

Depression and Primary Care

Two-thirds of people with mental illness do not receive treatment.¹

Depression

- second highest cause of disability and premature death worldwide by 2020²
- \$83.1 billion in direct and indirect costs³
- majority of people with depression turn to primary care providers for help

Screening improves the accurate identification of depressed patients in primary care settings:

- 1/100 patients screened will have clinical depression
- treatment with antidepressants, psychotherapy, or both decreases clinical morbidity
- programs combining depression screening and feedback with staff-assisted depression care supports improved clinical outcomes in adults and older adults

For initial screening, asking the following TWO simple questions about mood and anhedonia are effective in helping to determine whether a patient is depressed.⁴

- “Over the past two weeks, have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless?”
- “Over the past two weeks, have you felt little interest or pleasure in doing things?”

As a next step, the nine-question PHQ-9 depression scale is an easy tool for assisting primary care providers in diagnosing depression, as well as selecting and monitoring treatment.⁵

When you choose to refer a patient, you can call the Mental Health/Substance Abuse telephone number printed on the back of his or her health insurance ID card.

References

¹USPSTF recommendation statements and evidence reviews – www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org

²World Health Organization – www.who.int

³National Institutes of Health – www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21155203

⁴The MacArthur Initiative on depression & Primary Care - Depression Tool Kit (includes PHQ-9) – www.depression-primarycare.org/clinicians/toolkits/

⁵Magellan Behavioral Health, Inc. Clinical Practice Guidelines – https://www.magellanprovider.com/MHS/MGL/providing_care/clinical_guidelines/clin_prac_guidelines/index.asp

This information is provided by Independence Blue Cross and its affiliates (IBC) for IBC-participating primary care providers for informational purposes only. This is not a statement of benefits and should not be construed as medical advice. Benefits may vary based on state requirements, Benefits Programs (HMO, PPO, Indemnity, etc.), and/or employer groups. Providers should call Customer Service for the member's applicable benefits information. Members should be instructed to call the Customer Service telephone number on their ID card.

Magellan Behavioral Health, Inc., an independent company, manages mental health and substance abuse benefits for most IBC members.

For informational purposes only – 2013

Independence Blue Cross offers products directly, through its subsidiaries Keystone Health Plan East and QCC Insurance Company, and with Highmark Blue Shield – independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.