

The Need for Coordinated Care for Depression, and the Need for Creative Innovation

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Abstract

Mental disorders are a major source of functional disability and add significantly to the health care and lost productivity costs of U.S. employers. Depression is also costing U.S. employers tens of billions of dollars every year in lost productivity time and costs for medical and therapeutic treatment through the current acute-care system. Patients who access behavioral health services have substantially higher total health care costs than those who do not. Opportunity exists for additional health care cost savings from more effective and timely treatment of depression, psychosocial and other behavioral health care disorders. The key starting point in making behavioral health care system changes is to identify the nature and scope of the problem. Employers and payers need to actively seek change in the system of mental healthcare delivery—operational, clinical and financial change.