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# Mental Health in the Primary Care Setting

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# History

- Capital Health is a tertiary care hospital based in Trenton, NJ that has provided 24 hour/day, 365 day/year mental health care to the community.
- Capital Health has, through the screening center, provided evaluation, initiated treatment, and because of the limited referral options, continued to provide care beyond our own resources.



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# History cont'd

- Overcrowding of emergency departments with non-emergent behavioral health needs
- Shift of treatment to primary care providers who lack familiarity and comfort with the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness



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# How do we help these clinicians and their patients?

- Go to them.
- Provide on-site education and clinical consultation.
- Create an ongoing educational program.
- Rather than become their psychiatrist, help primary care physicians become more familiar with these issues.



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# Solution

- A grant to Capital Health in partnership with the Henry J. Austin Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Care Center, provided by Bristol - Myers Squibb.
- A psychiatrist on-site providing clinical consultations 10 hours/week with the goal of transitioning care back to the primary care physician.
- Lecture series with evaluation of material learned



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# Solution cont'd

- Lectures are typically attended by 20-25 of the clinical staff (internal medicine, family medicine, OB/GYN, pediatricians, social workers)
- Also in attendance are the UMDNJ – Robert Wood Johnson family medicine residents – we hope that incorporating this into their training will better prepare them for recognizing and treating mental health issues early in their careers.



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# Future considerations – Postpartum depression

- Patients currently screened in the OB-GYN dept using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
- Priority access to community mental health centers
- Not instituted yet, but may place a psychiatrist directly in the OB-GYN clinic to provide onsite consultation



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# Other resources

- Screening center
- Mobile outreach available 24 hour/day, 7 days/week in the community as well as responding to needs at the Henry J. Austin Center.



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# Current limitations

- To be able to access these services, patients must have a medical issue first and become a patient of the Center.
- Others continue to face wait times of 4-8 weeks to see a psychiatrist.



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