

# HOW INPATIENT PSYCHIATRY UNITS CAN TRANSFORM MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR YOUR HOSPITAL

*Prepared by Psychiatric Medical Care*

- **Did you know there is an increasing demand for psychiatric services in hospital settings?**
- **Can your hospital benefit from improved patient outcomes and increased staff satisfaction?**

The recent rise in mental health issues has made providing comprehensive and reliable services a key factor in successful hospital operations. Inpatient psychiatry units are becoming increasingly popular methods of treating psychiatric conditions while addressing the demands of both healthcare providers and patients alike.

In this white paper, we will look at how hospitals can use inpatient psychiatry units to improve their existing mental health services and increase their overall effectiveness when delivering quick interventions for those with psychological needs. We will discuss the advantages these specialized units bring to patients, outline specific steps you can take today for successful implementation, and discuss how inpatient psychiatric units can positively contribute to your hospital's patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, and generated revenue.

## **Inpatient psychiatry units and substance abuse-related mental health ED visits**

Given the increasing rates of substance abuse and associated mental illness, it comes as no surprise that substance abuse-related ED visits have also increased. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is estimating that substance use disorders could account for 3 million annual ED visits by 2025 (CDC, 2020).

The long-term repercussions of substance abuse-induced mental illness can be dire. Not only does it place an immense burden on both the individual and their families, but it also strains our healthcare system overall. Taking proactive steps to address substance abuse-related mental health disorders, like implementing inpatient psychiatry units, will help reduce their impacts on emergency departments and public health. For more information and statistics on substance abuse-related mental illness and ED visits, we have included a link to our white paper, [The Rise in ED Visits](#).

### **Inpatient psychiatry units can be cost-effective for hospitals**

Using evidence-based therapeutic practices, inpatient psychiatry units can effectively provide the necessary treatment for mental disorders, allowing hospitals to take advantage of their cost-saving potential and maximize patient outcomes.

According to a recent research report published in *ScienceDirect*, there is substantial evidence to suggest that appropriate psychiatric consultation services can improve medical care and decrease patient length of stay (LOS). Twenty to 40% of patients in general hospitals have psychiatric diagnoses. Most research finds that patients with psychiatric diagnoses have longer LOS. Studies with different approaches demonstrate that early psychiatric consultation is associated with early discharge, with additional studies demonstrating that intensive psychiatric consultation services can reduce LOS.

LOS-related financial advantages were analyzed from the perspective of benefit and cost to the hospital, assuming the hospital bore the full cost of the intervention. The analysis was based on the value of the annualized saved days. The saved days had value as expense reduction at \$400 per day and revenue enhancement at \$997 per day – when the saved day was filled by a new patient (Desan et al., 2011).

### **Inpatient psychiatry units can improve staff satisfaction**

A limited study published in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing (JAN)* explored psychiatric nurses' and patients' opinions regarding the care provided for patients who were admitted to a hospital due to depression and psychosocial difficulty, suicidal ideation, or overt suicidal behaviors. It also explored how mental health care for such patients could be improved.

The results indicated that both nurses and patients believe nurses should spend more time providing psychotherapeutic care, something that may be improved upon by instituting an in-patient psychiatry unit.

A different study published in *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* also discovered correlations between time spent in specific functions and job satisfaction among nurses. The study revealed that nurses who spent more time with direct patient care were more satisfied. The results of these small but profound studies offer valuable insight into increasing job satisfaction and retention/recruitment efforts among all hospital staff through the implementation of dedicated inpatient psychiatry units.

### **How to create a successful inpatient psychiatry unit for your hospital**

According to a report published by *HeathAffairs*, psychiatric boarding, which is defined as psychiatric patients waiting in hallways or emergency room areas for inpatient beds, is a fundamental problem nationwide. Boarding consumes scarce emergency room resources and prolongs the amount of time that all patients must spend waiting for services (Alakeson et al., 2010).

Working together with a mental healthcare management partner like PMC can help your hospital provide life-changing round-the-clock care and customized treatment plans for adults struggling with depression, anxiety, mood disorders, PTSD, substance abuse-related mental illnesses, and other psychological concerns.

Hospital partner management services, like those offered by PMC, include:

- Ensuring proper treatment adherence and resource utilization
- Providing behavioral health resources for de-escalation for your hospital and emergency department
- Providing valuable mental health services to meet the needs of your community
- Reducing readmissions
- Reducing risks associated with lack of inpatient mental health services
- Reducing throughput time for busy emergency departments

In conclusion, having an inpatient psychiatry unit can provide many valuable benefits to your hospital. Hospitals across the country are searching for new ways to deliver quality mental health services, and the inpatient psychiatry unit is an irreproachable solution. With a focus on compassionate care, respectful treatment, and providing support in times of crisis, these units have proven to be essential aspects of modern healthcare systems.

Healthcare initiatives are always beneficial in terms of increased efficiency, reduced costs, and overall positive impressions that patients gain when visiting your facility. Therefore, implementing an inpatient psychiatric unit has many advantages to consider. Some of these standout advantages include greater patient engagement with providers, improved clinical outcomes, and better continuity of care across multiple specialties – all of which have the potential to advance mental health care across the board.

### References:

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Alakeson, V., Pande, N., & Ludwig, M. (2010). A plan to reduce emergency room ‘boarding’ of psychiatric patients. *Healthaffairs.org*. Retrieved January 31, 2023, from <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2009.0336>

## **Your hospital can benefit from Psychiatric Medical Care's (PMC) inpatient management services.**

*Our hospital partner management services include:*

- Reducing risk associated with lack of inpatient mental health services
- Reducing readmissions
- Providing valuable mental health services to meet the needs of your community
- Reducing throughput time for busy emergency departments
- Providing behavioral health resources for de-escalation for your hospital and emergency department

*PMC's management structure provides:*

- Clinical/operational oversight of the behavioral health program
- 24/7 on-call operational support
- Adherence to national standards and best practices
- Compliance with federal requirements for key staff members
- Core measurement of success management
- Development and maintenance of quality indicators for KPIs
- Environment of care GAP analysis
- Growth and outreach planning, execution of the plan, and evaluation
- Oversight of behavioral health policy processes
- Policy and procedure GAP analysis
- Provide an inpatient toolkit filled with best practices and processes
- Recruitment/supervision of key personnel, including Program Director (RN), Medical Director, Social Workers/Therapists, Recreational Therapist, and a Growth & Outreach Manager



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## **ABOUT PMC**

Psychiatric Medical Care (PMC) focuses on improving access to behavioral health care in communities like yours. Our founder and Chief Medical Officer, James A. Greene, M.D., developed PMC with the sole mission of improving the quality of life for mental health patients, particularly those living in underserved communities. Our clinical leadership team consists of some of the country's most knowledgeable, recognized mental health leaders. We offer extensive support to our hospitals and partners, including GAP analyses, recruiting, training and education, 24-hour staffing, clinical and operational oversight, core measure success management, and much more. If you are interested in learning more about PMC and how your hospital can benefit from our partnership, contact us today.

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