

FYI

Information for our enrollees

APS HEALTHCARE ENROLLEE NEWSLETTER
WINTER/SPRING 2007

Quality Improvement Program Evaluation

APS Healthcare, Inc. has developed and implemented a comprehensive Quality Improvement (QI) Program to monitor and improve care and services for all Behavioral Health (BH) enrollees, practitioners and providers. On an annual basis, APS evaluates the activities of its QI Program, including an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the program. This Executive Summary provides a high-level overview of the 2006 QI activities and the overall effectiveness of the QI Program.

The Program Evaluation document presents detailed information on:

- Administrative changes affecting the QI Program
- Population changes in the 2006 QI Program
- Evaluation of access and availability of services to enrollees
- Evaluation of the clinical improvement activities and initiatives, including those that address patient safety
- Evaluation of the service improvement activities and initiatives
- Evaluation of complaints and appeals
- Evaluation of enrollee and provider satisfaction
- Evaluation of care coordination and care collaboration activities
- Evaluation of delegated activities

The Program Evaluation contains analysis of the results of QI initiatives, including barrier analyses and interventions, those implemented and proposed. In addition, conclusions regarding the overall effectiveness of the program is explained.

Look for the 2006 QI Program Evaluation in May, 2007 on the APS Web site.

Clinical Practice Guidelines

APS adopts Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs) to help practitioners and enrollees make decisions about appropriate behavioral health care for certain clinical circumstances. APS bases them on the needs of our membership and on current scientific evidence and knowledge. APS reviews its CPGs at least every two years and revises them as necessary. CPGs are used as an aid in decision-making but do not replace all clinical decisions for a provider's patients.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

- Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Depressive Disorders
- Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Substance Use Disorders

American Psychiatric Association

- Treatment of Patients with Depressive Disorder
- Treatment of Bipolar Disorder
- Treatment of Patients with Eating Disorders
- Psychiatric Evaluation of Adults
- Treatment of Patients with Substance Use Disorders
- Treatment of Patients with Schizophrenia

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

- Diagnosis and Evaluation of the Child with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

You can ask your provider about the APS Clinical Practice Guidelines or to obtain a paper copy, send an e-mail to qualityteam@apshealthcare.com or call 1-800-305-3720 x3420.



A Healthy Start

A young man turns to his friend at a New Year's party and asks for a cigarette. The friend says, "I thought you made a New Year's resolution to stop smoking?" "I did," the man replied, "I'm in phase one." "What is phase one?" "I've quit buying."

Traditionally, the New Year is a time to make new resolutions and plan for a healthier and more prosperous New Year. It is a time to set goals and make changes. If you want to develop a healthier lifestyle in 2007 there are ways to get beyond "Phase 1" and develop healthy habits. Even though making changes can be challenging, the tips below will help you get started.

Identify your goals and break each goal down into small manageable steps. Is your goal to stop smoking, exercise on a regular basis, lose 20 pounds, or eat healthier? For example, instead of attempting to run 5 miles your first day of a running program, start small and gradually build up to running 5 miles (or more, depending on your goal) since muscle soreness and fatigue can cause you to lose interest quickly.

Make a plan and set a date to begin your lifestyle change. If eating healthier is a goal, clean out your cupboards, make a list of the healthy foods you want to incorporate into your diet, and go shopping. Even small changes can add up over time to improve your health. If your goal is to stop smoking, throw out all cigarettes, lighters, etc.

Track your habits by keeping a log of personal habits (food intake, activity level, and smoking habits) to help you identify stressors that may tempt you to want to revert back to an old habit or to not pursue your new activity. It can also be a boost of confidence when you are reminded of your successful days, or a boost of motivation for those not so successful days.

Overcome obstacles that might keep you from obtaining your goals. Know in advance what you will do should you be faced with a difficult situation. If invited to a function where food will be served, plan in advance what you will and will not eat. If it is a rainy day and you happen to exercise outside, have an alternative exercise plan already in place.

Reward yourself with something you enjoy when you have achieved a goal. Make sure this reward encourages rather than undermines your new healthy habit. For example, if your goal is to lose weight, don't reward yourself with a piece of cake. Instead, treat yourself to new running shoes, etc.

Be sure to check with your healthcare professional before beginning any new exercise plan, weight loss plan, or before taking any new medications to help with smoking cessation.

References: www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3039981

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To obtain a paper copy of the quality improvement programs summary and results, an enrollee brochure, preventive health newsletters, privacy policies, or enrollee rights and responsibilities send an e-mail to qualityteam@apshealthcare.com or call 1-800-305-3720 x3420.

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when you have achieved a goal



Preventive Health

Preventive Behavioral Health Programs

In 2006, APS continued to successfully implement and evaluate three preventive behavioral health programs. These programs were targeted to Health Plan enrollees.

- Education and Treatment Compliance for Adults with Depression

(A short survey is available at the bottom of each article for your comments and opinions at the APS web site.)

- ADHD in Children\Adolescents: Parenting Skills Training.

(This program has been revised. The updated article includes a short survey for your comments and opinions at the APS web site.)

- Postpartum Depression (Account-specific)

To access preventive health articles, go to the APS web site at www.apshealthcare.com, click on *Information for Members*, then *Member Materials*.

Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rights and Responsibilities

APS has a policy on enrollee rights and responsibilities. APS is committed to treating its enrollees dignity and respecting their rights. APS expects enrollees to meet their responsibilities.

The APS Enrollee Rights and Responsibility Statement is available on the APS web site. Click on "Information For Members", then "Quality Improvement." To obtain a paper copy, send an e-mail to qualityteam@apshealthcare.com or call 1-800-305-3720 x3420.

Decision-Making Ethics Statement

Care decisions that are made by APS clinical staff, medical directors, and physician advisors are based on the enrollee's need for behavioral healthcare or services, as evaluated within the benefit coverage of the individual enrollee.

Care decisions are based on the need for care and services only. Providers or staff do not receive financial incentives to deny care, nor do other providers conducting treatment review and appeals for care.

