Three Reasons to Refer to Beacon for Behavioral Health Services

From PHC Mental Health Clinical Director, Karen Stephen, Ph.D.

We encourage all PCPs and Specialists to refer to PHC’s delegated provider Beacon Health Strategies when a member presents with mild to moderate behavioral health issues. Beacon can also assist you in making diagnostic and medication decisions related to behavioral health.

But why refer to Beacon?

1. Prior to January 1, 2014, most Medi-Cal Members needing mental health care obtained services through county-administered mental health plans, which focused on the seriously and persistently mentally ill. Those who had mild to moderate mental health problems rarely accessed care due to the inadequacy of the fee-for-service provider network. This mild to moderately impaired segment of the Medi-Cal population need to know that mental health services are now available to them through Beacon. You, as their medical provider, through routine screening for behavioral health issues—such as depression, anxiety, and chronic pain—are our best resource in referring Members to these new services.

2. By utilizing Beacon’s telephone psychiatric consultation services for support around medication issues, you can provide continuity of care for the Member and ensure that your patients are prescribed psychotropic medications in a timely and appropriate manner. Our Beacon network has therapy services available in all of our 14 counties but is limited, as are all other health care systems, in terms of psychiatric availability, even though we are working diligently to establish tele-psychiatry throughout the region.

3. In addition to providing help for the individual Member, by referring to Beacon you are contributing to the reduction in the overall cost of health care. The numbers are staggering when we look at the proportion of health care costs (estimates of 30% and up) that are directed toward a small 14% segment of the population (which includes all levels of mental health impairment plus those with substance abuse issues). In addition, behavioral health referrals can often reduce the number of visits and/or complaints brought to medicine departments.

Referral is easy. Beacon’s Primary Care Provider (PCP) Referral Form is on our PHC website. You can use this form to:

1. Request decision support for diagnosis and/or medication from a Beacon psychiatrist,
2. Refer a Member for outpatient behavioral health services, or
3. Obtain case management help from Beacon to engage Members who need additional support in seeking behavioral health care.

You can also call Beacon at 855.765.9703.

And you can take advantage of Beacon’s online PCP Toolkit in making diagnostic decisions regarding behavioral health. For Members needing pain management services, special flyers are available that explain why behavioral health services are important in managing pain safely.

If you would like additional information or training on how to utilize Beacon services, please contact your PHC Provider Relations Rep by calling 707.863.4100 (PR) or email Eric Faulks, Beacon Account Manager for PHC at ericfaulks@beaconhs.com