

WHITEPAPER

Digital behavioral health: The first digitally forward service line?

<https://www.chartis.com/insights/digital-behavioral-health-first-digitally-forward-service-line>

Even as the pandemic has exacerbated the U.S. behavioral health crisis, it also has highlighted how digital behavioral health solutions can address one of the most difficult challenges facing healthcare organizations: improving access to behavioral healthcare.

Managing behavioral health conditions is increasingly important, both because of the prevalence of these conditions and because they significantly increase the overall cost of care. Organizations can't have a comprehensive health strategy without a behavioral health strategy—and they can't have a high-impact behavioral health strategy without a digital behavioral health (DBH) strategy.

DBH drives a transformation in how care is delivered in 4 key ways:



**\$38-\$68
BILLION**

Potential savings estimated annually through the use of effective integrated behavioral health programs¹

1. Delivering substitutive care.

For instance, a video encounter in place of an in-person encounter can eliminate the barriers of time and travel required to get to a physical encounter, reduce stigmas attached to care, and provide the home as a more comfortable care setting. In addition, scheduling efficiencies are gained when the physical site of care is not a factor.

2. Providing complementary care.

For instance, asynchronous solutions (such as chat, text, and self-guided solutions) extend care beyond in-person or virtual episodic visits. Behavioral healthcare providers can expand care across the continuum and facilitate greater connection with patients. With a more diverse menu of care options, providers can fine-tune their approach to address specific patient needs and preferences.

3. Scaling delivery.

DBH enables providers to perform screening and triage on a larger scale through digital interfaces, with centralized care teams overseeing follow-up using remote monitoring tools. Workflow modifications needed to support the virtual care experience should also ensure more efficient and patient-friendly approaches to support in-person care.

4. Fine-tuning the experience.

With a greater diversity of care options, health systems can offer a more fine-tuned and targeted approach to behavioral healthcare. Implementing this capability effectively, however, requires deeper consideration of which tools are most effective for different types of patients, what communication is required to support different approaches to care, what skill mix and collaboration is required for clinical teams, and how scheduling templates should be changed to ensure that the right types of patients see the right providers for the appropriate amount of time.

Will behavioral health become the first truly “digitally forward” service line?

With a technology platform and clinical workforce that embraces the unique advantages of digital service, provider organizations have the opportunity to dramatically improve quality of life for patients with behavioral health conditions. But the potential impact of digitizing behavioral healthcare is more profound.

A digitally forward approach that leverages virtual tools throughout the patient journey helps lay the groundwork for rapidly expanding the scope, scale, and efficiency of services across multiple conditions and service lines. For health systems looking to build upon recent gains in virtual care capabilities, DBH has become a catalyst and bellwether for digital transformation.

Read the Full Report

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Source

1 Stephen P. Melek, Douglas T. Norris, Jordan Paulus, Katherine Matthews, Alexandra Weaver, Stoddard Davenport, "Potential economic impact of integrated medical-behavioral healthcare," Milliman Research Report, (2018): <https://www.milliman.com/-/media/milliman/importedfiles/uploadedfiles/insight/2018/potential-economic-impact-integrated-healthcare.ashx>

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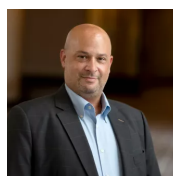
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