Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

# Integrating Behavioral Health Services Into Medical Hospital Care for Children

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Behavioral health issues are common in hospitalized children. One PolicyLab study found that although up to half of children hospitalized for a physical health condition have behavioral health needs or psychological distress during their stay, they may not regularly receive treatment to address their behavioral health concerns. Whether a hospitalized child is facing a behavioral health crisis, has a chronic condition like autism, or experiences symptoms of anxiety or depression during their stay, behavioral health issues can complicate hospital care. As a result, children with behavioral health issues experience longer hospital stays, higher costs, more complications and more rehospitalizations than their peers.

In this brief, we examine the challenges of and identify promising practices for integrating behavioral health care into hospital care to improve health outcomes for children while also finding opportunities to lower overall health care costs.

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