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CASE STUDY

Enhancing Behavioral Health
CP Agency Integration Across
Programs and Disciplines
including Behavioral Health CP
and Adult Community Clinical
Services Programs

CP: Brien Center Behavioral Health CP

Brien Center Behavioral Health CP (Brien CP) addresses behavioral health needs in western Massachusetts by organizing care and facilitating communication across medical, behavioral health, and long-term services, and helping MassHealth members navigate the healthcare system.

TA Vendor: Health Policy Matters

Health Policy Matters' (HPM) mission is to transform healthcare systems for vulnerable populations. They improve quality, cost-effectiveness and person-centeredness of healthcare delivery for consulting clients and help clients address disparities in care delivery.

Project Description:

HPM conducted a series of interviews and analyses to support Brien CP in coordinating and distinguishing services across the Behavioral Health (BH) CP program, established by MassHealth, and Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS), supported by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.

TA Project Timeline: June – September 2020



Identified Challenge

Brien CP sought consultation and analysis support to establish a common client assessment process and shared workflows for the Brien Center's BH CP and ACCS staff serving behavioral health clients in western Massachusetts.



Background

The Brien Center, Berkshire County's largest provider of behavioral health and addiction services, offers a comprehensive array of community-based mental health and addiction services for children, adolescents, and adults in western Massachusetts. As a provider for the ACCS program¹ supported by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, the Brien Center provides case management, skill building, and other supports for adults with mental illness who live in or are transitioning to the community. Through its BH CP, the Brien Center offers care coordination for MassHealth members with BH needs. The two programs overlap in their catchment areas and enrolled members. Brien CP recognized the importance of delineating each program's unique and overlapping services, and of establishing a care navigation system that is clear to providers in the area and to members in either – or concurrently enrolled in both - programs.

TA Project Objectives

Brien CP sought TA from HPM to differentiate the exclusive and overlapping responsibilities of Brien's BH CP with services provided through the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health ACCS Program. The main goals of the TA project were to:

- Fully understand and describe unique and shared services across the BH CP and ACCS programs;
- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and tasks across the two programs; and,
- Provide education for BH CP stakeholders, including Brien CP's partner ACOs, so that they understand the rationale and processes for BH CP and ACCS coordination.

All staff can now describe how the [Brien CP and Brien Center ACCS] programs fit together.

— Brien CP TA project team member

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/accs>

TA Activities

HPM completed three main TA activities with Brien CP as part of this TA project:

1

Conducted a regulatory review of the BH CP and ACCS programs. HPM reviewed the two programs' services and processes to uncover unique and shared responsibilities.

2

Revised process flows to ensure each program has distinct, agreed-upon roles and responsibilities. HPM met jointly with Brien CP and Brien Center ACCS staff to agree on new process flows. These process flows map each program's clear and distinct roles and responsibilities and incorporate best practices to manage interfaces between the two programs.

3

Developed educational materials for Brien CP and Brien Center ACCS program staff and for members of both programs. HPM developed staff and client education materials that describe the roles and responsibilities of each program. Materials include a manual of workflows, a slide show, and a member brochure that includes information on both Brien's BH CP and ACCS Programs.

TA Project Development

Brien CP selected HPM for this TA project to capitalize on the TA vendor's background knowledge of the CP, gained in prior engagements, and HPM's familiarity with ACCS. Ultimately, Brien CP is seeking to help MassHealth ACOs reduce unnecessary inpatient admissions for people with behavioral health conditions. With that goal in mind, Brien CP set out to optimize communications with Brien Center ACCS staff in order to support people with mental illness living in the community. HPM met with staff from Brien CP and Brien Center ACCS staff weekly for about four months.

Outcomes and Global Impact:

Increased collaboration between Brien CP and Brien Center ACCS program staff has immediate benefits for members of both programs, who can spend less time on program intake and better understand the services they receive. To institutionalize this collaboration, Brien CP established a program coordinator position.

The program coordinator serves as a liaison with Brien Center ACCS program staff and conducts Brien CP intake assessments with individuals who are already ACCS members. The position is housed and supervised within Brien CP. However, Brien Center ACCS staff had input into the job description and has designated a main point-of-contact for the program coordinator. In addition, monthly meetings between Brien CP and Brien Center ACCS leadership will continue beyond the TA program. These meetings address the processes and culture change activities both Brien Center programs will invest in to benefit members.

Brien CP has conducted staff training to ensure all staff can communicate with members about the unique and shared benefits available through Brien CP and ACCS. According to Brien CP project leaders, these joint efforts "keep people in the community and reduce unnecessary spending on behavioral health for people who do not need an inpatient level of care."