Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Strategic Implementation Planning for Integrated Behavioral Health Services in Pediatric Primary Care

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Up to 1 in 5 youth have difficulties with mental health; however, the majority of these youth do not receive the care they need. Many youth seek support from their primary care clinicians. Pediatric primary care practices have increasingly integrated behavioral health clinicians into the care team to improve access to services and encourage high-quality team-based care. Definitions of “behavioral health integration” vary across disciplines and organizations, and little is known about how integrated behavioral health care is actually implemented in most pediatric settings. In addition, program evaluation activities have not included a thorough examination of long-term outcomes. This article provides detailed information on the implementation planning and evaluation activities for an integrated behavioral health program in pediatric primary care. This work has been guided by a logic model, an important implementation science tool to guide the development and evaluation of new programs and promote replication. The logic model and measurement plan we developed provides a guide for policy makers, researchers, and clinicians seeking to develop and evaluate similar programs in other systems and community settings. This work will enable greater adoption, implementation, and sustainment of integrated care models and increase access to high-quality care.

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