



NEWS RELEASE

Minnesota Health Action Group announces findings from first-ever eValue8™ Mental Health Deep Dive survey in Minnesota

Report reflects findings from voluntary response to assessment of health plans; provides recommendations for changes to improve mental health parity, access, care delivery, and outcomes for people across the state

BLOOMINGTON, MN (October 1, 2019) – Only 43% of people with [mental illness](#) received treatment for their condition in 2018. This is often due to inadequate insurance coverage, lack of access to qualified in-network providers, or attitudes in society and the workplace that prevent people from seeking care. In an effort to change this dynamic, the [Minnesota Health Action Group](#) (The Action Group) announced today the results of the state’s first-ever [eValue8 Mental Health Deep Dive](#), a voluntary response to an assessment of health plans to evaluate their performance in the critical areas of network access, reimbursement rates, provider performance and outcomes, and efforts to address mental health parity. The report also identified areas of improvement for health plans that participated in the survey.

According to Deb Krause, vice president of The Action Group, the following health plans participated in the inaugural eValue8 Deep Dive, which was conducted in collaboration with the [National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions](#): Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, HealthPartners, and Medica. The process required health plans to provide data and answer a series of questions about their processes and performance related to mental health benefits for covered members and groups. By publicly sharing these results, The Action Group and the participating health plans are hoping to guide market-wide improvements in mental health care delivery and outcomes.

“We applaud the health plans that opted into this process on behalf of their members. It demonstrates their commitment to improving the health of Minnesotans who are living with mental health conditions daily and to the employer organizations that provide the health and workplace benefits they depend on,” said Krause. “The eValue8 Deep Dive showed that, while Minnesota is performing ahead of the national curve in some areas, we are still woefully behind where we need to be to ensure that mental health conditions receive the same level of support as other chronic and complex diseases.”

The eValue8 Deep Dive measured health plans against purchasers’ aspirational expectations in six key areas of operational performance. Learn more about performance against these areas in the [executive summary](#):

1. **Network adequacy and access** – The ratio of in-network psychiatrists to members; accuracy of provider directories; appointment wait times for new and existing patients; access to in-network clinic services versus hospital-based services; ability to easily distinguish between child and adult psychiatrists; and presence of a formal plan to improve network access.
2. **Physician measurement, management, and payment** – Adequate provider reimbursement for mental health services across all care settings; measuring and incenting the use of standardized tools to identify condition(s), evaluating patient outcomes and quality of care; promotion and reimbursement for Collaborative Care and Behavioral Health Integration, as well as for alcohol and substance use disorders across care settings.
3. **Pharmaceutical management** – Use of a value-based drug formulary for mental health, alcohol, and substance disorders medications; coverage for personalized and genetic testing (based on physician’s recommendation); fewer obstacles when accessing drug-based treatments for alcohol and substance use; formalized plan to address appropriate prescribing patterns and member adherence with medication plans.
4. **Member engagement, management, and support** – Using demographic data to better engage members with mental health care needs; assessing members for co-existing medical conditions; presence of a robust and user-friendly behavioral health provider directory; seamless access to after-hours mental health care services; adequate reimbursement for transitional care.
5. **Accreditation and compliance with parity** – Completion of [Managed Behavioral Health Organization \(MBHO\) Accreditation](#) by the National Commission for Quality Assurance (NCQA); completion of an external Mental Health Parity Compliance Audit; and maintaining a level of behavioral health claim denials that is comparable to denials for medical/surgical claims.
6. **Data analysis and reporting** – Evaluating and reporting of aggregated EAP services; measuring and reporting outcomes from depression and/or alcohol use intervention programs; and measuring and reporting performance against measures endorsed by the National Quality Forum.

As part of its commitment to improving mental health care, in 2019 The Action Group established a Mental Health Guiding Coalition comprised of leading corporate and public-sector employers, government representatives, health plans, providers, and nonprofit partners that have the ability, and commitment, to drive improved patient outcomes statewide. The Guiding Coalition was instrumental in the completion of the eValue8 Deep Dive and has been at the forefront of The Action Group’s drive to bring mental health to the top of the healthcare priority list.

“For years, people with mental illnesses have faced discrimination, limited access to qualified providers, and insufficient health benefits which has prevented them from seeking and obtaining the care they need,” said Sue Abderholden, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota and a member of The Action Group’s Mental Health Guiding Coalition. “By participating in the eValue8 Deep Dive, these health plans are taking a significant

step toward improving mental health parity and improving the lives of people with mental illnesses and their families in all corners of our state.”

To make the eValue8 Deep Dive assessment of current health plan performance more actionable, the National Alliance for Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions identified recommended action steps for each participating health plan.

In addition to leading the collaboration that produced the eValue8 Mental Health Deep Dive in Minnesota, The Action Group recently received a Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement [Award](#) from the [Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute](#) (PCORI) to improve quality and access to mental health care for people across Minnesota.

###

About the Minnesota Health Action Group

The Minnesota Health Action Group is a coalition of public and private purchasers whose sole purpose is to represent the collective voice of those who write the checks for health care in Minnesota. Action Group members collaborate with community stakeholders to drive innovations that support high-quality health care, create engaged consumers, and ensure the economic vitality of all Minnesota communities. Based in Bloomington, MN, the Minnesota Health Action Group was formed in 1988 as the Buyers Health Care Action Group. To learn more, visit www.mnhealthactiongroup.org. Follow on [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

For more information:

Barbara Tabor, APR / (651) 230-9192 / barbara@taborpr.com