



10 THINGS EVERY HOSPITAL EXECUTIVE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

1. **Behavioral Health Disorders are Common:**

30% of the US population in a given year has a behavioral health or substance abuse disorder.¹

2. **Behavioral Health Disorders are Common in Hospitals:**

24% of admissions in US community hospitals are for patients with principal or secondary behavioral health/substance abuse diagnosis.²

3. **Behavioral Health Disorders are Stressing Hospital Emergency Departments:**

From 1992 to 1999, annual rates of emergency department visits rose precipitously for certain mental disorders and related conditions. Rates for psychoses rose by 46%, while rates for drug dependence and nondependent drug abuse rose by 84%. Visits for self-inflicted injury rose by 147%.³

4. **Behavioral Health Disorders affect Utilization and Cost:**

The presence of a psychiatric diagnosis in a medical/surgical admission significantly increases length of stay by 30% or more, which also contributes to resource consumption.²

5. **Physical and Mental Health are Related:**

Depression and anxiety increase risks, increase healthcare costs and worsen outcomes in heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.¹

6. **Behavioral Health Disorders affect Older Adults:**

20% of older adults have behavioral health disorders and account for a disproportionate share of mental health/substance abuse admissions in hospitals.²

7. **Behavioral Health Disorders have significant societal impact:**

Behavioral health disorders are the second leading source of disability in the developed world, trailing only cardiovascular disease.⁴

8. Treatment is available, but access is uneven:

Less than one-third of persons with a diagnosable behavioral health disorder receive treatment in a given year. ⁵

9. Behavioral Health Treatment is Effective and Efficient:

Treatment of depression reduces overall healthcare costs not only for persons with depression alone, but for depression and co-morbid conditions such as cancer and heart disease. Major depressive disorder is successfully treated by medication or psychotherapy in 65% of cases. Response rates increase to more than 80% when psychotherapy is combined with medication in accordance with practice guidelines.⁶

10. Hospitals Need a Behavioral Health Strategy:

- Mental health disorders are common and have serious health consequences.
- Whether specialized services are provided or not, mental health disorders are among the most common disorders seen in hospitals and their emergency departments.
- The presence of mental health disorders affects the outcomes and hospital length of stay of many other diseases.

Sources

¹ (Mental Health: A report of the Surgeon General; 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

² (Care of Adults with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders in U.S. Community Hospitals, 2004; 2004 National Hospital Discharge Survey; Bourgeois et al, Psychiatric Diagnosis and Length of Stay, Psychosomatics, 2005; Fulop et al, A Prospective Study of the Impact of Psychiatric Comorbidity on Length of Stays of Elderly Medical-Surgical Inpatients; Sloan et al, A Five Year Study on the Interactive Effects of Depression and Physical Illness on Psychiatric Unit Length of Stay, Psychosomatic Medicine, 1999)

³ (CDC, National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2005 Emergency Department Summary; CDC, Trends in Hospital Emergency Department Utilization: United States, 1992-1999; Harman et al, Emergency Department Visits for Depression in the United States, 2004, Camargo et al, US Emergency Department Visits for Alcohol-related Diseases and Injuries between 1992 and 1999, Academic Emergency Medicine, 2002; 1997-2000 National Hospital Ambulatory Care Survey; Care of Adults with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders in U.S. Community Hospitals, 2004)

⁴ (NIMH, The Numbers Count: Mental Illness in America; The Impact of Mental Illness on Society)

⁵ (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006; Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1999)

⁶ (Mumford et al, A New Look at Evidence about Reduced Cost of Medical Utilization following Mental Health Treatment, American Journal of Psychiatry, 1984); Thompson et al, Predictors of a Medical-Offset Effect among Patients Receiving Antidepressant Therapy, American Journal of Psychiatry, 1998; National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, Behavioral Health is an Integral Part of Overall Health, 2007)