

## 4 Benefits of Behavioral Health Partnership for Hospital Performance

Workforce shortages, restricted patient access and shifting reimbursement are among the top challenges facing hospitals trying to meet the rapidly growing need for behavioral healthcare, according to a recent report by HealthLeaders.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these challenges, meeting today's behavioral health need is vital to help safeguard the overall health of the community, and to relieve demand from emergency departments (EDs) and other key areas of a hospital's core operations.

Hospitals are finding that joint-venture or contract management partnership with a dedicated behavioral health expert can be a beneficial strategy to meet the demand while also helping to optimize quality and efficiency, lower risk and improve care access.

**Read this guide to discover four key benefits of behavioral health partnership that can help optimize overall hospital performance.**

**Partnership with a behavioral health expert** enables a hospital to meet the unique needs of the community it serves in a high-quality, cost-effective way. This is especially critical as:

**21%, or  
52.9 million,  
U.S. adults  
experience  
mental illness  
each year.**



### 1 Enhanced Quality Through Specialized Expertise

"Mental illness and substance use disorders – often referred to as behavioral health problems – are associated with high healthcare utilization and medical spending, especially when co-occurring with physical health problems," notes a National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) study.<sup>2</sup>

To limit the use of unnecessary resources and medical spending, hospitals are focusing on improving access to quality behavioral health services and resources. The right partner will have access to exemplary resources, best practices and national trends that enable a hospital to better integrate behavioral health services while providing the highest level of treatment in a cost-effective manner. Further, having a dedicated behavioral health unit or hospital allows patients to be transferred to the appropriate care setting faster. This relieves the burden on overcrowded EDs as well as other care settings that are not equipped to effectively treat behavioral health conditions.

By enhancing a hospital's behavioral health offering, it creates a domino effect across other service lines – ultimately improving quality, the patient experience, employee satisfaction and hospital efficiency.



## 2

### Greater Clinical and Operational Efficiency

Through the support of a partner, a hospital can begin to improve clinical and operational processes and efficiency in areas such as:

#### Staff Optimization

A recent guide highlights that an experienced partner will have a team with both local and national reach, dedicated to recruiting top talent. This enables the program to effectively locate and hire highly-trained talent that matches the culture of the hospital and the specific needs of the community.

Once hired, employee support through training and educational pathways is crucial for continually enhancing an employee's skillset and delivering high-quality outcomes. Doing so leads to greater employee satisfaction and retention. Further, a partner can provide guidance on the most efficient use of limited resources, making the unit more effective overall and requiring less staff.

#### Enhanced Quality Outcomes

Having a team of focused experts allows the hospital to leverage the latest trends, data and best practices – promoting efficiency and quality outcomes. Partnership enables hospital leadership to focus on their core acute services and helps relieve the burden of managing a behavioral health program.

## 3

### Reduced Patient and Staff Risk

By nature of the conditions treated, there is an inherent risk in treating behavioral health patients. Whether it's through reducing the risk of self-harm for a patient within the behavioral health unit, or quickly identifying disorders such as depression or anxiety in a patient receiving care in another setting, having proper behavioral health resources and training to successfully help patients recover can benefit the entire hospital. This not only reduces risk during treatment, but also reduces the possibility for rehospitalization, since health needs are addressed in the same care episode.



**There are a variety of innovative solutions being used in behavioral health to reduce risk including:**

#### Electronic Health Records (EHR)

An EHR system can help identify what additional services may be required for a patient to recover through detailed logging of patient data. Given the connection between physical and mental health, EHRs can help uncover previously unknown behavioral health disorders, allowing a patient to receive prompt treatment and avoid readmission. This is especially important as depression among hospitalized patients can often go unrecognized and therefore untreated.<sup>3</sup>

#### Wearable Devices

Wearable devices, such as patient wrist bands, can play a crucial role in lowering both patient and staff risk. These devices can alert staff when a patient has left their room – keeping patients safe and helping staff maintain hospital compliance. Utilizing wearable devices that keep care teams compliant with patient check-ups on a regular basis not only lowers the risk of reportable offenses by a patient, but helps patients receive the highest quality of care at all times.

By partnering, a hospital can gain access to innovative solutions without the heavy lift of developing them from the ground up. Moreover, patients can begin to reap the benefits of a more streamlined care team, resulting in enhanced patient satisfaction and outcomes.



# 4 Greater Ability to Serve the Community

While the clinical and operational benefits of partnership are important, the most substantial benefit to partnership is the impact it can have on the community. Partnership with a behavioral health expert enables a hospital to meet the unique needs of the community it serves in a high-quality, cost-effective way. This is especially critical as **21%, or 52.9 million, U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.**<sup>4</sup>

Research demonstrates that hospitals which incorporate behavioral health services into post-acute settings are more likely to generate positive outcomes for both behavioral and physical health. This implementation across settings helps reduce the use of other post-acute services, thus generating cost savings and improved patient satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

Creating greater access also helps reduce stigmas surrounding behavioral health illness while

simultaneously increasing education and awareness of the warning signs of mental health conditions. This is a benefit for the health and well-being of the overall community.

## Behavioral Health Partnership: Achieve Lasting Results for Your Hospital

A strategic partnership relieves the burden of running an efficient behavioral health program all while maintaining the mission and values instilled in the hospital. It also helps enhance the current service offering by implementing critical behavioral health services to patients in need of both physical and mental health treatment.

Lifepoint Behavioral Health is a leader in treating patients with mental health and substance use disorders through partnerships that integrate best practices, resources and innovative solutions – therefore producing quality care, streamlined performance and superior outcomes.

To learn how Lifepoint Behavioral Health can help your hospital enhance its overall performance, visit [www.LifepointBehavioralHealth.net](http://www.LifepointBehavioralHealth.net).

**Marty Mann**  
Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships  
Lifepoint Healthcare  
630.904.8400 • [Martin.Mann@LPNT.net](mailto:Martin.Mann@LPNT.net)



 [www.LifepointBehavioralHealth.net](http://www.LifepointBehavioralHealth.net)

### References

1. Cheney, C. (2021). *Tackling the top 3 challenges in Behavioral Health*. HealthLeaders Media. Retrieved January 11, 2022, from <https://www.healthleadersmedia.com/clinical-care/tackling-top-3-challenges-behavioral-health>
2. Goldman, M. L., Spaeth-Rublee, B., Nowels, A. D., Ramanuj, P. P., & Pincus, H. A. (2016, April). *Quality measures at the interface of Behavioral Health and Primary Care*. Current psychiatry reports. Retrieved January 11, 2022, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5847488/>
3. (2019) *Behavioral Health Integration: Treating the whole person*. American Hospital Association, [https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/06/Market\\_Insights-Behavioral\\_Health\\_Report.pdf](https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/06/Market_Insights-Behavioral_Health_Report.pdf)
4. *Mental health by the numbers*. NAMI. (2021, March). Retrieved January 12, 2022, from <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>