



Behavioral Health Screening: Integration into Pediatric Primary Care

Failure to identify and address the behavioral health needs of children at the earliest possible time often leads to exacerbated mental health conditions later in childhood and adolescence. Early life detection of sub-threshold symptoms can prevent the development of full-blown disorders. The pediatric primary care office is an ideal setting for universal behavioral health screening. Such practice is consistent with the goals set forth for a medical home and with policies from the American Academy of Pediatrics. In Connecticut, reimbursement and referral options support behavioral health screening.

Recent “unbundling” of service billing in Connecticut allows reimbursement from public and private insurers for screening occurring in conjunction with a well-child visit. Primary care offices in Connecticut that have begun to incorporate behavioral health screening in routine practice are finding that not only is the activity valued by parents and beneficial in providing important information for making treatment referrals, but the implementation of a screening program is also economically feasible.

This EPIC module provides simple instructions for incorporating behavioral health screening into routine primary care practice, allowing for earlier identification of children with behavioral health treatment needs. The training offers practical guidelines about behavioral health screening in primary care, with a brief orientation to various tools that are easy to use and provide helpful information about a child’s functioning and needs. The module also includes coding instructions to ensure payment for behavioral health screening.

The Integration of Routine Behavioral Health Screening into Pediatric Primary Care module is offered through the Educating Practices in the Community (EPIC) Program. A professional trainer will visit your practice at a time that is convenient for you and provide a brief presentation to you and your entire staff on initiating and implementing a behavioral health screening program in your office.

Presentation Objectives

- Highlight the need for, and benefits of, behavioral health screening in pediatric primary care
- Understand current guidelines for behavioral health screening
- Learn about screening tools that are easy to use as part of well-child exams
- Gain familiarity with office and billing procedures which facilitate implementation of a screening program
- Gain awareness of the options for responding to behavioral health concerns identified through screening

EPIC provides:

- > Sample screening tools
- > Office system guidelines
- > Lunch or snack



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