

ABSTRACT

Support for Behavioral Health Providers During Public Health Emergencies



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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of public health emergencies, specifically the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and shift to telehealth, on behavioral health providers. The authors collected data through a comprehensive literature review and 12 interviews with key stakeholders and experts in the field. A thematic analysis was completed to summarize qualitative findings. Findings fell into three primary categories: (1) increased provider burnout due to the pandemic, (2) the impact of the shift in service delivery mode to telehealth, and (3) significant changes in healthcare policy and uncertainty about their long-term continuation. Interviewees suggested that behavioral health providers have not been adequately supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought much-needed attention to the phenomenon of burnout, particularly among healthcare workers. However, more research is needed to determine the best ways to support behavioral health providers specifically. In addition, the transition to telehealth has been largely positive for behavioral health providers, but there are a number of challenges that must be addressed as telehealth becomes a mainstream service modality. Additional research is needed to determine long-term best practices to address the needs of behavioral health workers in a newly defined healthcare landscape.

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