

Adult Medical Behavioral Health Integration
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Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) provides home care services to more than 100,000 New Yorkers each year, most of whom are elderly. A recent analysis of the geriatric population revealed 40% of our elderly patients exhibit some form of cognitive impairment or symptoms of depression, or both. Yet mental health service utilization at VNSNY remains low, with only about 200 geriatric patients receiving such services in 2006. Since most of these patients are homebound, few can visit traditional outpatient mental health settings. Additionally, primary care providers frequently miss mental health symptoms, creating additional barriers to care.

This project will design and test a Geriatric Mental Health Service Line that integrates mental health services with traditional home care services and facilitate the development of a business plan to expand beyond the pilot to the entire VNSNY organization. The project objectives are to:

- 1) Identify clinical indicators to determine need and measure quality, utilization and process outcomes of patients receiving care by the Geriatric Mental Health Service Line;
- 2) Design and test a screening/ referral process that establishes practice standards to initiate the use of the Geriatric Mental Health Services; and
- 3) Define requirements for a fiscally viable expansion to the wider organization.

Sample metrics for these three objectives include actual vs. expected referral rates, changes in functional and emotional status, hospitalization rates and staff productivity.

Implementation of a Geriatric Mental Health Service line will represent a significant change for the VNSNY organization because mental health services are not routinely provided to our elderly patients. Accordingly, the design and rollout of the service line will have to take into account the level and extent of change to clinical practice at VNSNY, as well as recognize VNSNY's strong culture of fiscal accountability. By requiring the service line to bear P&L responsibility, it is anticipated that the design will provide the structure, resources, and accountability necessary to build a long-term capacity at VNSNY to close the gap in mental health services for the geriatric home care patient.

Please [email Ilaina](#) with any questions or comments regarding this project.