



# How the ACT Center is working with health system leaders to improve patients' return access to mental health services

## The objective

Kaiser Permanente Washington's Mental Health and Wellness (MHW) department is prioritizing timely return access for members engaged in episodes of mental health treatment. One component of this project is to develop and implement predictable, evidence-based mental health care pathways for specific diagnoses, beginning with anxiety disorders and depression — which are the most common diagnoses among members in Washington. Having clear pathways for episodes of care will support collaborative, goal-oriented treatment planning and care.

## The work

The ACT Center is supporting MHW department leaders in developing and implementing care pathways in specialty mental health by: (1) conducting rapid evidence scans on existing mental care pathways and average treatment duration, (2) identifying best practices for implementation of clinical care pathways, and (3) supporting implementation by developing provider, care team, and patient resources and by creating visualizations of workflows.

## What we're learning

In early 2025, the ACT Center team completed a rapid evidence scan of care pathways, treatment duration, and implementation recommendations for anxiety disorders and shared the results with MHW leaders. The evidence suggests that most episodes of care for anxiety disorder that use evidence-based therapies consist of 12 to 18 sessions and should be consistently monitored for progress. Many care pathways for anxiety exist and are based on treatments with proven efficacy. However, care pathways themselves have not yet been tested rigorously for efficacy.

## What we're hoping to achieve

In the coming months, the ACT Center will support MHW implementation of the anxiety care pathway and collaborate to develop and implement a depression care pathway. We are working to create clinical care pathways that are predictable yet flexible. MHW seeks to continue delivering high-quality, feedback-informed, evidence-based treatments while having greater focus on achieving patient goals and symptom reduction. The overall goal is to successfully move patients through care and thereby create greater clinician availability for return appointments.

### Project snapshot

#### Health system partners



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#### ACT Center contributions



Rapid evidence scans  
Implementation support

Project team:  
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