COVID-19’s Impact on Behavioral Health Offerings

Brad Lerner, Health Policy Director, Anthem
October 19, 2020
The emotional toll of COVID-19

96% of all U.S. adults say the pandemic has impacted their overall stress

55% of Americans say they have felt lonelier since social distancing began

53% of all U.S. adults say the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health

300% increase in rate of depression

America’s State Of Mind: U.S. Trends In Medication Use For Depression, Anxiety & Insomnia

Ipsos “As COVID-19 quarantine continues, desire for virtual community grows but loneliness persists”

JAMA Network Open, September 2020
Impact of working from home

71% currently working from home

17% identify as regularly remote working employees

78% are new to working from home or are doing so temporarily

33% have dedicated office space with most repurposing some shared space like dining rooms, spare rooms or even laundry rooms

Top 3 challenges of working remotely

- Social Isolation or loneliness
- Lack of movement
- Hard to separate work from personal life

Stress is having an impact on productivity

2019
Employees missed at least
ONE DAY PER YEAR
due to stress

2020
Employees are missing at least
ONE HOUR PER DAY
due to stress

Americans are more likely than people in other countries to report mental health concerns as a result of COVID-19

Source: Reginald D. Williams II et al., *Do Americans Face Greater Mental Health and Economic Consequences from COVID-19? Comparing the U.S. with Other High-income Countries* (Commonwealth Fund, August 2020).
How can the workplace make an impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Sentiment</th>
<th>Employee Goals</th>
<th>Employer Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82% have felt anxiety or fear</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>• Open/frequent communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Empathic response</td>
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<td>77% have felt uncertainty or lack of control</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>• Reset work expectations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Empower employees to take ownership</td>
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<td>75% have felt loneliness or isolation</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>• Adjust communication patterns</td>
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<td>• Foster social engagement</td>
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Source: Deloitte Study of Healthcare Consumer Response to COVID-19 (April/May 2020)
Chapter 01

What we have seen
Key data points

- 110X times higher use of telehealth; overall outpatient use has remained relatively flat

- Telehealth leading diagnoses are stress/anxiety and depressive disorder

- Average length of stay (ALOS) for mental health and substance use inpatient stays have increased across all lines of business (up 29% for commercial line of business)

- 10% increase in unique utilizers with a suicidality diagnosis

- Individuals reporting SDOH needs (food, transportation, unemployment, etc.)
Chapter 02

How the industry responded
Impact on BH delivery system

Telehealth adoption:

- Rapid shift to telehealth – for a historically slow moving industry
  - Beacon trained 4700 providers over 18 trainings
  - 74% of providers reported providing services mostly or exclusively via telehealth
- Treatment done almost exclusively face-to-face required the most evolution (IOP, PHP, SAP/DOT)
- Many plan administrators had to make changes to grant permission for this modality
- Many telehealth restrictions were lifted:
  - Site restrictions were removed
  - “Established relationship” waived
  - State licensure flexibility

Additional adjustments:

- Pivoted call center activity from resource connection to “in-the-moment support”
- Repositioned many roles and responsibilities to adapt to the need (CM began proactive outreach to the most at risk)
- Communication of useful information and access to helpful tools was imperative
Integrated, Multi-Channel Campaigns

Social Media

Newsletters

Panel Discussion

Client FAQs

Tip Sheets

Web content

Blogs

Webinars & Podcasts

Leader Videos

Anthem

Living in Uncertain Times

The Intersection of Uncertainty and Parenting: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
Tools and Resources
Chapter 03

What to expect
Key External Projections

1. McKinsey
   - BH need prevalence could experience a 50% increase after the COVID-19 pandemic; 35 million additional people may experience BH conditions
   - 1 in 3 individuals in US could have BH need in 2021
   - Frontline health workers & newly unemployed are projected to have heightened need.

2. WellBeing Trust
   - Across nine different scenarios, the additional deaths of despair range from 27,644 (quick recovery, smallest impact of unemployment on deaths of despair) to 154,037 (slow recovery, greatest impact of unemployment on deaths of despair)

3. The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute
   - Reduced per capita GDP & associated rises in unemployment will be directly associated with increases in BH issues
     - Each percentage point increase in unemployment results in 1.6% increase in the suicide rate.
     - Each percentage point increase in unemployment associated with an increase of 0.334 overdose deaths per 100,000 people.
     - Each five percent increase in employment is associated with an additional 20,000 American veterans suffering from SUD.
Behavioral Health demands will increase overall

- Telehealth use will continue
  - Policymakers will work to relax regulations permanently
  - 98% of Beacon OP providers report plans to continue telehealth post-COVID.

- Greater recognition and normalization for seeking help
  - Pent up demand will strain the system
  - Projected 2-5% increase in BH use in 2020 despite COVID dip

- Substance use disorder diagnoses will increase
  - 13% of adults had increased alcohol consumption or drug use*

- Key events will drive further emotional health needs
  - Social unrest, national election and future spikes in cases

- Suicide rates will increase*
  - “seriously considered suicide in the past 30 days?”
    - 11% of all adults
    - 25% of adults ages 18-34

*CDC, June 2020
Chapter

What to consider
Percentage of employers who say benefit has increased in importance due to COVID-19

- 75% Telehealth benefits
- 60% Mental health benefits
- 58% Employee Assistance Programs
- 53% Paid Family Medical Leave

“Impact of COVID 19 on Employer Approaches to Workplace Benefits”, LIMRA
How employers can adjust

Increase emotional wellbeing support in both traditional and nontraditional ways

- Expand coverage to allow telehealth for most levels of care
- Expand EAP coverage to offer a richer benefit or to cover more members
- Add tools and resources designed to promote self help (cCBT, peers support websites, resiliency tools)
- Remove copays or coinsurance for routine outpatient therapy and/or for anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications
- Add behavioral health resources to onsite/near site clinic strategies
- Create Peer Support training for frontline managers, business agents and benefits teams
  - Training on active listening, supportive conversations and effective connections to services
  - Resiliency campaigns with senior leadership as champions
Thank you.

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