

Network Notes

United Behavioral Health-Minnesota Care Advocacy Center News for Medica Clinicians

Fall 2006

UBH, New Beginnings Create Pretreatment Program for Methamphetamine Addiction

United Behavioral Health (UBH) partnered with New Beginnings to create a pretreatment program in support of people struggling with methamphetamine addiction. Dubbed "the Clearinghouse," the program provides a low intensity environment targeting initial recovery from Methamphetamine Dependence. Interventions are geared toward enhancing mental and physical recovery. The program focuses on improving nutritional status, normalizing sleep patterns, and engaging clients in tasks that promote cognitive functioning. This is in preparation for participation in a chemical dependency treatment program.

People entering treatment for methamphetamine addiction often experience brain dysfunction due to a depletion of neurotransmitters from the central nervous system.

Amphetamines are central nervous system stimulants that increase the release of the brain's stimulatory neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters become depleted over time. When people stop using amphetamines they don't have enough of these natural stimulatory neurotransmitters left in their brains to function normally. Subsequently, they experience hunger, exhaustion, and depression.

The Clearinghouse interventions include mental, social, spiritual, behavioral, and physical exercises. The weekly schedule is highly structured with regular meal times, goal setting groups, lectures, gym time, thinking exercises, journaling, and television news viewing. Meals are designed with the nutritional goal of aiding physical and cognitive recovery. The thinking exercises include board and computer games. One example of

a thinking exercise involves using fictional scenarios of people who have destroyed their lives with methamphetamine. Clients are then asked to explore ways in which the fictional people can begin to make positive changes in their lives.

After participation in The Clearinghouse, individuals can begin chemical dependency treatment with improved mental capacity and physical health. Treatment can progress more quickly, and have more impact than if the individual had started treatment without participating in The Clearinghouse. The program houses up to five adult male clients. Currently they are only contracted with Medica/UBH Minnesota, though counties and other health plans are expressing interest in the program.

Medica Member Claim Submission Reminder

For the fastest processing of claims for Medica members, please submit them electronically at www.ubhonline.com, using Payer ID 87726.

Hard copy claims should be submitted to:

UBH
PO Box 30757
Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0757

Health Advantage by Medica™: Working with Our Network to Support Medica Members

Health Advantage by Medica™, now in its third year of implementation, can reflect on achievements made by this depression disease management program. What follows is an illustration of one such member's experience. His spouse called at a time when he was in crisis. The member's depression had increased over the past few months to the point that there was concern that he would take his life. After talking with a Health Advocate by telephone, the member agreed to go to a crisis appointment that day.

A follow-up call was placed to both the member and the crisis therapist, who encouraged the member to enroll in the program. During the enrollment call it was discovered that the crisis

was influenced by the member's lack of understanding about his depression and the need for ongoing treatment. This had resulted in the member discontinuing his medications and experiencing an increase in symptoms.

The Health Advocate provided education to the member about depression, and supported the member in coordinating care with the therapist to explore treatment options. Coaching was provided to increase medication and treatment compliance, and to offer the member self-management strategies for coping with stress.

At program closure, the member was taking his medication as prescribed, and experienced a significant reduction

in depressive symptoms and was able to balance the demands of his work and home life. He also had a new job, which was going so well that he was hopeful about the possibility of advancement.

This is just one success story of many exemplifying the interventions of Health Advantage by Medica: timely crisis intervention, education, and coordination of care. As in the above situation, members can profit from guidance in utilizing their full benefits to take control in managing their depression. For more information about Health Advantage by Medica, please call [1-866-658-4662](tel:1-866-658-4662) or [TTY 1-800-543-7162](tel:1-800-543-7162).