Teaming up to improve care: pediatric primary care provider education in integrated care
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INTRODUCTION
• 1 in 5 children and adolescents in the U.S. are impaired by a mental illness. Less than 20% of these youth receive mental health services due to several factors including - stigma and shortage of mental health specialists,
• Treatment of mild to moderate mental health concerns in primary care through integrated models of care can mitigate these barriers and improve youth’s access to mental health,
• The majority of primary care pediatricians surveyed feel responsible for addressing mental health concerns in their patients, but almost half feel they lack the knowledge and skills to do so.

CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES
• Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA): Accountable Care Organization (ACO) serving an underserved population in the greater Boston, MA area
  • Child Adolescent Mental Health Integration (CAMHI) - CHA’s current pediatric integrated care program

METHODS
• Literature review using HOLIS database. Search results from 1990-2020. Results sorted by best match. Search terms included: mental health education + primary care physicians; mental health + primary care integration. 34 articles reviewed.
• Needs assessment survey of 8 primary care physicians at CHA: mental health topics they want more information about / coaching on and best strategies for engagement.

RESULTS
• In the greater Boston, MA area, the majority of primary care pediatricians feel responsible for addressing mental health concerns in their patients, but almost half feel they lack the knowledge and skills to do so.
• The majority of primary care pediatricians surveyed feel responsible for addressing mental health concerns in their patients, but almost half feel they lack the knowledge and skills to do so.

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS
• Education about mental health in the context of an integrated care program is most effectively delivered as an interactive, provider-driven, case-based longitudinal intervention that includes all medical office staff.
• For the CAMHI program educational intervention, consideration should be given to making sessions interactive and expanding education about mental health and basic therapeutic skills beyond providers to all office staff.

REFERENCES

Pediatric primary care provider (PCP) education is critical to expanding the capacity of pediatric integrated behavioral healthcare programs to provide much needed mental health services to children and adolescents.