



Northeastern Ohio Universities
COLLEGES OF MEDICINE & PHARMACY

Best Practices in Schizophrenia
Treatment (BeST) Center



Ohio

Governor's Office of
Health Transformation

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**Report shows Medicaid beneficiaries with mental illness also likely
to have chronic physical problems**

Coordinated care critical to improve health outcomes and reduce costs

(COLUMBUS) – The Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment (BeST) Center at the Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy (NEOUCOM) in collaboration with the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati presented today the results of its study revealing that many of Ohio's Medicaid beneficiaries with serious mental illnesses (SMI) also suffer from chronic physical conditions. The study also showed that to improve care and reduce costs in the system, integrating behavioral health with physical health care is vital.

The study was presented during a forum in Columbus hosted by the Governor's Office of Health Transformation, which convened an audience of providers, consumer/family advocates, and university and state agency representatives to discuss challenges and best practices for improving delivery and lowering costs within Ohio's Medicaid system.

"Through a unique public-private-academic partnership formed to explore the costs and utilization of services by adults served by Ohio's Medicaid system, we now have solid, accurate and reliable data that underscores the urgency of offering better coordinated care to individuals with severe mental illness, including persons with schizophrenia," said Lon C. Herman, M.A., director of the BeST Center Best at NEOUCOM. "Opportunities are emerging to use these data to inform health care policy decisions addressing the cost and quality challenges faced by Ohioans with a serious mental illness."

The purpose of the study, "Documenting the Ohio Medicaid Business Case for Integrated Physical and Behavioral Health Care," was to determine the scope of the problem resulting from poorly coordinated care and under-addressed medical conditions of adults with SMI receiving services under the Ohio Medicaid program. According to the report, adult Medicaid beneficiaries with SMI account for 22 percent of the adult Medicaid population and 44 percent of adult Medicaid spending. The study also found that adults with SMI:

- Have co-occurring chronic physical health conditions at rates higher than adult Medicaid beneficiaries without serious mental illness (heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, chronic respiratory conditions, dental disease);
- Have more than twice as many hospitalizations for certain ambulatory care sensitive conditions (asthma and diabetes) than non-SMI adults ;
- Have two times higher rates of emergency department visits for asthma than non-SMI adults;
- Include 29 percent of beneficiaries receiving no services from the specialty mental health system;
- Are fairly evenly distributed across Medicaid eligibility categories; and
- Represent a higher proportion of residents in nursing homes under age 65 (42 percent) compared with non-SMI adults in nursing facilities (25 percent);

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Medicaid beneficiaries with Schizophrenia:

- Have three times more hospitalizations for uncontrolled diabetes and twice the number of hospitalizations for pneumonia and chest pains compared with non-SMI adults;
- Have twice the number of hospital emergency department visits for hypertension and uncontrolled diabetes than non-SMI adults; and
- Have three times higher costs for skilled nursing facility, prescription drug, and home health services than non-SMI Medicaid adults.

The Office of Health Transformation (OHT) was established in January by Governor John Kasich to modernize Ohio's Medicaid health coverage program for low income citizens, develop and implement Medicaid cost-containment strategies and improve overall health system performance. Because the federal share of funding for Medicaid will shrink in 2012, the state share of funds provided by Ohio taxpayers to support ODJFS Medicaid expenditures will increase 49 percent next year if Ohio does nothing.

OHT is currently taking part in forums and events with stakeholders, providers and patient groups to identify solutions that can be included in the upcoming budget bill to create better health, better care and cost savings through improvement. OHT is specifically targeting strategies to integrate behavioral health and physical health, improve care coordination and rebalance the delivery of long-term care services.

"We commend the BeST Center and Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati for their work on this report," said OHT Director Greg Moody. "Their research clearly shows that we must do a better job of integrating physical and behavioral health services for people with a mental illness. Failure to do so can have serious consequences for individuals with mental illness, and it is costly for taxpayers and communities."

National data shows that individuals with SMI die 25 years earlier than their peers, in part because of limited access to quality primary care (e.g., 60 percent of premature deaths for people with schizophrenia can be attributed to preventable or treatable medical conditions). A 2008 study of SMI patients in an Ohio public mental health hospital yielded similar findings and identified heart disease and suicide as the leading causes of death.

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The mission of the Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment (BeST) Center is to promote recovery and improve the lives of as many people with schizophrenia as possible by accelerating the adoption of evidence-based and promising practices. To achieve its mission, the center works with mental health consumers, family members, expert consultants, policy makers and mental health partners. The BeST Center does not provide direct services; rather, it offers training, consultation, evaluation, education and outreach activities to build the capacity of local systems to provide state-of-the-art care. The BeST Center was established in the Department of Psychiatry at the Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy (NEOUCOM) in 2009 through a generous grant from The Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation. For more information, please visit <http://www.neoucom.edu/bestcenter>.

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati is an independent foundation dedicated to improving community health and access to health care for vulnerable populations. The Health Foundation awards grants to non-profit and governmental organizations for selected health programs and activities in Cincinnati and 20 surrounding counties in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. Our mission is to improve the health of the people of the Cincinnati region. Our vision is to be one of the healthiest regions in the country. Visit us online at <http://www.healthfoundation.org>.

Ohio Governor John Kasich created the Office of Health Transformation to modernize Ohio's fragmented health delivery system, improve the quality of health services available to consumers and families and provide the best value to taxpayers. The Governor's Office of Health Transformation will achieve these goals by leading an initiative to address Medicaid spending, plan for the long-term efficient administration of the Ohio Medicaid program and improve overall health system performance.