

Creation of a Policy for a Behavioral Health Center

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Abstract

Background: Many patients diagnosed with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), who could benefit from outpatient pharmacological treatment are not commonly offered it. It is estimated that 99,000 deaths each year can be attributed to AUD. Not only does AUD affect the patient but it affects society, families, friends, co-workers, employers, and other drivers on the road. The overall cost to society in 2010 was \$249 billion per the CDC's report. Studies showed that less than 11% of patients are being treated for their AUD. The aim of this project is to increase outpatient care for patients with AUD by creating a standardized policy for a behavioral health hub.

Objectives: Proper alcohol screening, assessment, and referral will increase care for those with chemical and mental health problems. The expectation is that patients should have access to effective AUD pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods in the treatment of their AUD.

Methods: Creation of an alcohol use disorder policy to assist in standardizing outpatient access at the behavioral health clinic so that patients with AUD have the option of receiving outpatient care by a primary provider. Four experts in the field of Substance Use Disorders were asked to provide feedback to help revise the created policy based upon analysis of the current literature.

Results: The policy will be sent to the clinic project manager who will present the policy to the behavioral health clinic's planning committee for review and implementation when the clinic opens. Results as to whether this policy makes a significant improvement in the care of patients with AUD will have to be analyzed after the clinic is in operation. The projected outcome is that the clinic would be treating more than the standard 11% of their patients.

Conclusion: Conclusions as to the effectiveness and influence of this policy in increasing screening, treatment, and management of AUD will not be known until after it has been implemented. The creation of this policy and implementation hopes to bring more awareness that treatment of AUD is needed in outpatient care.

Keywords: alcohol use disorder, AUD screening, AUD treatment, AUD policy, outpatient care, chemical health