Behavioral Health Navigation Program

Impact report for Carl's Cause

In late 2020, the country's mental health status was at a breaking point due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the pandemic had a significant impact on the mental health of 1 out of 5 American adults. During this same time, NAMI reports more than 12 million adults across the country had serious thoughts of suicide.

The pandemic was leading to an additional mental health crisis on top of the nearly 20% of American adults who already lived with mental illness each year. Times were stressful for everyone and getting access to critical behavioral healthcare was crucial.

The Behavioral Health Navigation program at The University of Kansas Health System couldn't have launched at a better time. The health system is grateful for the ongoing partnership with Carl's Cause. Because of your family's heart, passion and generosity, lives are being saved.

Behavioral health navigation

The health system's behavioral health navigation program, created by Carl's Cause, sought to answer the question "how else can we support those who are struggling with mental health?" The transformational program for those who are living and struggling with mental illness has 2 goals:
- Connect new patients to the mental health services they need.
- Help existing patients stay connected to these resources.

Behavioral health navigation is built upon a simple idea: Prevent patients in vulnerable moments from falling through the cracks.

Program growth

Building on the success of the first 2 years of behavioral health navigation, these services are now an official program with the addition of 2 more full-time navigators. These new positions expanded the health system's ability to meet the needs of the patients receiving care at the Marillac Campus and in our ambulatory settings. The community investment in this program is a testament to the vision of Carl's Cause.

Patients navigated

Since the program's launch, the behavioral health navigators have worked with 256 patients across the state, including:
- 108 males
- 141 females
- 6 nonbinary
- 1 transgender

Through the ongoing work of behavioral health navigation, the health system is seeing:
- Lower levels of hospital readmission
  - Lower rates of suicide within the population being served
- Stronger support across the continuum of care

Learn more about the impact of Carl's Cause and its supporters.

Patients navigated by disease type

The patients being served by behavioral health navigation are managing complete and serious mental illness. The next highest diagnosis categories are:

•Depression (general and persistent depressive disorder)
•Co-existing conditions
• Other
•Suicidal ideation

The lives changed: Testimonials

Data show the lives impacted by Carl's Cause through the behavioral health navigation program, but that's only a small piece of the puzzle. The direct feedback from families whose loved ones were helped by behavioral health navigation at The University of Kansas Health System shows the true purpose behind the establishment of the program.

Note: Most names and identifying information have been changed for privacy purposes.

From patients

"I truly appreciate the [behavioral health navigation] program for several reasons. It gave me consistency by having someone to check in with who was trained to understand what I needed when I was struggling or needed help. It was also helpful because of the coordination with my psychiatrist. So, basically, everyone involved in my care had an overall 'idea' of what I had going on. [The behavioral health navigator] was also very easy to talk to, and very compassionate."

"My total experience with this [behavioral health navigation] program was the best help I couldn't find on my own. [The behavioral health navigator] was very helpful, from issues getting prescription refills to contacting [the doctors] when I had episodes and couldn't figure it out on my own. The only problem: It doesn't last long enough. Sometimes the help people need takes more than a year to accomplish. Another positive: I knew what we discussed was confidential, which helps, too. Thanks for the time I got with [the behavioral health navigator]; I just wish it was longer."

From parents

"Our experience with behavioral health navigation at The University of Kansas Health System has been life changing for our son. We were in serious crisis when we were introduced to [the behavioral health navigator], who responded immediately to our concerns and brought our son in for intake and evaluation of needs. She had an immediate impact on our son and the very difficult situation he was in. She continues to be a mentor and advisor to our son as he stabilizes his life and moves toward full independence. We are forever grateful for [the behavioral health navigator]'s willingness to bring our son into the behavioral health navigation program on such short notice and show such incredible kindness and care to our son."

"I echo everything said about [the behavioral health navigator] and The University of Kansas Health System's behavioral health navigation program. She has truly been a godsend to our family. She met with our son on short notice and helped him through a major time of crisis in his life. She has had an incredible impact, not only on our son's life, but also ours. She helped us navigate through some very difficult times. We will forever be grateful for the program. Thank you!"

Thank you

Thank you, Bob, Kelly, Megan, Tyler and Connor, and the dedicated supporters of Carl's Cause. Not only for supporting the behavioral health navigation program, but also for your commitment to removing the stigma surrounding mental illness and saving the lives of others while honoring Carl's memory. In 4 short years of partnership, the power of your family's advocacy, partnership and work to improve mental healthcare has made an immense difference in our community.

Read more testimonials from those impacted by the Behavioral Health Navigation program.