

VALUES THAT GUIDE MHAM'S WORK

Access to Quality Care

It is essential that people with mental health conditions have access to the appropriate level of quality care with adequate supports based on individual needs and provided without delay or arbitrary barriers.

Treatment and Continuum of Care

"Continuum of care" is a concept involving an integrated system of care that guides patients over time through a comprehensive array of mental and physical health services spanning all levels of intensity of care. Improved outcomes will result from the use of evidence-based treatments, coordination among providers, and prevention of interruptions in care. Continuous quality improvement with appropriate evaluation and oversight will maintain high standards of care.

Children's Mental Health

The unique mental health needs of children, youth, and their families require a team approach of mental and physical health providers, educators, behavioral specialists, and the family broadly defined. The continuum of care for children and youth includes home services, community-based services, crisis services, and the availability of higher intensity services to improve safety and treatment outcomes. Treatment should be family-driven and youth-guided.

Parity of Mental and Physical Health Care

Coverage and availability of mental health treatment must be comparable to that provided for physical health needs.

Independence in Recipient Rights

Recipients of mental health services need an independent system to evaluate complaints, ensure rights are protected, and allow for appeal when services are denied. Alternative dispute resolution procedures should be available where appropriate. Currently, a complaint is often evaluated and decided by the same entity that delivers care.

Substance Use Disorder Treatment

MHAM supports complete integration of the treatment of substance use and mental health disorders and an end to discrimination against people in recovery from substance use disorders. Treatment for substance use disorders should follow harm reduction guidelines whenever possible.

Criminal Justice and Mental Health

MHAM supports the use of outreach and prevention initiatives to involve adults and youth with mental health conditions in treatment before a crisis occurs. For persons with mental illness accused of crimes, we support the use of treatment alternatives to the criminal justice system whenever mental health or substance use treatment is a reasonable alternative to confinement or other criminal sanctions. When criminal justice dispositions are required, persons with mental illness should receive evidence-based treatments.

Eliminate Disparities and Discrimination in Care

The mental health system must provide culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and appropriate care to all populations while working to understand, acknowledge and resolve the impact of historical and current racial and social inequities.

Health Care System Improvements

MHAM supports an integrated care model that allows the primary care physician and the behavioral health specialist to work collaboratively as part of the individual's treatment team. Mental health and physical health are interwoven and must be regarded as equally important. This applies to privately and publicly funded health care systems. Integration of behavioral and physical health care services for patients is an issue distinct from financial integration at the system level.