

## 12. Integrated Behavioral Health Services

*This is Laurel Mildred from the California Collaborative for Long-Term Services and Supports, and joining me today is Dr. Xxxxx Xxxxxx, Clinical Director of Behavioral Health for Inland Empire Health Plan. Peter is here to describe integrated behavioral health services and how they contribute to a high-performing system of long-term services and supports.*

**Peter: Thank you, Laurel.**

**[ABSTRACT: Integrated Behavioral Health Services address mental health and addiction treatment essential to reducing systemic costs and improving health outcomes for populations with multiple chronic conditions.]**

Behavioral health services include both mental health and addiction treatment. Up until now behavioral health has largely been separate, disconnected and uncoordinated from the rest of the health system. These services are also underfunded – of an estimated [13 million](#) American adults who have a serious mental illness in any given year, only about 29% [receive any treatment](#) at all and of those, about 15% receive [minimally adequate care](#).

Untreated behavioral health issues result in poor outcomes for people as well as higher costs. People with serious mental illness in the United States have a life expectancy that is 25 years less than other Americans, and in some places that number is even higher – we have found in Riverside County that life expectancy of people with serious mental illness is 36 years less than the average. Untreated behavioral health problems and uncoordinated care are also expensive: [Medicare for example spends five times more](#) on beneficiaries age 65 and older who have both a severe mental illness and substance use disorder than it does on similar beneficiaries without those diagnoses. Full access to integrated behavioral health services is essential to better serve the needs of the person as well as to bend the cost curve and save money.

Right now, behavioral health is rapidly evolving. The Affordable Care Act, parity between behavioral health and physical health services, and integrated models like California's Cal Medi-Connect dual demonstration project are all making significant improvements in behavioral health services. These changes are bringing about expanded access, integrated approaches and better quality and outcomes for people who need treatment in California, in some cases providing access to services for the first time.

There are a number of strategies for integrating behavioral health into health systems. Bringing behavioral health in-house rather than delegating it to a separate entity, leveraging web-based technologies to improve coordination of care and building an open network of mental health and addiction treatment providers who can deliver timely access and expanded treatment options are some of those strategies. It's also important to demonstrate the value of the services by measuring outcomes and results.

At Inland Empire Health Plan, we actually removed all gatekeeping from behavioral health services, so that any member who needed them could get access. In the first year, we doubled utilization of our outpatient services and this expanded access cut our expensive inpatient costs in half, so the expansion paid for itself by offsetting medical costs. We infused behavioral health expertise into our entire health plan, significantly improved coordination of physical and behavioral health care, and met 100% of the National Committee for Quality Assurance requirements for behavioral health in 2012. Fully integrating care allowed us to provide better services to many more people without additional costs. Integration of behavioral health with physical health can be achieved and is essential to building a person-centered system of long-term services and supports.

*Laurel: Thanks for sharing this information, Peter.*

*If you'd like to learn more about other issues that impact long-term services and supports, if you'd like to hear more podcasts of this nature, or if you have any comments or questions, please visit [www.ccltss.org](http://www.ccltss.org) or call XXX-XXX-XXXX.*