



Metabolic Screening and Coordinated Care Reduce Complications and Deaths in Patients with Serious Mental Illness

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Pathways Community Behavioral Health Care, Inc. screens for metabolic disorders like diabetes, high blood pressure, high triglycerides, high cholesterol, and obesity. The metabolic screenings are provided to mental health patients with assigned case workers. "These patients are the ones who come regularly and the ones whom we have access to and can ensure proper follow-up," said Pam Knowles, a nurse supervisor at Pathways.

Through metabolic screenings, mental health patients who are obese, have elevated blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure and other risk factors that lead to pre-mature death, can be referred to a primary care provider for treatment and ongoing follow-up.

"The State allows us to conduct metabolic screenings every three to six months for patients who screen high for metabolic disorders," Knowles said. "We follow-up with our patients' medications and treatments. We want to make certain they are well taken care of."

Meeting Patients in the Middle

Caseworkers assigned to Pathways' patients coordinate care between the mental health provider and the primary care physician. This model of meeting patients in the middle tackles the 45% of serious mentally ill patients who lack primary care, and suffer from co-occurring diseases.

Caseworkers remain hands-on, whether it's taking patients to primary care visits, arranging transportation, or teaching them how to arrange transportation for themselves. Knowles said for the most part the patients remain very engaged in the process, receptive to the education they receive and interested in their metabolic screening results.

Pathways also uses something called "motivational interviewing" with patients to encourage them to take an active role in their health and well-being. "We ask them, 'what can *you* do to help regulate your blood sugar,'" Knowles said. "It could be something as simple as drinking one

less can of pop a day, or it may be not having that candy bar. It's something that they want to do and not something that we've told them to do."

Tackling diabetes

Motivating patients to play an active role in their health and well-being is especially important for those suffering with diabetes, a disease that is significantly higher among people who are mentally ill and afflicts 16 million Americans.

Through metabolic screenings, many patients at Pathways will be linked with a case manager, screened for the disease, paired with a primary care provider and supported to ensure proper follow-through, both behaviorally and physically. What this means to Pathways' patients is a continuum of care that caters to the whole person. It also means a front line of defense for those diagnosed with diabetes as well as lifestyle modifications for those who may be borderline diabetic.

"Each client is being treated as a well-rounded person and not for just mental health issues," Knowles said.

Contact us

Call Pathways at **660.885.8131** or visit *PathwaysOnline.org* for a location near you. Pathways' crisis hotlines are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **1-888-279-8188** (Johnson, Cass & Lafayette counties) or **1-800-833-3915** (Bates, Benton, Camden, Cedar, Cole, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Henry, Hickory, Maries, Miller, Laclede, Osage, Pulaski, Phelps, St. Clair and Vernon counties).

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About Pam Knowles

Knowles has worked with Pathways for 14 years as a medication clinic nurse, working directly with a psychiatrist and community support staff to educate patients and provide coordinated care. For the past two years, Knowles has served as a disease management nurse liaison for serious mentally ill patients. In this capacity, she focuses on the patients' complete wellness, utilizing health technology and a care management to coordinate and integrate behavioral and physical health care services.

About Pathways

Midwest Behavioral Healthcare Management, Inc. is the parent company of Pathways Community Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., and Royal Oaks Hospital, located in Windsor, MO. Together, the non-profit community behavioral healthcare center with 32 offices throughout 36 counties in Missouri and the 41-

bed behavioral health hospital, provide a full continuum of evidence-based behavioral health services for children, adolescents and adults. Services include comprehensive psychiatric treatment, addiction recovery, and crisis & prevention services. Pathways has been providing behavioral health services for over 30 years. For the Children Foundation, the primary funding-raising arm of Midwest Behavioral Healthcare Management, Inc., raises money for children who suffer with behavioral issues but have no way to pay for treatment. Funds raised by the Foundation help children receive needed services at Pathways and Royal Oaks.