TEAM-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

North Little Rock, AR   Boston, MA

Overview

The evidence is clear: team-based behavioral healthcare improves outcomes and satisfaction for individuals with mental health conditions. However, healthcare teams do not develop naturally and require targeted support to form, function effectively, and be sustained. Using facilitation techniques and common measures, this QUERI Program will enhance and inform team-based care for Veterans with behavioral health conditions. Specifically, this program will advance VA’s knowledge of how team-based behavioral healthcare can be improved through the use of implementation facilitation strategies, with anticipated improvements in Veteran outcomes. Our projects are individually and collectively responsive to VA national priorities to produce greater choice for Veterans, modernize systems, focus resources more efficiently, improve timeliness of services, and support suicide prevention.

QUERI for Team-Based Behavioral Health will work to improve coordination, quality, equity, and outcomes of team-based care for Veterans with behavioral health conditions. For this QUERI Program, team-based care is defined as treatment provided through interdisciplinary VA clinical teams and across disciplines (e.g., mental health and primary care). Specific aims include:

- Understand and enhance coordination, quality, equity, and outcomes of care for Veterans treated within interdisciplinary VA treatment teams and via shared care across healthcare disciplines;
- Advance measurement-based care delivery strategies that enhance personalized, proactive, and patient-driven care for Veterans; and
- Advance implementation science by developing, evaluating, and refining new tools and resources to support the use of facilitation to implement clinical programs and practices that are responsive to VA priorities.

Methodology

Guided by the ‘integrated—Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services’ (i-PARIHS) framework, Behavioral Health QUERI is testing the impact of implementation facilitation strategies to support the uptake of clinical innovations and enhance team-based care for Veterans with behavioral health conditions. Further, Behavioral Health QUERI investigators are using the RE-AIM framework to guide selection of measures for rigorous evaluations in program projects. Finally, investigators in our Implementation Core are conducting innovative work to enhance understanding of implementation facilitation (IF) and develop new tools to support use and evaluation of IF strategies for evidence-based practices and other clinical innovations. Examples of our Implementation Core resources include: a 2-day training program for novice facilitators, along with a companion Implementation Facilitation Training Manual (available for download at https://www.queri.research.va.gov/tools/implementation/Facilitation-Manual.pdf); and our Implementation Facilitation Learning Collaborative (contact: Mona.Ritchie@va.gov). 

(Over)
Findings and Anticipated Impacts

• The Tele-Mental Health (TMH) project addressed a VISN 20 request to develop a process to implement Tele-Mental Health programs in rural community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs). Project facilitators worked with 20 providers at TMH clinics providing services and three rural CBOCs receiving services to improve access to mental health care for all Veterans served by the CBOCs. Providers conducted 496 encounters for 126 Veterans during FY16. Additionally, facilitators supported implementation of VA Video to Home, which resulted in 52 Veterans receiving care in their homes for 588 visits. The TMH Implementation Checklist developed by our project team is now available to the four TMH Regional Hubs established by the VA Office of Rural Health.

• The Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) project is testing the impact of external facilitation for implementing BHIP teams based on evidence-based collaborative care models (CCM) in general mental health clinics. Sixty-five providers who care for 16,996 Veterans at 9 VA medical centers have received BHIP-CCM implementation support to date. In FY17, our BHIP team partnered with OMHSP leadership to train 17 senior Transformational Coaches, who now serve as external facilitators to support BHIP-CCM implementation for an additional 36 VAMCs.

• The Peers in PACT (PEER) project is evaluating the use of external facilitation to support the implementation of Peer Specialists on VA Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) in primary care. To date, 39 Peer Specialists involved in this project have delivered an approximate total of 12,731 encounters to 4,618 unique Veterans across 25 VA medical centers. Peer Specialists in this project also are supporting the Whole Health initiative as it rolls out in enrolled sites.

• The Measurement-Based Care for Mental Health (MBC) project will test the effectiveness of external facilitation and local team-based quality improvement for increasing MBC in primary care clinics using patient reported outcome measures. Investigators also will examine the impact of MBC on primary care and primary care – mental health integration (PC-MHI) clinic communication and team functioning. Twelve VA medical centers are being recruited to participate in this project. Multiple members of our QUERI Program lead or serve on committees supporting the VA’s Measurement Based Care in Mental Health National Initiative.

Operational Partner(s)
VA Patient Care Services (Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, Primary Care, Public Health), and the Office of Health Equity.