Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation: Behavioral Health Research Agenda Overview

Kaitlyn Kenney Walsh, PhD
Senior Director for Policy and Research
Overview

• Background on BCBSMA Foundation
  – Mission
  – Focus areas
• Policy & Research focus on behavioral health
• Questions
Our mission is to expand access to health care for low-income and vulnerable people in the Commonwealth.

- Fund community programs
- Help launch/expand innovative models
- Build/strengthen community capacity
- Facilitate public-private partnerships

Policy & Research Agenda

- Conduct policy research and analyses
- Provide independent, objective data
- Elevate and inform public discourse
- Convene stakeholders and build consensus
BCBSMA Foundation – Focus areas

- Coverage & Care
- Expand access to health care for low-income and vulnerable populations
- Behavioral health
- Social equity & health

Dedicated to impartial & informative policy analysis
Committed to diversity & inclusion
Engaged through collaborations & convenings
Involved through strategic grant making and knowledge sharing
Behavioral Health: Integration

- Documents licensing, privacy, and reimbursement barriers to integration
- Leverage learning from grantees to inform policy priorities

- Reviews privacy laws relevant to the exchange of information among physical and behavioral health providers
- Identifies opportunities to improve integration without compromising confidentiality

- Describes care integration practices at three centers in Central Massachusetts
- Identifies practices that facilitate provision of integrated care
- Documents persistent challenges remaining
Behavioral Health: Access

- Identifies the need, demand, and capacity of addiction and recovery services in Boston
- Includes recommendations to enhance and improve the current system of care
- Roadmap for newly created Office of Recovery Services

- Foundational resource for future work on state’s behavioral health system
- Includes focus on: historical policy initiatives, prevalence data, workforce and system capacity, affordability, and quality
Releasing soon....

- Comprehensive mixed-methods study analyzing access to outpatient mental health services in Massachusetts
  - Focus groups
  - Stakeholder interviews
  - Provider survey
  - Organization administrator survey
Behavioral Health: What’s in development

• 2018 Massachusetts Health Reform Survey (MHRS)
  – Survey of non-elderly adults in Massachusetts
  – Developing and prioritizing questions on mental health and substance use conditions
  – Challenges accessing mental health or substance use disorder services

• Designing a comprehensive, high-quality, integrated, and accessible behavioral health system in Massachusetts
  – Model components
  – Mechanisms for ensuring coordination across components of care
  – Roles and responsibilities for public and private entities
Questions?

Thank you!

Kaitlyn Kenney Walsh
Sr. Director, Policy & Research
Kaitlyn.KenneyWalsh@bcbsma.com