Diagnosis and Treatment of Depression

MVP Health Care®, as part of its continuing Quality Improvement Program, adopted a depression guideline for our practitioners. The guideline is based on the American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) guideline: Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Major Depressive Disorder. It reflects the current standard of care for the management of depression.

Impact of the Condition

Major depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the U.S. In 2015, an estimated 16.1 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. This number represented 6.7% of all U.S. adults. Depression often co-occurs with other conditions and is associated with decreased adherence to medical regimes. One meta-analysis concluded the odds of non-compliance with treatment recommendations are three times more likely in depressed patients than non-depressed individuals. Despite effective treatments for depression, many individuals often delay seeking treatment or do not receive an adequate trial of medication or physician follow-up.

Summary of the APA Guidelines

MVP adopted the APA guidelines to assist primary care practitioners to better identify depression in adults (ages 18 and over) and to provide ongoing management to achieve remission of symptoms and return to an optimal level of functioning. The complete APA guideline can be found at: http://psychiatryonline.org/guidelines The Executive Summary contains a Summary of Recommendations for psychiatric management, acute phase treatment, continuation phase treatment, discontinuation of treatment, and clinical factors influencing treatment.

The Formulation and Implementation of a Treatment Plan for the Acute Phase addresses pharmacotherapy, somatic therapies, psychotherapy, complementary and alternative treatments, assessing response and adequacies of treatments, and strategies to address incomplete response.

Other Support for Management of Depression

In conjunction with the guidelines, MVP partners with Beacon Health Options® to offer their program, Depression Identification and Management, for members with major depression. The goal of this program is to help individuals recognize the symptoms of depression, obtain

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appropriate treatment and adhere to prescribed therapies. Members receive educational information including a workbook, information about medications and help with getting treatment. Additionally, members have access to a no-cost depression screening tool, located on the Beacon Health Options website. Throughout their course of treatment, members will have additional support and resources to ensure they are receiving the proper care and that their questions are being answered. If you would like to refer one of your patients to this program, please call MVP’s Population Health Management Department at 866-942-7966. MVP will work with Beacon Health Options for member outreach and enrollment. More information on this and MVP’s other health programs may also be found on mvphealthcare.com.

If specialized treatment is needed, MVP will assist providers in matching their patients to the appropriate Behavioral Health provider in their area. To locate an appropriate provider, please call the MVP Behavioral Health Access Center at (800) 568-0458 between the hours of 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM. Providers in Vermont should call PrimariLink at (800) 320-5895 during these same hours. Referrals for outpatient substance abuse treatment are generated when calling. Board-certified psychiatrists are also available by telephone to answer questions primary care physicians may have.

This guideline is not intended to replace the role of the physician’s clinical judgment in the management of medical services, it is an educational guideline provided to assist in the delivery of good medical care. All treatment decisions are ultimately based on the physician’s clinical assessment and judgment. Where medication recommendations are made, please refer to each health plan’s formulary for coverage considerations.

MVP updates its clinical guidelines at least every two years. The review process is also initiated when new scientific evidence or national standards are published. Practitioners are alerted via the web site, and by written notices from the plan via fax or newsletter. A hard copy of the clinical guideline can be requested by calling the MVP Quality Improvement Department at 800-777-4793 extension 1-2247.

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