

Transforming Behavioral Health Agencies: Closing Referral Loops with Primary Care

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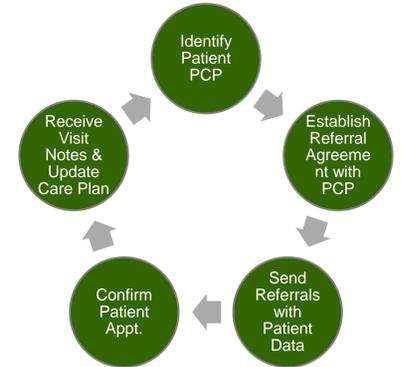
The Challenge

Value-based payment (VBP) programs require different providers across the healthcare system to work together on reducing cost & improving care for patients that are mutually shared between settings. Care coordination activities, such as closing the referral loop, are an important contributor to achieving value-based care. However, the process of coordinating care is challenging between primary care (PC) and behavioral health (BH) agencies. Capabilities such as collecting & tracking referral data are not as wide-spread among BH agencies. The Primary Care Information Project (PCIP) developed a technical assistance curriculum on closing referral loops between BH & PC and provided a framework to improve communication & coordination across these settings.

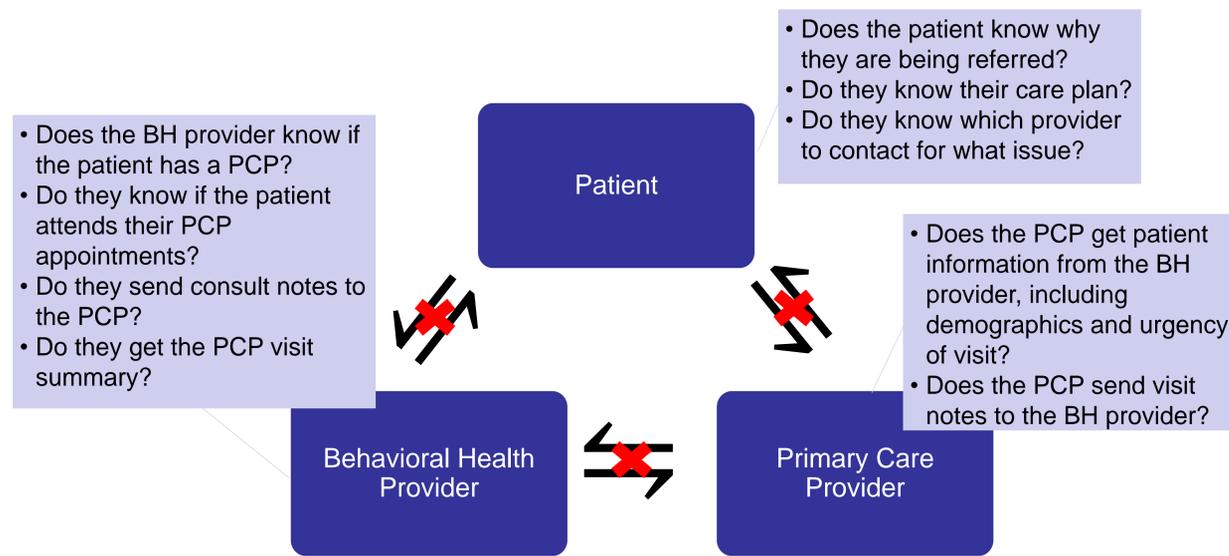
Benefits of Closed Loop Referrals for VBP & the Quadruple Aim

| Quadruple Aim | How Closed Loop Referrals Support The Aim |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Improve Patient Experience | Facilitated transitions between settings |
| Improve Provider Experience | Clear communication between providers |
| Improve Population Health | Access to care before conditions become worse |
| Reduce Cost | Reduced avoidable hospitalizations & redundant tests |

Ideal Closed Loop Referral



Coordinating Care Between BH & PC Has Many Challenges

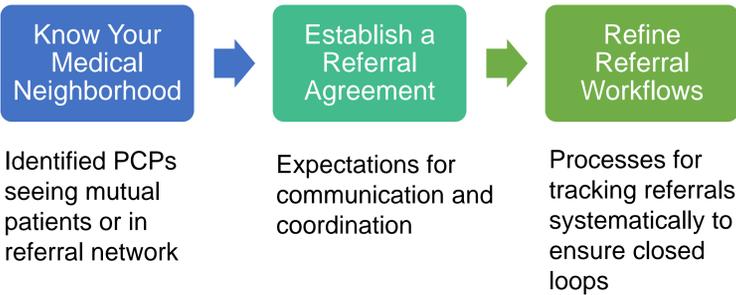


Root Causes

- Inconsistent documentation of patients' Primary Care Providers (PCPs)
- Limited relationship with patients' PCPs
- Unclear expectations for communication & coordination
- Lack of workflows and technology for tracking referrals

The Curriculum

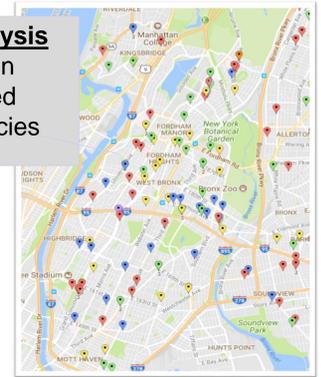
Focus on Key Best Practices



Tools

Project Charter Standard Framework: Problem Statement, Issue Analysis, Solution, Metrics, Staff Roles

Network Analysis: Map of PCPs in network located near BH agencies



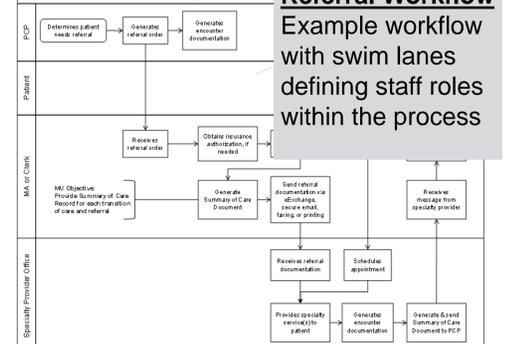
Methods for Implementing Best Practices

- Trainings on network analysis & quality improvement tools (SMART goals, Plan-Do-Study-Act)
- In-person learning collaboratives where peer agencies can share best practices & learn new strategies
- Facilitated meetings with PCPs who have agreed to communication & coordination terms
- Templates for referral agreements & referral workflows
- Implementation support for referral-tracking technology

Referral Agreement

Referral Agreement Example agreement with terms of communication, coordination, & co-management

Referral Generation Workflow Template



Referral Workflow

Example workflow with swim lanes defining staff roles within the process



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