

How the US is Treating Mental Health in 2024

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As we enter 2024, numerous medical advances towards behavioral health are being introduced in the United States. With a large percentage of the country having limited access to mental health treatment, these changes are meant to provide wider access to treatment and improved overall care.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) provides health coverage through Medicare, Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Programs, and the Health Insurance Marketplace. CMS has announced several initiatives for 2024 as part of their Behavioral Health Strategy, which focuses on "1) substance use disorders prevention, treatment and recovery services, 2) ensuring effective pain treatment and management, and 3) improving mental health care and services."

One of these initiatives is the Making Care Primary Model (MCP), designed to provide patients with primary care that is "integrated, coordinated, person-centered and accountable", support independent organizations, and upgrade the quality of care while reducing costs. CMS hopes that by improving care, unnecessary costs such as additional hospitalization will be reduced and money will be saved. Beginning July 1, 2024, MCP will run for 10.5 years, ending December 31, 2034. MCP is meant to raise the quality of the care that teams provide by preparing them to recognize and treat health issues, which minimizes emergency visits and stays and therefore lowers overall costs of care.

Another initiative starting in 2024 allows marriage and family therapists and mental health counselors to treat Medicare patients with services such as alcohol and drug counseling, psychotherapy, and group therapy. This will allow a dramatic increase in therapists and counselors that will be able to treat patients, providing more access to proper treatment for mental health disorders.

These programs are all set to begin in 2024, and will hopefully fulfill their goals of providing more efficient and better quality care to patients. This will result in improved patient outcomes and access for rural patients to receive the care they need.

References:

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