

November 18, 2019

Dear Jennifer,

Insurance is one of the biggest barriers. One thing they do in outpatient is limit the amount of visits. So you're depressed, 8 visits only. Now that's just an example, but is frustrating. Us clinicians are also required to diagnose the 1st or 2nd visit. This is often not possible or accurate. That's not fair to anyone. These diagnoses can impact life insurance policies, etc. Matters like this should be handled in such a lackadaisical manner. More screening for suicide, by licensed clinical staff, that assesses not just ideation and attempts, but hopes/plans for future (not having any is a big red flag), access to weapons/meds which makes it more probable. There is a need for more violent risk assessments. One less spoken symptom of depression is rage. Are they more likely to commit a crime to evoke a "suicide by cop" type issue? Medications take anywhere between 4 to 8 weeks to enter the system. Stop forcing us to discharge at 3 to 4 days. Regrettably, the incubation period for antidepressants can increase suicidal thoughts. Utilization reviews be completed by clinical professional therapist, not RNs. Training is much too different, it's why our profession exists. It is easier to obtain OTO/IOP requirements where they are forced to go or return inpatient, much like diversion, as we know it's a critical time.

In Missouri, a 72-hour psychiatric hold can be done at any hospital. If the need is greater and the patient doesn't fit their criteria they are sent to the state hospital. I believe the way the law is now, a 72-hour hold can only be taken at a state psychiatric facility. The facility doesn't not accept voluntary patients and even when we do, there are often wait periods due to lack of beds in the state. Other self-care failures I've encountered that insurance overlooks are eating, bathing, etc. They say they are no longer suicidal, but have refused meals for 4 days. How is that safe? Those loopholes are where they get us. It needs to be completed by a clinical mental health professional. I love what you are doing and am thankful we have people behind us fighting for what's right. It gets overwhelming for us in the trenches, especially when they tie our hands.

Halee Brockus
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