

## **Collaborative-care model best for behavioral health, study shows**

A study conducted at Montefiore Health System's primary-care sites concluded that a collaborative-care approach achieves better outcomes for behavioral-health patients than a colocation model does.

With collaborative care, a care manager or social worker works with a psychiatrist and a primary-care provider to create and manage treatment plans. In the colocation approach, patients are screened by primary-care providers and referred to a behavioral health care provider at the same location.

The [study found](#) that 44% of patients treated under the collaborative-care model had reduced depressive symptoms, compared with 31% of patients in the colocation model.

Providers are putting more focus on treating the whole person and understanding how physical health can influence mental health and vice versa, said Michelle Blackmore, project director of Behavioral Health Integration, Montefiore's care-management organization. Blackmore was the study's primary author.

Implementing a collaborative-care model requires more upfront resources, such as additional staffing and technology, as well as a cultural shift, Blackmore said. The new research might prove important for health systems considering the investment, she added.

Six of Montefiore's 22 primary-care sites now use the collaborative-care model, and the health system plans to expand the approach to more of them.

The model provides follow-up with patients and regular evaluation of their symptoms, as well as patient education and self-management, including the use of a mobile app.

The study was supported by a grant of more than \$5 million from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.