Behavioral Health Integration into Primary Care Practice in Western MA

By Megan Hansen, Carly Herbert, Ryan Payne, Bronwyn Wada-Gill
Defining Rural MA

Three Categories of Rural Areas:

- **Red**: Suburb Communities
- **Blue**: Concentration of Second Homes
- **Orange**: Areas of Economic Distress
Franklin County and North Quabbin Region
Franklin County has had the lowest average earnings per job since 2002

Average Income Per Job in 2017:
Franklin County: $44,635
Massachusetts: $73,246
Nation: $60,660
Population to Provider Ratio Offers an Incomplete Picture

Counseling/Therapy for Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Franklin County</th>
<th>MA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Care</strong></td>
<td>1280 : 1</td>
<td>960 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health Providers</strong></td>
<td>130 : 1</td>
<td>180 : 1</td>
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</tbody>
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Baystate Franklin Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment 2019
Summary of Priorities

Franklin County/North Quabbin Priority Social & Economic Factors that Impact Health
- Education
- Housing Needs
- Built Environment: Access to food, activity, transportation and broadband
- Social Environment
- Lack of Resources to Meet Basic Needs
- Violence and Trauma

Franklin County/North Quabbin Priority Barriers To Accessing Quality Health Care
- Health Literacy
- And Language Barriers
- Insurance Related Challenges
- Need For Culturally Sensitive Care
- Lack of Transportation
- Limited Availability of Providers
- Lack of Care Coordination

Franklin County/North Quabbin Priority Health Conditions & Behaviors
- Chronic Disease
  - (obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, cancer)
- Mental Health & Substance Use
- Infant and Perinatal Health

Franklin County/North Quabbin Priority Populations
- Local residents with incomes < 300% of federal poverty level
- People reentering the community after incarceration
- Black and Latino residents of Franklin County and North Quabbin
- Transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming people
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning youth
- Older adults
- Children who have experienced trauma

Baystate Franklin Health

Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Opioid Crisis in Western Massachusetts

In Massachusetts in 2018:

- Overdose related Deaths
  - Age 15-24: 27%
  - Age 25-34: 48%
  - Age 35-44: 35%
- 89% of opioid overdose deaths (+) for fentanyl
- Franklin County has a higher rate of fatal opioid overdoses than Boston

Trends in percent of admissions to substance use disorder treatment with opioids as primary substance of use

Source: Massachusetts Department of Health, 2005 - 2014
Our Project:

- Goal: Understand **Behavioral health integration** (BHI) into primary care practices in Western MA

- 2 weeks:
  - Surveyed: **15 primary care practices**
  - **11 Community Meetings**
Highlighted Findings from Providers and Practices:

How many practices are employing additional behavioral health staff?

- Inside Practice: 61%
- Outside Referrals: 39%

What are the main challenges to integrating behavioral health care at this time?

- Funding: 38%
- Staffing: 19%
- Workplace Culture: 9%
- Information Sharing: 5%
- Psychiatrist Shortage: 14%
- Practice Size: 5%
- Credentials: 5%
- Patient Interest: 5%
Highlighted Findings from Providers and Practices:

What are your patients greatest needs for social services?

- Housing: 7
- Food Insecurity: 5
- Transportation: 4
- Sustained Finances: 2
- Interpersonal Violence: 1
- Legal Services: 1

Number of Responses
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Housing Needs in Franklin County

Why can’t you find a home in Greenfield?

- Department of Housing and Urban Development defines **cost burdened as >30% income for housing**
- Cost Burdened Status of Franklin County (2018)
  - 27% homeowners
  - 48% of renters
  - 15% households severely cost burdened
Why is stable housing an important factor in recovery?

“We see trauma and retraumatization. When you can’t get housing, that’s traumatizing... It’s a generational problem for most of our clients.”

~ (Key informant interview, Franklin County house of Corrections Reentry Team)
What are the obstacles to housing in Franklin County?

- Homelessness
- Shortages of...
  - Dignified Housing
  - Sober Housing
  - Affordable Housing
Action Items:

For the Providers:

1. Funding for BHI expansion
2. Financial Incentives
   a. “Brain Gain”
3. Expansion of psychiatric training in Primary Care Tracks
   a. Dr. Robert Baldor

For the Community:

1. An Act Promoting Fair Housing By Preventing Discrimination Against Affordable Housing: H.1344 and S. 781
1. Prevents discriminatory land use practices based on:
   a. Income
   b. Families with children
   c. Race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, disability

2. We propose an amendment to also prohibit discrimination against people with a public record of SUD
We would like to thank the following people and organizations:

UMass Medical School
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Julie Thompson

Opioid Task Force
Recovery Learning Center, The Recovery Project, Cheryl Pascucci, CSO, CHCFC, Communities that Care
All survey respondents
Bibliography


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