
Sweetser's
Telepsychiatry Partnership with
Rural Health Practices.

Dr. Marc Kaplen

Medical Director

Dean Bailey, MPA, LSW

Special Projects



Sweetser's Psychiatric Staff

- Dr. Marc Kaplan – Medical Director
- Dean Bailey – Special Projects
- Service provided by psychiatrist and psychiatric nurse practitioners.
- Located in Sanford and Brunswick, but can be located at any Sweetser office

Health Centers Benefited

- DFD Russell, HealthReach, Indian Health Center
- Health Centers interest in ability to triage patients and in close communication between PCP and psychiatric staff
- Health Center staff prepared patient history and provide follow up
- Both agencies shared the technology cost
- Both agencies shared Risk (No Shows)

Partnership with DFD Russell

- Our Learning Lab – Service Started 8-17-2012
 - Development of a working program design
- Identified a number of challenges
 - Technology, technology, technology
- During the first year of operation
 - 50 individuals served, 73 sessions
 - 50.9% showed an improvement in their PHQ-9 score by an average of 5.52 points

Model of Delivery

- All patients remained exclusive patients of the health care provider
- All patient records were kept in the health center's Electronic Health Record
- Information on the patient developed by the health care provider staff prior to appointment
- Sweetser's psychiatric staff assessed each patient and recommend a course of treatment via video
- All treatment and prescriptions were delivered by the Primary Care Physician

Model of Delivery - Continued

- Health care provider billed all health care payers
- Health care provider schedules all appointments – triages patients
- Health care provider payed Sweetser based on 30 minute increments for face to face time with patient
- The Sweetser psychiatric provider provides consultation. All the prescribing was done by the on site PCP's.

Video Technology-Multiple Possibilities

- Cisco Telepresence Video System
 - Using 42” screens and EX 60 desktops
- Cisco Telepresence to existing Polycom System
 - Firewalls challenges
- New secure internet platforms
 - Jabber
 - Lower start up cost

EHR and Safety Technology Options

- VPN connects to health center's ECR or EHR, usually a dedicated laptop
 - Health Infonet in the future
- Fax and Scan as the last option
 - Whenever either partner reboots their server or upgrades their software, connectivity can be compromised
- Dedicated phones to Care Coordinator staff

EX 60



Considerations for Implementation

- Credentialing of psychiatric staff
 - Can take some time for some payers
- Technology upgrades – access to adequate broadband
 - Numerous opportunities for grants
- Firewalls
- Fiscal viability for both partners

Advantages of Sweetser's Approach

- Focused on smaller, rural health care providers who usually did not have enough patients to support a full-time psychiatric provider.
- Maximized the use of our telehealth system
- All the PCP partners feel they have increased their knowledge of treatment options for patients with psychiatric illness through this model.

The Future

- As more psychiatric staff are hired, expand the number of clinicians who can provide telepsychiatry services
- Lower start up cost with new technology
- Improved psychiatric coordinated care for rural patients

For Information

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