

The Adams County Telepsychiatry Clinic: An Innovative Collaboration and National Model for Residency Telepsychiatry Education

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Background

- Prior to Covid-19, telepsychiatry was viewed primarily as a way to expand mental health access to areas with a shortage of psychiatrists¹.
- During the pandemic, residency programs have been forced to deliver telepsychiatry services without guidance on how to do so.
- Despite 85% of residency programs expressing interest in a sample telepsychiatry curriculum prior to Covid-19, very few residency programs established formal telepsychiatry education².
- There are no specific requirements by the ACGME regarding telepsychiatry training, resulting in varying levels of education across programs.
- Residents' interest in telepsychiatry far exceeds what is offered during training³.
- Further, there are few models to teach residents best practices in managing virtual telepsychiatry teams⁴.
- The Adams County Clinic is an innovative collaboration between the University of Cincinnati and the Adams County Health Department that can serve as a national model for residency telepsychiatry education.

Telepsychiatry Workflow

Adams County (AC) admins faxed patient face sheets to UC clinicians and admins prior to each appointment.

University of Cincinnati (UC) admins scheduled patients into the university EMR.

AC admins logged in and set up a video meeting prior to the start of each appointment, eliminating the need to rely on patients' ability to navigate technology.

After completion of the evaluation, resident and attending discussed patient briefly off screen and then returned to the virtual room to discuss final plan with patient.

After introduction and clarification of roles, attending turned off camera and observed both rooms as residents evaluated patients.

Residents independently logged in to video meetings, with attending present in both rooms.

For health department and probation patients, medications were prescribed electronically. For jail patients, verbal orders were relayed to jail nurse.

Following each appointment, AC staff scheduled patient for follow up appointment and coordinated labwork and other care if indicated.

Patient notes were entered into the university hospital EMR and faxed to the health department the next day.

Competencies

Technical

- Synchronous audio/visual appointments were performed using a commercially available HIPAA compliant platform, Zoom.
- University EMR was utilized (EPIC).
- Considerations had to be given for physical exam limitations (for example, when a thorough neurological exam was warranted).

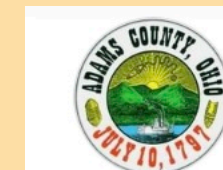
Collaborative

- Prior to start of the clinic, all clinicians involved in the project, admin staff on both ends, and county officials met in Adams County. UC clinicians toured Adams County Jail and Health Department with local staff.
- Frequent email communication was used between AC staff and UC staff.
- When patients required transfer to an emergency room, resident called ahead to the receiving ER to give physician-to-physician report.

Administrative

- A process was created for electronically writing a psychiatric hold and transmitting it to AC staff.
- Due to Covid-19, emergency exemption existed for Ryan Haight Act and applicable Ohio law, allowing controlled substance prescriptions. Yet there are ongoing discussions about potential follow-up options if/when exemption ends.

Partnership



Adams County Courts

October 20, 2020 · 🌐

Judge Spencer would like to take this time to personally thank Danielle Poe, Director of Behavioral Health, and Dr Hablitzel, Health Commissioner, of the Adams Co Health Dept, for organizing the meeting of UC, Department of Psychiatry, Adams Co Common Pleas Court and the Adams County Health Dept. The purpose of this collaboration is provide Mental Health Care to the families of Adams County. Also, we want to thank Murphin Ridge for the wonderful dining experience! The delicious meal and charming atmosphere made it the perfect venue for our meeting!



References

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