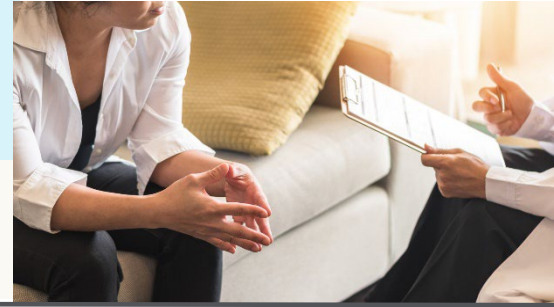




Antidepressant Medication Screening and Management

We appreciate you taking an active role in screening your patients for depression.



The American Psychiatric Association recommends patients complete the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) screening tool.

For Patients Diagnosed with Major Depression and Prescribed Medication:

- Encourage psychotherapy. Medication in combination with psychotherapy can be more effective than either alone.
- Provide education on how medication works. Ensure patients understand it may take several months for antidepressant medication to be effective.
- Emphasize the importance of continuing medication for at least six months even if they begin to feel better or experience side effects.
- Consider a referral to a psychiatrist for patients with complex conditions.

Sources: [Depression | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#); APA Clinical Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Depression Across Three Age Cohorts (February 2019)

How You Can Help

Use a screening tool, such as the PHQ-9, to aid in identifying the severity of depressive symptoms, especially before prescribing medication.

The PHQ-9 instruction manual recommends considering medication only for those patients who score in the moderate to severe range (scores above 15).

A PHQ-9 Scoring Guide is available through providerexpress.com > [PHQ-9 Scoring Guide](#).

Resources

- More tools and information about behavioral health issues are available on providerexpress.com > Clinical Resources > [Clinical and Quality Measures Toolkit for Behavioral Providers](#).
- Patient education information is available on liveandworkwell.com > use access code "clinician."

Virtual visits are an effective way to provide care. Visit our provider website at the following link for more information.

[Become a Virtual Visit Telemental Health Provider](#)

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Important Information about Coordinating Care

Optum requires contracted behavioral health practitioners and providers to communicate relevant treatment information and coordinate treatment with other behavioral health practitioners and providers, primary care physicians (PCPs), and other appropriate medical practitioners involved in a member's care.

WHY?

Coordination of care among behavioral health and medical practitioners benefits your practice because it:

- Establishes collaborative, credible relationships
- Provides opportunities for referrals

Coordination of care improves patients' quality of care by:

- Avoiding potential adverse medication interactions
- Providing better management of treatment and follow-up for patients

WHEN?

Coordination of care may be most effective:

- After the initial assessment
- At the start or change of medication
- Upon discharge
- Upon transfer to another provider or level of care
- When significant changes occur, such as (diagnosis, symptoms, compliance with treatment)

RESOURCES FOR COORDINATING CARE

Our practitioner website, providerexpress.com, includes tools and resources to support you in coordinating care. Select the "Clinical Resources" tab at the top of the main page, then select "Coordination of Care."

Use the Optum "[Confidential Exchange of Information Form](#)" to communicate relevant treatment information with other treating practitioners. This template may be signed by the patient to show their consent and then completed by you.

Use the "[Coordination of Care Checklist](#)" to document your efforts to coordinate care with patients' other practitioners, including when patients decline.

GUIDELINES TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

When scheduling appointments for new patients, request that they bring names and contact information (address, phone number, etc.) for their other treating practitioners.

Within a week of your initial assessment and annually thereafter provide other treating practitioners with the following information:

- A brief summary of the patient's assessment and treatment plan recommendations
- Diagnoses (medical and behavioral)
- Medications prescribed (brand or generic name, strength and dosage)
- Your contact information (name, telephone, fax number, and the best time you may be reached by phone, if needed)

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