Meeting the Challenges: A Data-Driven Approach to Building Behavioral Health System Capacity

Mathematica partners with federal and state agencies, foundations, managed care organizations, and providers to improve behavioral health care. We combine our methodological expertise and deep knowledge of the behavioral health system to provide our clients with objective, data-driven insights that lead to solutions to their most pressing challenges.

Program and policy evaluation. We have decades of experience evaluating a wide range of service delivery and payment models, including the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Demonstration and the Primary and Behavioral Care Integration program—two initiatives that aim to improve access to care and integrate and coordinate services. Our evaluations of the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants and the National Health Emergency Grants to Address the Opioid Crisis identified innovative strategies to help individuals recover from opioids and other substances, and our evaluation of the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Services Demonstration provided insights into the impacts of using Medicaid to pay for inpatient psychiatric care.
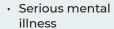
Program support and monitoring. We help our clients stand up programs and implement new services and policies. For example, we established data reporting and feedback processes to help the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and states implement Medicaid Section 1115 demonstrations focused on serious mental illness and substance use. We have unparalleled expertise in using Medicaid data to provide insights that help policymakers fill gaps in behavioral health services and target interventions, as evidenced by the recently published T-MSIS Substance Use Disorder Data Book, which provides critical information on different patterns of substance use treatment across states. We also produce toolkits and issue briefs that provide guidance on a range of topics, including care coordination for women with opioid use disorder, employment interventions for individuals affected by substance use, and strategies to support trauma-informed care for vulnerable populations.

Behavioral health expertise

Data
- Administrative records
- Electronic health records
- Clinical registries
- Large-scale surveys
- Interviews & focus groups
- Environmental scans

Populations
- Serious mental illness
- Women and families
- Child welfare and foster care
- Transition-age youth
- American Indian & Alaska Native
- Incarcerated & justice involved

Service delivery innovations
- Value-based payment
- Care coordination and integration
- State Medicaid programs
- Inpatient & nursing home care
- Telepsychiatry
- Peer support

Large-scale data collection and novel data collection methods. We design and conduct complex multimode surveys of behavioral health care facilities, providers, and consumers that achieve high response rates. For more than two decades, we have conducted the National Mental Health Services Survey and the National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services. These are annual surveys of every mental health and substance use treatment facility in the nation that provide data for findtreatment.gov and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator—critical resources that connect people to treatment. We're also spearheading efforts to use municipal wastewater to provide real-time monitoring of community-level substance use.

Evaluation-related technical assistance. We help organizations develop their capacity to collect and use data to improve service delivery. We develop user-friendly data collection systems, train staff to incorporate data collection into daily practices, and provide tools to analyze and interpret data for a range of audiences. As one example, we support the Regional Partnership Grants to ensure that grantees' local evaluations rigorously assess how partnerships between child welfare agencies and substance use treatment providers impact children at risk for out-of-home placement because of parental substance use.

Advancing clinical quality measurement. We are nationally recognized for developing and implementing behavioral health quality measures. To date, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, we have developed more than 30 behavioral health measures that states, managed care organizations, and national demonstrations use to monitor care delivery. We have a long history of successfully obtaining National Quality Forum endorsement of these measures. We support the development and maintenance of measures for the Inpatient Psychiatric Facility Quality Reporting Program and provide technical assistance to help states report, interpret, and improve performance on Medicaid Core Set measures. We have also worked with the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve the quality of care in psychiatric residential treatment facilities by developing standardized metrics, conducting on-site quality reviews of more than 100 facilities, and helping facilities develop quality improvement plans.

Behavioral health clients

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- National Institutes of Health
- Administration for Children and Families
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Managed care organizations
- State and local government agencies

Let's Progress Together. Contact Jonathan Brown, area director for behavioral health, jbrown@mathematica-mpr.com or (202) 264-3446.

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