

**Workforce Development: Key Considerations for Hiring and Retention in Integration Efforts**

The cultural differences between primary care and behavioral health settings may impede effective staff interaction, which in turn may hinder care coordination and care delivery for individuals with serious mental illness. Hiring the right team is crucial. Here are five tips for recruiting and hiring staff to advance integration of primary care and behavioral health.

The integrated Cherokee Health System, Healthy Connections, and The Providence Center all have senior staff who are responsible for overseeing and implementing their integration efforts. Finding someone who is “bilingual,” that is, with experience in physical and behavioral health, is very helpful to change efforts.

TIPS TO HIRE STAFF FOR INTEGRATION EFFORTS	EXAMPLES
<p><b>Identify the “soft” skills needed by employees</b></p> <p>Working in an integrated environment requires skills and competencies beyond technical skills. Ensure you have a comprehensive list of all the soft skills that will be needed in the identified role.</p>	<p>Incorporate integration competencies (e.g., teamwork and collaboration, care planning and care coordination, practice-based learning, and quality improvement) into all job descriptions and recruit individuals with the necessary traits to engage in this work.</p> <p>See the resources page for a listing of competencies needed for integration.</p>
<p><b>Implement targeted interview selection techniques (behavioral-based interviewing)</b></p> <p>These techniques can capture candidate characteristics that are inherent in the person and are not necessarily taught.</p>	<p>Include questions that assess the candidate’s ability to work in a unique setting. Ask about how an individual managed a difficult client in a clinic or a time when he/she successfully led a team to improve care for a client.</p>
<p><b>Identify or hire one champion to lead the integration efforts</b></p> <p>When this work is “everyone’s job,” it gets lost in other priorities. Identify one person who will drive this work forward on a day-to-day basis.</p>	<p>Consider creating a dedicated position for this work (see call-out box above) or allocate a protected portion of someone’s time to manage and drive this work on a daily basis.</p>
<p><b>Create opportunities to make sure you have the right candidate</b></p> <p>Hiring the wrong candidate can cost an organization time and resources. Minimize the impact of turnover by implementing systems that help you evaluate whether you have the right candidate.</p>	<p>Offer job previewing opportunities so candidates can see the realities of the job prior to accepting an offer. Create a probationary period to ensure you’ve selected the correct candidate. This period should be accompanied by strong coaching and mentoring to help individuals orient themselves to new work.</p> <p>Consider external mentorship options if no one at the organization is doing or has done this work. External mentorship could come from sites across the country undertaking this work or professional societies.</p>
<p><b>Look for staff with non-traditional work experience</b></p>	<p>Identify individuals with varied experience that can be an asset to an integrated role, such as those with experience in mixed settings (e.g., primary care provider with psychiatric experience) or experience in settings other than behavioral health or primary care (e.g., homeless shelter or Child Protective Services).</p>

*The Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to ensure that beneficiaries enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid have access to seamless, high-quality health care that includes the full range of covered services in both programs. This brief is intended to support health plans and providers in integrating and coordinating care for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees. It does not convey current or anticipated health plan or provider requirements. For additional information, please go to [www.resourcesforintegratedcare.com](http://www.resourcesforintegratedcare.com). Please submit any feedback on this brief or topic suggestions for other briefs to [RIC@Lewin.com](mailto:RIC@Lewin.com).*

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