



Scaling Collaborative Care for Behavioral Health:

A Mercy and Concert Health Case Study

Mercy, one of the largest U.S. health systems, looked to improve access to behavioral health services within its interdisciplinary health care system. Mercy searched for an evidence-based, patient-centered care model that was highly adaptable and could be readily incorporated into its existing primary care system. With millions of patients served by Mercy across multiple states, this proved to be a difficult feat to accomplish on their own. As Vice President of Behavioral Health Services at Mercy, Patty Morrow, said “We quickly realized that the scale and expertise required exceeded our own resources.”

Mercy sought to collaborate with Concert Health, the leading behavioral health provider dedicated exclusively to providing Collaborative Care Management. The evidence-based Collaborative Care model (CoCM) is used to identify and treat patients with behavioral health conditions through patient-centered care plans within primary care, pediatrics and women’s health settings. Concert Health had the resources and technical know-how needed for scalability in order to meet the demand for behavioral health services in the populations served.

Mercy, powered by Concert Health, began a pilot CoCM program in Joplin, Missouri in December 2021. Primary care providers affiliated with Mercy Joplin were eager for solutions and support. The program was launched in nine clinics with 47 providers.

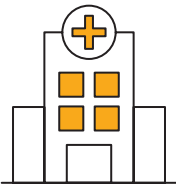


Program Success

After the success of the pilot program, a full program rollout was launched. Suicide risk screening increased by utilizing evidence-based tools focused on depression and anxiety. Morrow went on to explain, “The evidence-based screening was significant to our primary care providers [...] historically providers were hesitant to universally screen patients because there was no clear path or consistent resource to provide further care for the patient.”

To reduce the chance of inappropriate referrals, Mercy providers were educated and trained in Collaborative Care. With the increase in patient referrals, the registry was critical to addressing and managing patient volume. As Morrow added, “With the launch of Mercy’s relationship with Concert Health, patient referrals quickly mounted and allowed Mercy to expand our capabilities at scale.” In addition, the CoCM registry has enabled data tracking monitoring of clinical outcomes along the continuum of care for each patient and the population.

By the numbers



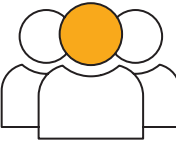
Number of clinics:

150



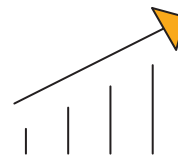
Number of providers:

1,300



Number of provider referrals:

13,473



Provider adoption rate:

91%

Mercy and Concert Health have successfully expanded their presence to encompass 150 clinics, achieving an impressive adoption rate of 91% among providers in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri. This growth has scaled to encompass a vast network of approximately 1,300 primary care providers specializing in adult and family medicine, women’s health and pediatrics. Notably, the efficacy of this expansion is evidenced by the fact that these providers have referred more than 13,473 patients.

In the expanded program at Mercy, anxiety and depression symptoms decreased within the first 90 days of treatment. By the final treatment, for the population served through the CoCM program, outcomes revealed an overall decrease in symptoms of anxiety and depression. For discharged patients experiencing anxiety symptoms, 41% reached subclinical levels. Approximately 38% of patients with depressive symptoms were at subclinical levels upon discharge. The effectiveness of the program can also be seen in patient satisfaction measures with favorable responses from patients reporting a positive experience with CoCM intervention.

Efficacy of Collaborative Care

Collaborative Care utilizes a care team-based approach. A Concert Health Collaborative Care Clinician and Psychiatric Consultant work alongside a primary care provider. The Concert Health clinicians deliver high-quality care to the patient via telephone or video while using the provider's electronic health record as a means of communication about the patient's status.

This sustainable, economic model leverages technological solutions to meet patients at the point of their need. Morrow further indicated, "We are seeing great success in remote areas where we are able to provide care to those who may not have access to a physical clinician or resources. Technology is allowing us to bridge the gap and provide accessible care to many who would not have had access previously."

Collaborative Care provides full transparency and support for patients and providers. The benefits of Collaborative Care are far-reaching in:

- Improving care in populations with comorbid, chronic health conditions
- Lowering total cost of care with billing situated under primary care services and reimbursement dependent on quality of care rather than patient volume
- Monitoring patients with the treat-to-target approach which heavily relies on regular measurement and treatment changes to achieve clinical goals

With an emphasis on population health, patients tracked through the registry are cared for as a whole within an integrated primary care system. Concert Health Co-founder and Chief Clinical Officer, Virna Little, stated, "We're just wrapping a warm, fuzzy blanket around the providers."



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