Mental Healthcare Equity: Challenges and Recommendations

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Agenda

1 | Types of Barriers to Mental Healthcare
2 | The Patient Experience
3 | The Provider Experience
4 | Recommendations
5 | Discussion
Behavioral Health Equity

“The right to access quality health care for all populations regardless of the individual's race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or geographical location.

This includes access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services for mental and substance use disorders” (SAMHSA, 2021)
Barriers to Mental Healthcare Equity

- Ethnic/Racial/Demographic Disparities
- Geographic Disparities
- Psychosocial Barriers
- Insurance-Related
Structural and Racial Barriers to Mental Healthcare

What do underserved and underprivileged patient's face?

1. Lack of diversity among MH providers
2. Mental illness stigma
3. Lack of Insurance/underinsurance
4. Lack of culturally competent providers
5. Language barriers
Among people with any mental illness, % receiving services, 2015

48%  31%  31%  22%

White  Black  Latinx/Hispanic  Asian

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2008-2015
The Patient Experience

Barriers to Mental Healthcare

Clinician Shortage  Limited Parity  Fragmented Access  Social Stigma  Limited Awareness
The Patient Experience
Path to Mental Healthcare Services

MH Resource Awareness
Do I need a therapist? Doctor?

Financial resource awareness
Insurance? MH services?

Quality
Will I get the type of quality help I need?

Service Location
How do I find the MH provider? Distance?
The Patient Experience

What Can Insurance Companies do to help Improve Mental Health Equity?

Mental Health Awareness → Mental Health Resource Awareness → Financial Resource Awareness → Service Location → Quality Assessment

→ Clear and Concise Educational Initiatives

→ Up-to-date Provider Directories

→ Easy-to-Use Website Interface

Patient Feedback
Provider Experience

Improving Mental Health Equity

Lack of Diverse Workforce
High Administrative Burden
Contractual obligations
Capitated Payment Model
Patient Frustration
Decreased Insurance Acceptance*
Considerations for Mental Health Providers:

- Do I have time for the amount of paperwork?
- Can I refer to the appropriate services within this network?
- Will I be forced to see a panel of patients that I'm not comfortable with?
- Can I afford to join a network?
The Provider Experience

What Can Insurance Companies do to Help Improve Mental Health Equity?

- Lack of Diverse Workforce
  - Targeted Recruitment Initiatives
    - Coverage of Non-medical staff
    - Coverage of Culturally Sensitive Services

- High Administrative Burden
  - Eliminate Unnecessary/Redundant Paperwork

- Concerning Contractual Obligations
  - Review and Eliminate hindering components of service contracts

- Capitated Payment Model
  - Review and consider restructuring for more balanced mutual benefit

- Patient Frustration
  - Educational Initiatives

Provider Feedback
Inter-agency Collaboration

Insurance Providers, Governmental Agencies, Medical Entities

Policy Creation
Targeted Educational Initiatives
Targeted Recruitment Initiatives
Insurance Carriers
Considerations and Recommendations for Mental Health Equity

1. Enhanced Financial Incentives
   - Improved Remuneration
   - Improved bonus structures
   - Review current payment models

2. Decreased Burden
   - Contractual obligations
   - Overall paperwork/administrative tasks

3. Expanded Coverage of Services
   - Coverage of non-medical staff
   - Coverage of culturally sensitive services

4. Enhanced Patient & Physician Education
   - Updated provider directories
   - Easy-to-use website interface
   - Clear definitions
   - Collaborate with providers

5. Policy Creation
   - Quality improvement
   - Improved access to care

6. Targeted Recruitment Initiatives
   - Historically Black Colleges and Universities
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MEDICAL TRAINING

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, STONY BROOK, NY

Adult Psychiatry Residency Training, University of Cincinnati Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH

Child and Adolescent Fellowship Training, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN

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