

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 6, 2019

Effectiveness of Implementing a Collaborative Care Model on Mental Health Clinician Teams and the Mental Health of Patients Receiving Care

BOSTON- The Journal of American Medicine Association – Network Open has published a [study](#) led by Dr. Mark Bauer, Investigator at the Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR) and the Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) for Behavioral Health at VA Boston Healthcare System which found outpatient mental health teams using the evidence-based Collaborative Chronic Care Model reduces hospitalization rates for individuals and, for those with complex mental health conditions, improves mental health status. These gains were achieved without the need for additional clinical staff.

VA’s Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (**BHIP**) team-based care initiative began in August 2013. In 2016 the investigators engaged BHIP teams in nine VA medical centers across the country that were interested in enhancing team performance in their mental health clinics, providing facilitation support to introduce the Model into those BHIP teams. The study’s outcome measures included a survey of over 60 BHIP team members, interviews with more than 1,000 randomly selected Veterans treated in their teams, and hospitalization data on over 5,500 Veterans treated.

The study found that improving team function with existing clinical staff, guided by a small amount of implementation support, can improve clinical outcomes. This data applies to those who experience depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, PTSD and other conditions cared for in general mental health clinics.

The study suggests that those with more complex mental health needs may benefit the most from their engagement with evidence-based care model teams. Understanding more about the characteristics of these patients may help refine the approach to stepped care in mental health treatment, thus better matching treatment intensity with need.

“Mental health conditions affect one in five Americans annually, yet treatment resources are inadequate to meet their needs. Aligning existing mental health treatment resources with evidence-based care models can improve outcomes.” - Dr. Mark Bauer, Investigator, Center for Organization and Implementation Research (CHOIR), VA Boston Healthcare System.