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Collaborative Primary Care: Preliminary Findings for Depression and Anxiety

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) was directed by the 2013 Legislature to prepare an inventory of evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices for prevention and intervention services for adult behavioral health.¹ This brief report presents our preliminary findings on collaborative primary care for depression and anxiety. Final results for collaborative care will be published in May 2014.

Program Description.

Collaborative care integrates mental health services into primary care. This approach involves collaboration between the care manager, the patient, the general practitioner, and usually a mental health specialist. After screening patients for depression and/or anxiety, the care manager provides, at a minimum, an initial assessment of patient health and subsequent follow-ups by phone and/or in person regarding patient treatment. In one form of the intervention, the care manager treats a comorbid medical condition in addition to depression or

anxiety. We examined three forms of the intervention including collaborative care for patients diagnosed with depression, depression and a comorbid medical condition, or anxiety.

Findings.

Our findings indicate that collaborative care can reduce mental health symptoms. Collaborative care is particularly effective for depressed patients who also suffer from a medical condition.

In addition to reviewing the research evidence, we examined the benefits and costs of collaborative care (see inset for our research approach). The benefit-cost analysis determined that the benefits of collaborative care exceed the costs.² The risk analysis shows that benefits from collaborative primary care exceed the costs 100% of the time. The detailed results are summarized on the following page.

Research Approach

WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps.

- ✓ First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to reduce mental & physical health symptoms, using a statistical technique called meta-analysis.
- ✓ Second, we calculate whether the benefits of collaborative primary care exceed its costs. This economic test demonstrates whether the monetary value of collaborative primary care benefits justifies its expenditures.
- ✓ Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a collaborative primary care by testing the sensitivity and uncertainty of our modeling assumptions. Risk analysis provides an indication of the likelihood that, when key estimates are varied, the benefits consistently exceed costs.

¹ Second Substitute Senate Bill 5732, Chapter 338, Laws of 2013.

² See Technical Appendix I, from WSIPP Report: Return on Investment: Evidence-Based Options to Improve Statewide Outcomes April 2012 Update, for an in-depth description of WSIPP's benefit-cost analysis.

Meta-Analysis Methods.

We conducted a systematic review of research studies to determine if, on average, collaborative primary care reduces depression, anxiety, and other health symptoms. We located 53 unique studies with sufficient research rigor to include in our review. Of these studies, 39 examined collaborative care for patients with depression, 11 examined collaborative care for patients with depression and a comorbid medical condition, and three examined collaborative care for patients with anxiety.

Intervention	Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes		usted effe m effects		Adjusted effect size and standard error used in cost-benefit analysis			
			ES	SE	p-value	ES	SE	p-value	
Collaborative Care for Anxiety	Anxiety	4	-0.459	0.123	0	-0.393	0.123	0	
Collaborative Care for Depression	Depression	48	-0.269	0.034	0	-0.224	0.034	0	
	Suicidal ideation	2	-0.229	0.104	0.027	-0.217	-0.229	0.104	
Collaborative Care for Depression w/Comorbid Medical Condition	Depression	11	-0.395	0.076	0	-0.352	0.076	0	
	Blood pressure	4	-0.369	0.182	0.043	-0.352	0.182	0.043	
	Blood sugar	3	-0.254	0.134	0.059	-0.213	0.134	0.059	

Benefit-Cost Analysis.

We collected collaborative care cost information from recent cost-effectiveness analyses. We adjusted these costs to fit the average form of collaborative care found in our meta-analysis of the literature. The sum of the estimated benefits, along with the costs, provides a statewide view on how collaborative care produces benefits that exceed costs. For more information on our benefit-cost methods, please reference WSIPP's Technical Manual.³

Topic area/program	<u>Last</u> updated	Monetary benefits			Costs	Summary statistics				
Benefits and costs are life-cycle present-values per participant, in 2012 dollars. Some programs achieve benefits that we cannot monetize.		Total benefits	Taxpayer	Non- taxpayer		Benefits minus costs (net present value)	Benefit to cost ratio	Odds of a positive net present value		
Collaborative Primary Care Interventions					•					
Collaborative Care for Depression	Sep. 2013	\$6,882	\$2,162	\$4,720	(\$789)	\$6,093	\$8.73	100%		
Collaborative Care for Depression with a Comorbid Medical Condition	Sep. 2013	\$5,999	\$1,945	\$4,054	(\$832)	\$5,167	\$7.21	100%		
WSIPP is currently reviewing benefit-cost results for collaborative care for anxiety										

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³ Washington State Institute for Public Policy, (2013). *Benefit-cost technical manual: methods and user guide*. (Doc. No. 13-09-1201b). Olympia, WA: Author.

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