



The Right Company, The Right Clinician

Flexibility Helps an FQHC Achieve Telepsychiatry Success



THE CHALLENGE

Finding the ideal clinician and service level

When it comes to delivering behavioral health services, the ideal program looks different at every healthcare organization. For Advantage Health Centers, finding a telepsychiatry partner that understands its unique needs has been the key to success.

As a Detroit-based federally qualified healthcare center (FQHC), Advantage provides the community with access to medical, dental and behavioral health services, regardless of the patient's ability to pay. With five locations across the Detroit area, Advantage's behavioral health team diagnoses and treats adults and children with a variety of mental health conditions. When a recent nationwide search for an in-person psychiatrist was unsuccessful, the community health center turned to telepsychiatry to find the right clinician.

Advantage had a full list of criteria for its new psychiatrist, including previous community health experience and the ability to develop a strong rapport with its patient population. The center also wanted to implement telepsychiatry on a gradual basis, starting with a few hours a week, in an effort to monitor the program and solicit patient feedback. After evaluating three telepsychiatry companies, Advantage selected Regroup because of its flexible services and extensive clinician network.

THE SOLUTION

Personalized services, proactive support

A leading provider of integrated telepsychiatry services, Regroup provides its partners with access to a large and diverse pool of clinicians so they can find the right fit. Regroup identified a clinician who met all of Advantage's requirements, and established a program to provide four hours of psychiatric services weekly across three Advantage sites.

Before going live in December 2017, Regroup worked closely with Advantage to manage credentialing requirements, set up technology across its three locations, and even provide patients with background on telepsychiatry and a bio sheet introducing the new clinician. Regroup also trained the new clinician on Advantage's EHR system and the RegroupConnect™ videoconferencing platform so she would be ready to hit the ground running.

"It was a perfect pace for us; Regroup took its time to explain what they would provide and make sure we felt comfortable with the rollout," behavioral health director Lakreese Johnson says.

"To develop a successful telepsychiatry program, you need a company that's going to work for you and with you. From the beginning, we felt that Regroup understood our organization and was open to designing a program that would allow us to grow as we were ready."

Dr. Lauren Carroll, Chief Medical Officer

ADVANTAGE'S TELEPSYCHIATRY TIPS

Get the entire team on board.

Before even engaging a telepsychiatry partner, Advantage made sure that everyone from its leadership to administrative staff supported the initiative.

Communicate clearly about changes.

Advantage trained staff thoroughly on new procedures, from scheduling patients to establishing communication with its new psychiatrist. Explaining the program to patients ahead of time also helped them get comfortable with the concept of receiving care by video.

Look for a partner who listens.

While some telepsychiatry companies have rigid program requirements, Regroup customized its services for Advantage's patient population and budget, and has provided flexibility as those needs change.



THE RESULTS

Meeting patient, staff and organizational needs

Post-launch, Advantage's staff and patients have welcomed the new clinician, who is both a clinical and cultural fit for the center. With its telepsychiatry program thriving, Advantage is realizing the following benefits:

- **Program flexibility.** Telepsychiatry has enabled Advantage to serve patients at multiple sites efficiently with a single clinician, and Regroup has worked with the health center to adjust service levels as needed. After seeing how well patients responded to the telepsychiatrist, Advantage added an hour of weekly care, and service utilization has been consistently high.
- **An integrated approach to care.** Advantage's telepsychiatrist has become a key part of the care team, working with on-site staff to provide a comprehensive and collaborative approach to patient care. She welcomes staff to check in with her during office hours, proactively flags items that need monitoring, and provides EHR notes on each patient that are "amazing," Johnson says. "Anything that you could possibly want to know is in there."
- **A true connection with patients.** Earning patient trust comes naturally to Advantage's telepsychiatrist, which has helped her to overcome patient concerns and provide effective care. "We had one patient who said, 'I'm not going to see anyone on a computer,'" Johnson says. "He agreed to try it once, and when I walked in an hour later, he was so engaged he didn't want to leave."

"Without a genuine rapport, patients will not discuss various challenges, stressors, or previous and/or current trauma... Our telepsychiatrist has experience with community health and our patient demographic, which has enabled her to establish trust with our patient population."

Lakreese Johnson, Behavioral Health Director

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