

# behavioral health condition management provides coaching for optimal chronic condition management

Our Behavioral Health Condition Management program is designed to help members overcome depression so they can effectively manage their chronic conditions. This program is for members enrolled in our chronic condition management programs who are also determined to be depressed. Being faced with a chronic condition can often trigger depression, and studies show that there are significantly higher healthcare costs for members with both chronic conditions and depression. This depression-centered behavioral health program will help members overcome their depression so they can effectively focus on following their treatment plan for their chronic condition, with goals of better quality of life, better condition management, and lower cost of health care.

## How the program works

### Referrals

Members enrolled in our disease and case management programs are routinely screened for depression by their nurse care manager. Members who screen positive for depression are immediately referred by the care management nurse to the behavioral health condition management program.

### Engagement

Behavioral health coaches assess and stratify members via a more extensive depression screening tool. Those that screen positive are enrolled in the program and are encouraged to participate in ongoing telephonic coaching; those that don't are provided educational resources and assistance with referrals to behavioral health providers. The member's score on the screening tool is used as an initial baseline metric for measuring improvement in subsequent screenings throughout the duration of the program.

### Coaching

Behavioral health coaches, who are master's-level clinicians, engage members through phone calls, motivational coaching techniques, cognitive skill-building exercises, and action plans to overcome their depression. The coaches focus on outcomes improvement for members with an emphasis on how thoughts influence feelings and behaviors even when external factors do not change, such as people, situations, and events. The coaches support members in developing their own self-management plans and in recognizing and acting on symptoms as early as possible to prevent serious, costly events. Coaching calls occur as needed, as often as daily if necessary. Coaches are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for emergency response and coordination of care.

## Physician coordination

The program emphasizes the importance of care coordination in an effort to optimize treatment outcomes for members. Behavioral healthcare coordination is achieved by coaches communicating with members' physicians. Physicians receive reports detailing member involvement in the program, depression severity, and outcomes improvement.

## Educational materials

Educational materials are also provided to members based on their severity and needs, including information on their conditions, medication, diagnosis information, improving communication with providers, and community resources.

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Our coaching strategies enable members to overcome their depression so they can focus on managing their chronic condition.

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## Outcomes

A 2014 analysis showed that this program is associated with favorable financial and utilization outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Participation in the program resulted in significant utilization reductions as follows:

- 13% reduction in inpatient admissions
- 35% reduction in inpatient days
- 41% reduction in emergency room visits
- 13% reduction in outpatient surgical visits
- 6% reduction in professional visits

Participation in the program also resulted in increased medication adherence:

- 10% improvement in year-over-year Proportion of Days Covered (PDC) for anti-depressant medications

The program also delayed participants' first visit to the ER after enrollment.

## Reporting

Quarterly employer-specific reporting includes aggregate metrics on referrals by disease condition, enrollment, depression improvement, productivity improvement, and member satisfaction. See your Blue Shield account manager for more information on reporting eligibility and frequency, and to review a sample report.

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This program is part of our fully insured health plans. For more information about behavioral health condition management, please contact your Blue Shield account manager or account representative. The program is offered by Blue Shield of California and Blue Shield of California Life & Health Insurance Company.

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1. 2014 Blue Shield of California Medical Informatics study comparing a group of participants enrolled in the program (whose goals were met or partially met) to a control group of non-participants during the same period. The utilization reductions represent a percent of the participants' baseline utilization.

# Behavioral health treatment and applied behavior analysis (ABA) benefits: **What you need to know**

As part of your mental health benefits, your medical plan covers behavioral health treatment. This includes medically necessary professional services and treatments, such as applied behavior analysis and evidence-based intervention programs, for covered individuals with **pervasive development disorder or autism**.

All behavioral health treatment must get prior authorization from Blue Shield's mental health service administrator (MHSA).

In the PPO plan, you have the option to receive treatment in an office, home or other non-institutional setting from either MHSA participating providers or non-network providers at the same cost share.

Please note that services used for the purposes of providing respite, day care or educational services, and to reimburse a parent for participation in the behavior health treatment, **are not covered**.

## **Learn more**

For more information about the coverage and specific behavioral health treatment/ABA benefits in your plan, please refer to your *Blue Shield of California Benefit Booklet*.

### **Prior authorization**

Medically necessary behavioral health treatment is covered when prescribed by a physician or licensed psychologist, and the treatment plan is approved by the MHSA.

To get prior authorization, you or your physician must contact the MHSA at **(800) 378-1109**.