



Minute Update

HOW YOUR MONEY IS SPENT

Guess which medical condition costs those paying the American healthcare bills (*you and me!*) the most. Heart disease? Cancer? Trauma? Nope. ...Mental Health! An article in last month's Health Affairs presents most recent US data. Some highlights from this and other sources:

- \$201 billion in *healthcare* spending on mental health in 2013 – *too much of it very late*.
- That's nearly 40% more than heart disease and trauma, and 65% more than cancer.
- Non-healthcare costs (lost productivity, disability) add perhaps another \$300 billion.
- Huge costs of untreated mental health disorders manifesting as somatic complaints, including estimates that more than 20% of all primary care office visits are related to anxiety disorders.
- Only 1 in 5 (10 million out of 50 million) who might benefit from care, actually seek it.
- The number of practicing psychiatrists decreased by 10.2% over the preceding decade.
- Mental health resources, including other professionals and facilities, continue to decline.
- We have no reason to believe we're any different locally. In fact, we know we're *not*.

So what do we need to do in Monterey County:

- Acknowledge how underdiagnosed and undertreated our population is.
- Understand the enormous cost of this to our community, including the "hidden" costs.
- As we transform our regional healthcare system to a value-based approach, recognize the very real positive ROI of expending resources to diagnose and treat mental health disorders early.
- Integrate mental health evaluation and treatment into routine primary (and specialty) care, vigorously addressing the extraordinarily prevalent problems of depression and anxiety.
- Engage those outside of traditional healthcare, including government and community organizations.

The MBIPA Clinical Management Committee is developing local Community Consensus Statements on:

- The evaluation and treatment of depression.
- The evaluation and treatment of anxiety disorders.
- We will include a recommendation that primary care physicians (and perhaps others) adopt the practice that will be initiated in the community's largest primary care group – ask *every* patient *annually* the two very simple questions in the PHQ 2. (*more on that in a future Update*).

We very much welcome your input now as these statements are developing. Please email or call me.

--- Jim
28 July 2016