

HOME HEALTH (CARE COORDINATION)

The goal of the Home Health services at the Mental Health Association (MHA) is to enhance individuals' overall well-being by integrating physical and behavioral health care. All services are individualized to meet the needs of each person served and are designed to facilitate a seamless continuum of care. Care coordination embodies a recovery-focused model of care that respects and promotes independence and responsibility.

MHA is dedicated to improving our consumers overall health by ensuring they receive individualized care for their health needs. MHA staff continues to support each consumer in choosing physical and behavioral health service providers, as well as assisting in coordinating these services appropriately. Each individual is given the option of receiving behavioral health services through MHA programs and medical services through MHA's Prospect Primary Healthcare, located in the same building as MHA's day treatment program Prospect House. If a consumer chooses to utilize a health care provider outside of MHA, staff continues to assist with coordinating services and identifying their strengths and needs. For those without a primary care provider, individuals served under our agency are offered a yearly physical at Prospect Primary Healthcare regardless of insurance coverage or income. MHA staff continues to model and teach skills to help individuals advocate their needs to their health care providers. All individuals are provided with Medical Provider Communication forms, which can be filled out with the assistance of MHA staff prior to medical appointments to help promote continuity and quality of care. MHA also provides other basic clearance forms, including a Medical Clearance Form that can be filled out by their health care provider to allow consumers to utilize the on-site gym facilities at Prospect House.

MHA staff continues to support individuals in managing their health concerns through providing resources, education, and linkage to health services. Skills-based groups are conducted by MHA staff in several programs, covering topics such as budgeting, coping skills, and stress management. Along with skills-based groups, health education groups are run regularly by a Registered Nurse in which all individuals MHA serves are welcome to join. During these groups, individuals learn about health promotion and chronic disease management practices. During the FY2024, 758 consumers attended MHA's health education groups. Health education and counseling provided by MHA nursing staff is available to all consumers on an individualized basis.

One of the ways MHA staff continues to support individuals in managing their health concerns and conditions is by providing access to mobile health events at MHA sites. Health Home staff collaborates with community providers to bring essential medical screening and treatment events to MHA consumers to improve access to care. MHA collaborates with Zufall Community Healthcare to bring health screenings and services to MHA's sites, including blood pressure clinics, influenza and COVID-19 vaccination clinics, and mobile dental clinics. MHA also works with EDGE NJ to bring mobile rapid HIV testing, Hep C screening, and PrEP counseling to our sites. These health events are available to all consumers throughout the agency as well as for staff to utilize. By the end of the FY2024, 168 consumers and staff were served at our mobile health events.

Health Home has also made connections with local nursing schools, including Fairleigh Dickinson University's School of Nursing and Allied Health to give nursing students the experience of providing care to the mental health patient population in the community. Nursing students came on 4 different dates during this fiscal year to observe staff from several different disciplines provide services in the community. This gives new nurses joining the profession insight into how physical and mental health care is provided outside of an inpatient setting.

MHA staff across all programs remain flexible to meet the needs of the individuals served. This includes scheduling appointments at convenient and comfortable times and places for the individual. In the event of a staff member's planned or unplanned absence, another team member takes over responsibilities to ensure services continue without interruption. On-call services are available 24/7, including holidays and weekends, for support and crisis intervention, provided via telephone, face-to-face contact, and collateral contacts with caregivers and other service providers.

All programs continue to conduct Comprehensive Intake Assessments to determine the necessary coordination of services. Staff gather information such as past medical and behavioral health history, family health history, past hospitalizations, current medication use, treatment profiles, current or previous substance use, and any current health concerns or needs. Suicide Risk Assessments are completed with each individual to identify life-threatening crises and the need for appropriate intervention. Chronic disease status, including conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, is also assessed. Individuals in all agency programs collaborate with MHA staff to create a person-centered plan that addresses needs in both physical and behavioral health. This plan is developed by the individual, and all staff involved in the individual's care have access to it to ensure continuity of care. Staff assist individuals in identifying appropriate services and scheduling appointments based on the needs identified. Individuals diagnosed with severe and persistent mental disorders often have shorter lifespans due to untreated, preventable chronic conditions. Prospect Primary Healthcare monitors Body Mass Index (BMI), vitamin D levels, glucose levels, and blood pressure readings for individuals in this program, who are considered high-risk. As of the end of FY2024, Prospect Primary reported a BMI average of 29% within the normal range, vitamin D average of 66% within the normal range, glucose level average of 58% within the normal range, and blood pressure average of 68% within the normal range.

MHA staff recognize the importance of ongoing staff education to better serve individuals in our programs and community. All staff receive verbal and written educational materials and guidance on using this information to assist individuals with their health needs. Each program site has a binder labeled "Health Home," containing written educational documents on prevalent disease processes and commonly used medications within the population served by MHA. These documents are also available digitally on a shared network for staff to use for personal or consumer education. All MHA staff also receive annual psychopharmacology and summer heat and sun risk training to stay informed about current psychotropic medications and to educate consumers about these medications. MHA staff can also contact nursing staff from the Health Home program to request individualized health education based on specific staff or department needs.

Each program offers all individuals the opportunity to complete a Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The surveys are completed in order to measure an individual's satisfaction in areas of personal treatment, physical environment, consumer/staff interactions and overall quality of services. All results are analyzed and reviewed.