

New Behavioral Health Data Portal launches patient-centered care effort at Fort Leonard Wood
By: Juliza A. Ramirez-Wylie and Angela Garrett

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. (Dec. 2012) - The Behavioral Health Data Portal, slated for launch with select behavioral healthcare providers at the General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital this month, widens the scope of Army Healthcare's "Patient-centered care" concept.

Patient-focused research has been a driving force in behavioral healthcare for over 10 years and is now taking a greater role as a result of BHDP implementation.

BHDP is a tool designed to empower patients by giving them a greater voice in their treatment by connecting the patient, provider, and several other Army healthcare systems into a collaborative, web-based team solution.

The message to patients is that the Army recognizes the importance of quality, timely patient feedback and that the portal's implementation will be progressive to ensure minimal disruption in care. The BHDP gives the patient a more active role throughout their care by providing a direct say in their treatment.

With the BHDP, patients bring to the table the information that only they can provide. It is based on the patient's self-reported feedback, and includes answers gleaned from social, medical and family history questionnaires.

Patients use a secure, convenient and private web-based quality management treatment tool on a laptop computer while waiting to be seen in the behavioral health department waiting area. The brief behavioral health screening tools assess distress and other symptoms pertaining to specific behavioral health issues.

The information gathered from BHDP assessments are displayed for providers via color-coded graphs immediately following the patient's completion of each screening tool.

Patients' responses are used by providers to facilitate timely discussion of the results with the patient, more informed decisions and assessment of each patient's treatment process, and provide timely feedback on their patients' progress.

It will also warn providers when treatment responses vary and require adjustment of the current approach to each specific patient's care.

BHDP tracks treatment progress from start to finish, even tracking patients' clinical outcomes in their behavioral health treatment.

The initial completion of BHDP screenings takes up to 20 minutes, doing away with several paper screening tools currently used to gather baseline information from patients.

Following initial BHDP screening completion, future screenings are personalized for each patient and expected to take about five minutes to complete. The number of future assessments will be reduced allowing maximum efficiency to prevail.

In addition to direct patient feedback to providers, the BHDP will serve as a portal through which patient treatment information will be linked with other medical management tools and computer-based systems. The portal will include integrated profile management, medical evaluation board information, and help facilitate wounded warrior transitions.

BHDP will serve as an additional tool to measure clinical outcomes and wellness for patients while protecting the patient privacy. All patient information obtained through the BHDP will be protected in accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and Protected Health Information requirements.

All BHDP patient responses are transferred through a secure web-server. In addition, access to all information on the BHDP will be limited to the patient and their specific healthcare providers.

This includes electronically transferring access to the patient's information to a new provider when there is a provider change, assisting in continuity of care. BHDP allows new providers to have all of the previously-gathered information to take over a patient's treatment as effectively and efficiently as possible.

A future goal is to link BHDP with deployment health assessments and facilitate service members' transitions to duty assignments or health care settings with greater continuity of care, more tailored to the patient.

Each individual is different and reacts to the same treatment at a different pace. By capturing progress, BHDP allows behavioral healthcare providers to make more informed and timely adjustments to each patient's care, which is central to the patient-centered care concept.

The BHDP will be administered to active duty patients and active duty adult beneficiaries, with monitored implementation. Full implementation is expected next spring.

BHDP is currently an active portal at various Army military treatment facilities throughout the United States and is said to be very helpful, giving healthcare providers more of the whole picture of what's going on in the life of the Soldier, as well as providing a better perspective about how the Soldier is doing and progressing throughout the process, according to Dr. Kelly Bickel, psychologist and BHDP coordinator for the Pacific Region.

"In addition, it speeds up my documentation in the medical record so I'm also able to spend significantly more time seeing patients. I love it," added Bickel.

"Psychologists can make more informed decisions about whether someone should deploy or is fit for duty, based on a variety of information sources, synthesized for ease of review in BHDP," said Bickel.

(Editor's note: Juliza A. Ramirez-Wylie, M.Ed. and Angela Garrett, M.Ed., are Psychology Technicians at the Behavioral Health Department, General Leonard Wood Army Community)