Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

COVID-19: A Catalyst for Integrating Youth Behavioral Health Care Across Settings

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The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the behavioral health of children and families, and has further highlighted a complex system of behavioral health services and a high level of unmet need. As we look ahead, can we use this crisis to move the needle on innovations in care delivery? How can we provide better access to care across settings, including primary care and schools? What are the barriers and facilitators for integrated behavioral health care? And how can we address disparities and payment limitations in this space?

On August 13, PolicyLab hosted a virtual conversation titled, “COVID-19: A Catalyst for Integrating Youth Behavioral Health Care Across Settings,” with health care providers, national leaders in behavioral health, and policy and payer experts who shared their perspectives on these issues and more. The discussion was informed by PolicyLab’s comprehensive policy review to address system needs for child behavioral health in the context of COVID-19.

The top question raised during this critical discussion focused on how parents and teachers can support children amid the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. To follow up, our experts compiled the following resources, which offer thoughtful techniques for helping children cope with the changes brought on by COVID-19:

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Supporting Children During Coronavirus
- Yale Child Study Center: First Aid for Feelings: A Workbook to Help Kids Cope During the Coronavirus Pandemic
- National Association of School Psychologists: Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting From COVID-19
- California Surgeon General’s Playbook: Stress Relief for Caregivers and Kids during COVID-19
- The University of Miami, and 7-Dippity, Inc.: Helping Children and Families Cope with the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Cincinnati Children’s: COVID Anxiety Smartphone App

Another important question raised focused on prevention and early intervention and the utility and feasibility of school-based screening methods to support the mental health of students. For a more complete picture of this topic, we gathered several studies that discuss screening in schools, including the barriers and facilitators to this work:

- Feasibility of School-Based Identification of Children and Adolescents Experiencing, or At-risk of Developing, Mental Health Difficulties: a Systematic Review
- Modeling the Impact of School-based Universal Depression Screening on Additional Service Capacity Needs: A System Dynamics Approach

Panelists included:

- Lee A. Savio Beers, MD, FAAP, president-elect of the American Academy of Pediatrics, professor of pediatrics and medical director for Community Health and Advocacy at Children's National Hospital
- Tami Benton, MD, Frederick Allen Professor of Psychiatry at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, psychiatrist-in-chief and chair of psychiatry at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), executive director of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (DCAPBS), and chief of the Division of Child Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania
- Benjamin F. Miller, PsyD, chief strategy officer for Well Being Trust
- Tamra Williams, PhD, clinical psychologist and deputy chief clinical officer for children's services at Community Behavioral Health (CBH), a division of the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
- Jami Young, PhD, clinical psychologist, faculty lead for PolicyLab's Behavioral Health Portfolio and director of psychosocial research in CHOP's DCAPBS and Shawna Dandridge, LCSW, policy and strategy manager at PolicyLab, and co-lead for PolicyLab's Behavioral Health Portfolio (*moderators*)

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Related Content

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