

# Follow-Up After ED Visit for Mental Illness

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many persons are affected by a serious mental illness (SMI). According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health<sup>1</sup>, in 2019, approximately 51.5 million adults aged 18 or older had any mental illness (AMI). Of these, an estimated 13.1 million adults had SMI, which corresponds to 5.2% of adults. All ages are affected by mental illness. According to the 2017 – 2018 National Survey on Children’s Health<sup>2</sup>, 21.9% of children and adolescents aged 3 – 17 years had a mental, emotional, developmental or behavioral problem.

ED utilization is high among patients suffering from mental illness. In 2007, approximately 12 million ED visits were related to mental health of substance abuse - 1 out of 8 (12.5%) of all ED visits.<sup>3</sup> Follow-up interventions are imperative to prevent future ED visits for this vulnerable population. With a shortage of Behavioral Health Care specialists, the role of the Primary Care Physician is more important than ever in the continuity of care for these patients.

<sup>1</sup>SAMHSA.2019. “Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health” @ <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt29393/2019NSDUHFFRPDFWHTML/2019NSDUHFFR1PDFW090120.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2017-2018 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by Cooperative Agreement U59MC27866 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB). Retrieved [03/03/20] from [www.childhealthdata.org](http://www.childhealthdata.org). CAHMI: [www.cahmi.org](http://www.cahmi.org)

<sup>3</sup>Owens P.L., Mutter R., Stocks C. *Mental Health and Substance Abuse-Related Emergency Department Visits among Adults, 2007*. HCUP Statistical Brief #92. July 2010. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb92.pdf>

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Identify patients who had an ED visit for a Mental health diagnosis or self-harm
- Assist in scheduling follow-up appointments with the patient as soon as possible after the ED visit - one within 7 days and one within 30 days after the ED visit
- Develop outreach systems or assign case managers to encourage patients with recent ED visits for a mental illness to keep follow-up appointments or reschedule missed appointments
- Educate these patients on the importance of follow-up appointments to reduce future ED visits
- Facilitate referrals to behavioral health care specialists when appropriate
- Encourage your patients to utilize clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurse specialists, and marriage and family therapists
- Encourage a telephone visit, e-visit, or virtual check-in when appropriate

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) @ [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjQn-nRyvDqAhU6g3IEHRB3CNcQFjADegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org%2FHome%2FGetFileByID%2F218&usg=AOvVaw2yZ9TqORR-INR\\_A1Fdw8-M](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjQn-nRyvDqAhU6g3IEHRB3CNcQFjADegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org%2FHome%2FGetFileByID%2F218&usg=AOvVaw2yZ9TqORR-INR_A1Fdw8-M)

Primary Care PTSD Screen (PC-PTSD) @ <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/pc-ptsd5-screen.pdf>

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (8255)**