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PURPOSE

To identify, remove and/or minimize barriers to access to BayCare Behavioral Health (BCBH) programs, services, or employment.

BARRIERS, BARRIER PREVENTION AND IDENTIFICATION

Architectural barriers are physical features that limit or prevent people with disabilities from obtaining BCBH services.

- Facility Services ensures new construction or alterations of facilities conform to ADA Accessibility Guidelines
- Semi-annual internal Health and Safety Risk Assessments are conducted to identify architectural barriers.
- Ongoing team member monitoring assures safe and ADA accessible access to facilities, available and clearly marked parking spaces for the disabled, ramps that are not blocked.
- Barriers are addressed and recommendations are made to Leadership when appropriate.

Environmental barriers can be any characteristic of the setting that compromises, hinders, or impedes service delivery and the benefits to be gained.

- Semi-annual internal Health and Safety Risk Assessments are conducted to identify environmental barriers.
- Any individual may identify environmental barriers. Issues may be reported through various forums including but not limited to team meetings, committees, satisfaction surveys, and complaints and grievances.
- Barriers are addressed and recommendations are made to Leadership when appropriate.

Attitudinal barriers may include language used in literature or communication, how individuals are viewed and treated, whether or not input is solicited and used, eligibility criteria that screens out individuals with specific types of disabilities.

- BCBH participates in community education and awareness outreach activities and provides training and education to team members aimed at reducing stigma
- Customer input and stakeholder feedback regarding attitudinal issues and barriers to services is obtained through complaints and grievances, surveys, community forums, therapeutic groups, etc.
- Barriers are addressed and shared with management for consideration.

Financial barriers may include insufficient funding for services and supports.

- Ongoing reviews of current and pending contracts ensure service and capacity standards are met.
- State contracts, assistance grants, third party insurance agreements and the provision of a sliding fee scale are actively pursued.
- BCBH explores new opportunities and diversification of programs, services, and revenue sources.
- The Executive Committee focuses on improving operational performance and efficiencies within all programs.

Employment barriers may include lack of applicants, efficient systems to effectively hire, BCBH is committed to employing skilled team members and assisting persons served in overcoming barriers to employment.

- Team Resource policies, the Affirmative Action and Cultural Diversity plans are reviewed regularly to ensure legal requirements are met, and a non-discriminatory and culturally diverse environment is promoted
- To reach a diverse applicant pool, job vacancies are posted at BayCareJobs.com and other websites.
- Team members, supervisors, and managers provide input to leadership regarding the unique needs of the persons served or anticipated population to serve in the effort to hire team members with unique competencies.
- When a person served in not employed, and expresses a desire to work, staff may assist persons served in overcoming barriers to employment through the provision of referrals and service plan goals to help the person identify resources, mental health and / or substance use issues that may interfere with seeking and or obtaining employment.

Communication barriers may include the absence of a telecommunication device for the deaf and the absence of material in a language or format that is understood by the persons served.

- Each BCBH program location has a designated a Single Point of Contact responsible for ensuring effective communication with customers or companions who are deaf or hard of hearing, and or individuals who are limited English Proficient.
- Age and/or population specific evidence based, and emergent best practice materials are used in various settings throughout the service continuum. Additional materials are purchased as appropriate.
- Barriers are addressed and recommendations are made to Leadership when appropriate.

Technology barriers may include any barrier that would prevent the necessary transmission and receipt of essential data to provide person served care, operational sustainability, and organizational efficiencies.
- BCBH researches, provides, installs and supports any hardware or software that would reasonably assist a team member with a handicap or disability to perform their job function or a person served to access services.
- Barriers are addressed and recommendations are made to Leadership when appropriate.

Transportation barriers may include persons being unable to reach service locations at all or to participate in the full range of services and other activities

- Ongoing communication and relationship building between BCBH and community providers assures successful transportation coordination.
- Select BayCare programs utilize vans and cars for transportation services and purchase bus tickets / passes, taxi vouchers, and other hired services.
- Information related to transportation barriers is shared with management for consideration and follow-up.

Community Integration barriers Identify may include any barriers that would keep the persons served from returning to full participation in their community.

- Team members utilize the Resource Guide to assist customers gain access to activities and services within their community.
- Transition/Discharge/Aftercare plans are created at or near the time of admission to ensure community integration is addressed throughout the course of treatment.
- Barriers are addressed with Supervisors and or Managers when appropriate.

Other Barriers include those beyond the categories listed above that limit impede access BCBH programs, services, or employment.

- BCBH receives input from team members, customers and stakeholders that may identify additional barriers through the Strategic Planning Survey process, satisfaction surveys, person served feedback, Team Member as Customer Surveys, and other venues.
- Barriers are addressed and recommendations are made to Leadership when appropriate.

ACTION PLAN INLCUDING TIMELINES FOR ANY IDENTIFIED ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS

Barrier Identified	Actions to be Taken	Target Date	Completion Date
Access to Services/ Employment	Behavioral Health Specific Job Fairs	2021-2025	Ongoing
Access to Services	Expansion of GME Psychiatric Residents Program & Fellowship	2023 - Present	Ongoing
Access to Services/Architectural	Expansion of waiting and treatment area of ISU	December 2025	Ongoing
Access to Services	Construction of BH Urgent Care	January 2025	February 2025
Architectural	Additional parking spaces for persons served including re-evaluating ADA parking at ATC & Urgent Care	December 2025	Ongoing
Architectural	Additional team member parking acquired resulting in added persons served accessibility at DCOP	2023 – Present	Ongoing
Architectural	NBHC replacement of exterior staircases (Community Housing)	June 2024	October 2024
Attitudinal/Communication	New Globo Interpreting (new language/ASL interpreting services) to include telehealth	April 2024	April 2024
Transportation	Addition of 6 FDOT vehicles for persons served transport (2 budgeted for NBHC)	2025	Ongoing
Transportation	Addition of 2 vehicles for HCOP	June 2024	August 2024
Technology	IMED Electronic Signatures	August 2024 - Present	Ongoing
Technology	Expansion of Telehealth Services	October 2024 - Present	Ongoing

Progress made in the removal of identified barriers

BayCare Behavioral Health continues to expand services across counties while increasing our workforce in order to provide quality patient care and better access to services. BayCare Talent Acquisition actively hosts in person and virtual behavioral health specific job fairs to recruit new BayCare team members. BayCare

Behavioral Health had the Psychiatric GME Residents providing Ambulatory services at Northside Behavioral Health in 2024. Application for a Child and Addiction Fellowship was submitted for 2025. Parking spaces at various facilities have been evaluated for ADA accessibility and increase of space as workforce increase. The exterior staircases at some of Northside Behavioral Health's Community Housing locations have been remodeled. Globo Interpreting Services has assisted in language and DHOH services for persons served including in our telehealth platform. Phreesia was implemented in December 2024 and allowed for a better workflow and registration process that also corresponds to the rest of the health system. In addition to Phreesia, IMED electronic signatures was implemented in 2024 to streamline documentation for persons served and team members. Additional forms continue to be added into IMED. The Behavioral Health Urgent in Pasco County has created another pathway for clinical services.

Barriers identified in 2024 and actions taken to remove and or mitigate those barriers were outlined in the updated 2025 BCBH Accessibility Plan.