

Psychiatric Consultant: Sample Job Description, Typical Workload & Resource Requirements

JOB DESCRIPTION

The psychiatric consultant supports the collaborative care team—medical provider, patient, and behavioral health care manager—through regular consultation on an assigned caseload of patients. The psychiatric consultant advises the prescribing medical provider on appropriate medications and other treatment strategies, also providing the care team with educational support on diagnosing and managing behavioral health conditions.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide regularly scheduled (usually weekly) caseload consultation to behavioral health care managers. Case review consultations focus primarily on patients who are new to the caseload or who are not improving as expected under their current treatment plan. Case reviews may be conducted by telephone, video, or in person.
2. Work with behavioral health care managers to oversee the status and population health of their assigned patient caseload. The psychiatric consultant uses a registry to track all assigned patients and prioritize patients for case review and treatment adjustment. Registry functions can be accomplished through an EHR build, on a spreadsheet used in conjunction with an EHR, or can be built into a stand-alone clinical management tracking system that may or may not be linked to an EHR.
3. Recommend any treatment adjustments through the case review process or in ad hoc consultations, including medication recommendations and other interventions, within 24 hours of consulting with a behavioral health care manager or other team members.
4. Advise on treatment for patients who may need more intensive or more specialized mental health care, advising on treatment until patients can be engaged in specialized care.
5. Clearly communicate the limitations of the case review consultation and treatment recommendations if the patient is not evaluated in person. The following disclaimer statement is an example of how to acknowledge these limitations in consultation notes in an EHR:

“The above treatment considerations and suggestions are based on consultation with the patient's behavioral health care manager and a review of information available in registry. I have not personally examined the patient. All recommendations should be implemented with consideration of the patient's relevant prior history and current clinical status. Please feel free to call me with any questions about the care of this patient.”

6. Be available to provide occasional telephone consultation to medical providers for very complex patients or challenging patient situations. Respond to telephone calls from medical providers and behavioral health care managers within one business day. Respond to urgent telephone calls within one hour, if available.
7. Coordinate with other psychiatric consultants for vacation coverage.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Direct evaluation of patients with significant diagnostic or therapeutic challenges who are identified in discussion with the patient's behavioral health care manager and/or primary care provider. Such consultation may be provided in person or via telemedicine (video or telephone).

2. Development and delivery of in-service training for primary care-based providers and staff regarding recognition and treatment of behavioral health conditions in primary care.

IF CONSULTING REMOTELY AND OFFSITE FROM CLINIC TEAMS

1. If possible, visit each participating clinic at least once when initiating a new consulting relationship and then at least once per year to meet clinic providers and discuss ongoing collaboration.
2. Maintain professional cell phone and email accounts for contact during usual business hours. Check professional accounts daily and respond to email questions/consultations within two business days, sooner if urgent.

REQUIREMENTS

- Licensed psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate effectively in a team setting
- Excellent communication skills
- Positive, flexible, and solution-focused attitude
- Ability to quickly synthesize medical and psychiatric data and formulate effective and evidence-based clinical recommendations

DESIRED

- Board-eligible in psychiatry
- Experience with primary care psychiatry or consultation-liaison psychiatry

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND TYPICAL WORKLOAD

Generally, for each full-time or nearly full-time behavioral health care manager, organizations will need approximately 0.075 FTE (3 hours per week) of psychiatric consultant time. To estimate FTE requirements for a behavioral health care manager, please refer to the AIMS Center's [Guidelines for Behavioral Health Care Manager Caseload Size](#).

CONTRACTING FOR PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATION SERVICES

The AIMS Center provides examples of psychiatric consultant contracts for organizations that may be interested in contracting for such services.

