While many Americans struggle to access mental healthcare, Atrium Health has pioneered a new approach to close our region’s gaps in behavioral health services. We proactively screen for behavioral health issues in more than 50 primary care practices and use telemedicine to guide patients who need help through appropriate follow-up care — either while they’re in our office or shortly after. Our comprehensive screening process takes social and emotional factors into account, regardless of whether the patient has ever been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. This system helps us better assess the entirety of each patient’s health and better coordinate treatment with primary care physicians. Our integration of virtual behavioral health into primary care settings has expanded needed services to more people, helped to diagnose mental disorders sooner, reduced the stigma associated with asking for mental health support, and lowered the overall cost of care.

“Adding real-time behavioral health support and psychiatric consultation to primary care through a seamless virtual network

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“This is a life-or-death issue. Today, the life expectancy of a patient with severe mental illness is 25 years shorter on average. As the U.S. suicide rate keeps climbing and we see a growing list of chronic diseases associated with mental illness, it’s time to change the face of primary care in America into ‘whole person’ care.”

Martha Whitecotton
Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health Services

How Behavioral Health Integration (BHI) Works

**PATIENT VISIT**

Patient visits Atrium Health
For an annual physical, check-up, or other primary care visit

Comprehensive screening
– Takes place before seeing primary care doctor
– Includes questions about mental and behavioral health

If patient or provider identifies a behavioral health issue that needs to be addressed...

**CONSULTATION WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST VIA**

Video connection in the exam room — or — Follow-up phone call

Specialists include: psychiatrists, pharmacists, psychotherapists, licensed clinical social workers, and health coaches

**FOLLOW-UP CARE**

Treatment recommendations
Can include medication, therapy, and social resources given to primary care provider, who determines the next step

Primary care providers automatically receive updates on patient’s mental health and updated treatment recommendations

Enrollment in virtual Behavioral Health outreach program
Regular calls with specialists help patients manage ongoing issues related to depression, anxiety, or substance use
The ability to provide behavioral health services while a patient is sitting in your office, while they’ve have had the courage to open up about their mental state, is a golden opportunity. It’s our mission to keep that door open — removing the barriers of cost, distance, and stigma. We make it as simple as possible for patients to address their mental health, whether that’s by phone, or the click of a button.”

“Manuel Castro, MD
Medical Director of Behavioral Health Integration

Let’s Work Together
As one of the country’s leaders in behavioral health, our team of experts offers guidance to other health systems looking to expand their behavioral health offerings. Whether you’re just starting to develop a behavioral health program or you want to improve your current services, we help health professionals reach the best solution — while avoiding common mistakes along the way. To learn more, contact Brandt Bettilyon at Brandt.Bettilyon@AtriumHealth.org.

About Atrium Health
Atrium Health, previously Carolinas HealthCare System, one of the nation’s leading and most innovative healthcare organizations, provides a full spectrum of healthcare and wellness programs throughout the Southeast region. Its diverse network of care locations includes academic medical centers, hospitals, freestanding emergency departments, physician practices, surgical and rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, nursing homes and behavioral health centers, as well as hospice and palliative care services. Atrium Health works to enhance the overall health and well-being of its communities through high-quality patient care, education and research programs, and numerous collaborative partnerships and initiatives. For more information, visit AtriumHealth.org.

Innovation by the Numbers

**THE PROBLEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 in 4</th>
<th>45,000</th>
<th>60%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American adults suffer from mental illness¹</td>
<td>Americans commit suicide annually due to underdiagnosis, undertreatment and lack of access to services¹</td>
<td>Of U.S. counties do not have a licensed psychiatrist²</td>
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**OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLUTION**

Since 2014, Atrium Health’s BHI program has reached:

- 40,000+ patients
- 50+ of 200 physician practices

In 2018, patients who completed our BHI program reported significant mental health improvements:

- 88% reported a cessation of suicidal thoughts
- 60% showed reduced depression scores
- 66% showed reduced anxiety scores

**What’s Next**

Atrium Health’s Behavioral Health Integration program is expanding quickly across our system and has proven effective within primary care, pediatrics, and specialty care practices. Over the next 10 years we plan to bring behavioral health services into more of our primary care practices. Meanwhile, we encourage all our primary care providers to actively discuss behavioral health with their patients, through an organizational culture that emphasizes “whole person” care.

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¹ Source: National Institute of Mental Health Disorders
² Source: The American Medical Association, New American Economy