

Title: Building Mental Wellness: Outcomes of a Statewide Intervention to Implement Mental Health Services in Pediatric Primary Care

Authors: Rebecca A. Baum MD; Melissa A. King PhD, MPAff; Heather Maciejewski; John Duby MD; Lawrence S. Wissow MD, MPH

Background. Mental health concerns are among the most frequent issues faced by pediatric primary care, yet providers report low comfort levels for managing common mental health conditions. Efforts to train primary care providers are underway, but research on interventions that address both individual and organizational determinants of mental health care are lacking.

Aim: To determine the effectiveness of the Building Mental Wellness (BMW) Learning Collaborative in improving mental health implementation outcomes in pediatric primary care.

Methods. Staff from 29 pediatric primary care practices completed 4 on-site trainings over 10 months. Training content included communication and management skills for common mental health problems and addressed organizational (inner organizational context) and individual (staff attitudes, provider confidence) factors. Practices measured change in 5 areas (resources, referral tracking, mental health promotion and screening, mental health integration, and practice-based interventions), earning a star for each category.

Results. Most practices earned ≥ 3 stars in the 5 star recognition system, and all earned at least 1. All aspects of inner organizational context improved, with most being significantly affected by practice. Improvements in staff attitudes were noted but did not reach statistical significance. Total confidence scores increased 20% (95% CI: 15 to 25%) from 2.92 to 3.55 points post-intervention. Using Medicaid claims data, monthly rates of office visits for mental health concerns increased by 0.14 percentage points (95% CI: 0.05, 0.23; $p=0.003$) per month, from 6% one year prior to 9% at the end of BMW.

Conclusions. This study provides initial evidence that an intervention addressing individual and organizational factors may be effective in improving aspects of mental health service delivery in primary care. These factors may be important in driving and sustaining changes in care. Using a train the trainer model, BMW has been adapted for use in residency continuity clinics to address gaps in training.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank the BMW participants for their time and insights. We would like to thank the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center for assistance with our Medicaid data request.

Funding: Building Mental Wellness was supported by the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center with funding from the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Medicaid. This research was additionally supported by National Institute of Mental Health grant P20MH086048 (Center for Mental Health Services in Pediatric Primary Care).

Corresponding author: Rebecca.Baum@nationwidechildrens.org.