

Youth-in-Transition: A Community-Based Approach that Improves Long-Term Outcomes

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that one out of every 10 youth in the United States suffers from a serious emotional disturbance (SED)—a diagnosed mental illness severe enough to cause some impairment in daily living. Left untreated, outcomes for these youth are typically bleak.

Among the youth who do receive treatment, the results are often short-lived due to a lack of youth-specific support services in the community. As a result, many of these individuals end up hospitalized time and time again. But it doesn't have to be that way.

More than 233,000 of Iowa Plan members—59 percent—are between the ages of 0 and 17. In Iowa, Magellan is helping these youth and their families fight the cycle of hospitalization through its Youth-in-Transition Prevention Program.

The Youth-in-Transition Prevention Program, launched on July 1, 2009, aims to improve the mental health and overall well-being of youth with SED by reaching out to their families while the youth is in the hospital. The program engages families so they can help the youth access aftercare community-based services that prevent inpatient readmissions by helping the individual stay on the road to recovery at home.

Highlights of the Youth-in-Transition program:

- 30-day readmission rates for youth went down from 13.1 percent in 2009 to 10.5 percent in 2011.
- Member satisfaction increased 22 percent for the support provided in accessing community-based services between 2009 and 2011.

Components of the program:

- Education of care managers at child inpatient psychiatric units across the state on the needs of families and youth who are experiencing SED, particularly prior to discharge.
- Identification of youth members in need of intervention through inpatient admission reports from acute inpatient mental health units.
- Outreach by Magellan's consumer/family advocate to provide hands-on support and information about important steps for care following discharge to families of youth members.
- Parent peer support training and materials to increase youth and family-focused resources in the community.
- Assistance as needed to help families schedule appointments and access additional resources for making key decisions about services their child will need.

For more information about the Youth-in-Transition program, contact Karen Kramme, KAKramme@MagellanHealth.com.