

6 Keys to a Successful Regional Behavioral Health Network

Hospitals and health care systems have a unique opportunity to serve as leaders and conveners of a broad spectrum of community agencies and other community partners to form regional behavioral health care networks to improve access to the right care at the right time and right place. The characteristics of current and emerging regional behavioral health networks across the nation offer insights for other communities interested in improving access to behavioral health services through community partnerships.

Regional Behavioral Health Networks'

IMPACT

50% REDUCTION in wait times for outpatient services.

- Reduced emergency department wait times for inpatient behavioral health beds
 - Increased awareness
 - Improved access
- Improved outcomes of care

1

Engaged leadership

1. Health system/hospital plays key role as convener and leader.
2. Health system/hospital CEO and governing board are directly involved and supportive.
3. Health system/hospital behavioral health care service line leader plays vital internal and external role.

2

Community endorsement and support

1. Not all networks are alike, but all involve a coordinated initiative among partners.
2. Each network participant is also a stakeholder and part of the solution.
3. Networks do not require a formal legal body or structure.

3

Innovative coordination and funding

1. Communities optimize the use of existing resources.
2. Health systems build on existing strengths.
3. There's more than one way to fund a collaborative network.

4

Optimize care delivery through standard processes and handoffs

1. Adopt common screening and assessment tools.
2. Mitigate social and medical obstacles to treatment compliance.
3. Coordinate at all levels of follow-up care.

5

Leverage technology

1. Mental health crisis and support lines connect people with immediate help.
2. Telehealth offers an avenue to expand behavioral health services.
3. An electronic referral system can efficiently triage patients and coordinate care.

6

Actionable data and metrics

1. Metric selection and measurement will vary based on identified outcomes.
2. Standardized screening tools and quality measures improve data integrity.
3. Data reporting and transparency demonstrate value to partners.

Download [AHA's Executive Summary: Regional Networks – Improving access to behavioral health services.](#)