cont'd)

- 500,000 to 1,000,000 young people attempt suicide every year (ages 15-24)
- Approximately 20% of adolescents have a diagnosable mental disorder
 - *among these, about 70% do not receive the care that they need, either because they cannot access it or because they choose not to*
- In our own community, in late 2009 and early 2010, the City of Palo Alto was rattled by a rash of teen suicides -- four deaths within a span of six months. Each of these tragedies took the lives of promising young students, devastated their families, and caused a tremendous emotional shockwave

Defining the Problem: A Systems Perspective

- In the private health care sector, behavioral health services are usually disconnected from general medical care.

Behavioral health is often “carved-out”:

- *Behavioral health practitioners work outside the traditional health care system*
- *PCPs are not reimbursed for this care, nor do they have the staff support or resources to address behavioral concerns*

A Systems Perspective (cont'd)

The disconnection between physical health and mental health exacerbates the stigma many teens feel about acknowledging behavioral health concerns and seeking treatment

- If teens do seek help, they may have difficulty accessing it
- If teens do find help, the PCP is not usually co-managing the teen's care or in communication with the behavioral health provider

Current State in our Region

(Peninsula Coastal Region, from Santa Cruz to Daly City)

- Our region provides outpatient and inpatient health care services to more than 70,000 adolescents
 - *Nearly 500 teens are treated annually as psychiatric inpatients*
 - *Another 100 teens are treated in intensive outpatient programs*
- However, as in other private health care systems across the nation, our teens' behavioral health care is often poorly integrated

Our Challenge

*Despite our reputation for providing high-quality care, including well-respected psychiatric services, the region has yet to develop an **integrated** system for behavioral health care delivery.*

Our Solution

Integrate behavioral health care into the traditional primary health care setting through a:

5-year project that will demonstrate and evaluate integrated care throughout the region, beginning with our adolescents

ABH Project: Key Elements

- Enhanced usual care
- Resource Navigation
- Care Management

ABH Project: Enhanced Usual Care

“Enhanced Usual Care” will be provided to primary care providers (PCPs)

- Orientation to the project and the available screening tools, with training as appropriate
- Identification of local mental health champions at each PAMF location (providers with an interest in adolescent behavioral health); they will act as a conduit for disseminating information to their colleagues
- Addition of automated tools to PAMF’s electronic health record to help PCPs screen, identify, refer, and treat adolescents with behavioral health problems.

ABH Project: Resource Navigation

“Resource Navigator” for primary care providers (PCPs) and patients/families in the departments of Pediatrics and Family Medicine

- Facilitate referrals from primary care to behavioral health specialists
- Match patients to referral sources based on patient need, availability of services at PAMF and in the community, and insurance compatibility
- Facilitate and communication between primary care and behavioral health providers across care settings
- Collect data about processes, outcomes, and utilization

ABH Project: Care Management

“Care Manager” in selected Pediatric and Family Medicine clinics

- Nurse Practitioner with special training in adolescent and behavioral health
- Physically located in primary care clinics at PAMF (alongside pediatricians and family practice physicians)
- Co-manage (along w/PCPs) common behavioral health conditions and, as needed, work with consultant psychiatrist
- Resource for patients/families but also for PCP who feels they could manage patient themselves if they had support

Expected Outcomes

The ABH Project will:

- Determine which behavioral health interventions can be provided in primary care settings, or by specialists at PAMF and the community, and which do not currently exist
- Improve screening, identification, and treatment of psychiatric disorders in adolescents = save lives
- Develop a protocol to expand behavioral health services to other patient populations (children, adults, and seniors)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of behavioral health interventions in primary care; provide guidance to other health care systems as national health care reform proceeds.

Public Health Implications

The proposed program is particularly timely because:

- Tragic events within the local community underscore the need for improved adolescent behavioral health care
- Recent legislation has heightened public awareness of the importance of treating behavioral disorders
- The project has the potential to become part of the larger national discussion about primary care integration of behavioral health services (particularly important with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act)

Additional Information

- For more information, please contact:

Kimberly Erlich, MSN, RN, MPH, CPNP, PMHS
Nurse Practitioner/Project Coordinator

(650) 696-4595

(855) 729-4321 (toll-free)

erlichkj@sutterhealth.org

Thank You!

- Dan Becker, MD, Dir, Behavioral Health, Mills-Peninsula Health Services
- Meg Durbin, MD, Regional Dir, Managed Care, PAMF
- Amy Heneghan, MD, Pediatrician, PAMF
- Lynette Hsu, MD, Psychiatrist, PAMF
- Kimberly Erlich, MSN, MPH, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, and Project Coordinator
- Ming Tai-Seale, PhD, MPH, Senior Staff Scientist, PAMFRI
- Dan Fulford, PhD, Research Psychologist, PAMFRI