

Disease Management

The Importance of Preventative Care

America's health care system is a hot topic of discussion both in the news media and around the water cooler these days. Most realize that something seems to be broken. However, few are aware of the complications that the system's problems cause for the behavioral health care field.

As health care systems in America continue to evolve, more and more providers are coming to understand that coordinated, transparent systems called disease management programs are the most efficient way to care for a person with a chronic illness, such as mental illness.

Disease management is defined as "a system of coordinated health care interventions and communications for populations with conditions in which patient self-care efforts are significant." It is the concept of reducing healthcare costs and improving quality of life for individuals by preventing or minimizing the effects of a disease, usually a chronic condition, through integrative care.

There are three aspects of disease management that can be thought of as a three-legged stool, with no particular order to the "legs." One – assessment and evaluation by a professional such as [Coleman Access Services](#). Two – self-education and self-help through sources like the websites of Web M.D., NAMI or [Coleman Behavioral Health](#). Three – treatment or patient care. In the mental health field, the order of treatment is typically counseling, psychology then psychiatry with medication if needed.

A quality disease management program for an area of specialty, like mental illness, must also have a system to coordinate with the patient's primary care physician. Too often, one doctor doesn't know what treatments or recommendations another is making for a patient, causing issues with frequency of appointments, concerns over multiple medications, and expenses for the patient.

At Coleman, the diseases most often served are depressive disorders, bipolar disorders, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia, respectively. Each patient works with a counselor or psychologist to coordinate each of the three aspects of their specific disease management plan.

Many factors can influence a patient's condition – the holiday season and winter are often difficult times for many; and the effects of stress, especially financial, can cause worsening conditions as well. Because we are in the middle of a challenging economic time and it falls during difficult months of the year in Ohio, many patients' treatment intervention may be modified by their therapist or psychiatrist to help manage the effects of these external stressors.

To learn more about the services available to someone who may need help diagnosing and managing their mental illness, visit www.coleman-bh.com and select the community in which they live.