



Sun River Health

Integrating Behavioral Health & Primary Care

Overview

Hudson River Health Care (Sun River Health) serves nearly 9,000 patients with co-existing mental health and primary care needs, as do many federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) nationally. Research suggests that nearly 20% of primary care visits relate to mental health issues. Additionally, patients with such needs are more likely to seek out services within primary care settings instead of specialty care settings, necessitating primary care-based interventions.

Providing high-quality integrated primary and behavioral care is shown to reduce preventable emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and re-admissions, and to improve the patient experience. Sustaining and expanding this effective and cost-efficient model of care requires appropriate incentives and funding that recognize the critical role of FQHCs and the complex patients they serve.

Our Work

Sun River Health has implemented the following strategies to support integration:

- Routine behavioral health screenings during primary care visits for alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and depression. Individuals who screen positive in any area of the simple questionnaire are further assessed and connected to an onsite social worker on the same day
- Comprehensive and seamless integrated behavioral health and medical care services from initial screening and assessment, to diagnosis, to the development of a treatment plan, to appropriate treatment and referrals. We provide individual and group counseling, patient education, and care management
- Multiple integrated and co-located services through partnerships with other providers, including embedding an Article 31 mental health provider at Sun River Health Yonkers, and Sun River Health primary care staff at an Article 31 mental health site in the Hudson Valley
- Adoption of the evidence-based IMPACT model for depression care. The essential elements of this model include multidisciplinary team-based care, depression care managers, designated psychiatrists, and stepped care to change treatment depending on patients' needs

About Sun River Health

Founded over 40 years ago as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Sun River Health is one of the nation's largest community health providers. The Sun River Health network of 43 health centers throughout the Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island provides affordable, accessible care to over 225,000 patients annually. The network's exceptional primary care practitioners, specialists, and support staff have made Sun River Health a destination for convenient, high-quality care for all. In 2018, Brightpoint Health, an FQHC network with sites in all five boroughs of New York City, joined Sun River Health.