Social Work in the Primary Care Setting

Maria Rosario, MSW
Karen Langley, LICSW

Monadnock Community Hospital
MCH Overview:

- Monadnock Community Hospital – 14 Practices
  - Nine Primary Care Practices, including:
    - Five Off-site Practices
    - One Designated Rural Health Practice
  - Five Specialty Practices
- Currently, three Social Workers FTE’s are assigned to provide services to all of these Practices, in addition to:
  - On-call for ED and inpatient evaluations
  - Pain Care Program Case Management
MCH History:

- Shift from inpatient to outpatient services.
- Patient Centered Medical Home was the driving force for shift.
- Critical Access Hospital status led to difficulty addressing issues on the inpatient level; shift was necessary.
MCH Outpatient Social Workers:

“Changes to the medical home model have created a need to imbed social workers in primary care and outpatient practices.” Maria Rosario, MSW

- Provide patients with immediate access to behavioral health services regarding bio-psychosocial issues.
- Create a multidisciplinary team approach, allowing treatment plans that target individual needs and abilities of each patient.
Program Goals - Ongoing:

• Support primary care health providers with recognition and treatment of mental disorders and psychosocial problems.

• Help in the early detection of “at risk” patients, with the aim of preventing further psychological or physical deterioration.

• Assist health care providers in preventing relapse or morbidity in conditions that tend to recur over time.

• Reinforce prevention and management of addiction to pain medicine or tranquilizers.
Program Goals - Ongoing:

- Assist in the prevention and management of functional disabilities.
- Help health care providers obtain quality clinical outcomes with high prevalence mental disorders.
- Collaborate with providers to treat and manage patients with chronic emotional and/or health problems efficiently and effectively.
- Navigate providers who manage patients that use medical visits to obtain needed social support.
Program Goals - Outcomes:

- Improve the quality of provider interventions.
- Efficiently move patients into appropriate behavioral health specialty care, when indicated.
- Enhance the health status of the MCH population through increased adherence to positive lifestyle regimens, e.g., smoking cessation, weight management, etc.
Access and Satisfaction Outcomes:

- Increase access for patients to behavioral health services.
- Improve patient satisfaction by providing routine behavioral health services in the primary care setting.
- Reinforce provider satisfaction with access to and feedback from both integrated and specialty behavioral health services.
- Support ongoing patient satisfaction through education and coordination of services.
Cost-Effective Outcomes:

• Increase productivity of primary care practices by shifting behavioral health interventions to social workers.
• Streamline behavioral health referral process within primary care practice.
• Reduce overall medical costs associated with high-cost users in primary care.
Primary Care Social Worker - Role:

- Performs appropriate clinical assessments
- Supports provider decision making
- Builds on provider interventions
- Teaches provider “core” behavioral health skills
- Educates patient in self-management skills
- Improves provider/patient working relationship
- Monitors “at risk” patients with provider
- Manages chronic patients with provider
- Assists in team building within a practice
Primary Care Social Worker-Tasks:

- Limited to one to three visits in a typical case
- 20-30 minute visits with each patient
- Reinforces provider assessments and goals
- Implements long term follow-up care, reserved for high risk cases, but re-referral by patient or provider always available
Examples of Interventions:

- Substance Abuse
- Behavioral Health
- Chronic Disease Management
- Collaboration with Community Resources
- Family Support
- Health Lifestyle Promotion
- Chronic Opioid Management
- Follow-up after ED visits
- Addressing chronic no-shows/compliance issues
- Liaison between practices and community agencies
Primary Care Survey Results:

- Conducted August 2014
- Feedback from Physicians and other Clinical Staff
- Total surveys received 43
- Average overall satisfaction rating: 9 out of 10
Questions/Survey Results:

The social worker is easy to contact when needed

The social worker is knowledgeable about local services and resources

The social worker chooses the appropriate interventions to meet patient needs

The social worker has a good relationship with the practice and its providers
Survey Results:

The social worker provides clear communication about the patients to the clinical team

Most important benefit of social work

Most common reason for contacting social work

Mental Health 43%

Financial Issues 31%

Abuse/Neglect 10%

Substance Abuse 8%

Improving Patient Satisfaction 11%

Improving patient Compliance 13%

Linking patients to other resources in their community 47%

Crisis Intervention 21%

Other 8%
Survey Comments:

- “Adding social workers to primary care is one of the best resources added to our ‘toolbox’. I’m very happy with her.”
- “Being able to have social workers come out to our practice and meet with our patients has been a tremendous service to patients and a great support to providers. I believe it demonstrates MCH’s commitment to comprehensive patient care and I know our patients truly appreciate the effort put out by our social worker on their behalf.”
- “Our social worker is very knowledgeable and extremely helpful. She always knows what to do, where to direct us when we aren’t sure… wonderful asset to the team. I think by having social workers working closely with primary care it makes things so much better for our team and our patients.”
- “The best thing MCH administration has done for the practice in my 9 years here is to add social services to our team! As we move towards a patient-centered medical home, we should strategize how we can have our social worker in our office 5 days per week, we can keep her busy.”
- “I don’t know what we ever did without her, she is an excellent resource for our patients… she has been a huge help with many cases and helped me to sleep easier knowing our patients have been looked out for.”
THANK YOU

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Q & A?