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Integration of Behavioral and Mental Health Care into Primary Care Clinics: A Program Evaluation

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Fragmentation of physical, mental, and chemical dependency care delivery systems has led to significant gaps in care for individuals with severe mental illness and substance use disorders. A shifting international focus to chronic illness and the default provision of mental health care demands new approaches. In the US, the rise in numbers of those identified with mental health conditions has risen, while the resources to care for those patient have declined, creating a gap in service to a vulnerable population. This DNP project is a program evaluation of an integrated behavioral health and mental health program provided by a Patient Centered Medical Home Primary Care Clinic. This DNP Project's purpose was to evaluate the impact of the implementation of integrated behavioral and mental health services within a primary care clinic on patient's adherence to the treatment plan, staff and patient experiences and cost of care for patients with severe mental illness. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected 12 months prior to and after the program change which included the addition of a licensed mental health expert and workflow adjustments. Upon completion of data collection and analysis, results showed that the integration of mental health into primary care has had a positive impact on patient adherence to treatment, patient satisfaction and staff satisfaction.

Biography:

Dr. Paulette Sides Sasser has completed her Doctorate in Nursing Practice from Duquesne University with a focus on the integration of mental health into primary care systems. During her 25 years in the fields of mental health and primary care she has worked as a graduate school faculty, and manager of community, emergency, and forensic mental health programs. She acted as a clinical expert for the National Medicare Reimbursement Pilot for the United States. She has also presented topics in ambulatory nursing, reimbursement, primary care, and mental health at national and international conferences.