



DATA SHORTS

Six Months of Behavioral Health Adult Outpatient Claims

On January 1, 2015, the Public Behavioral Health System (PBHS) Medicaid carve-out expanded to include Substance Related Disorder (SRD) services. There is now sufficient claims data available to complete an initial evaluation of the characteristics of people getting outpatient SRD treatment, outpatient Mental Health (MH) treatment, and those getting both.

To assure comparability among the groups, the analysis is limited to outpatient claims for those over age 15 with service dates within the first six months of calendar 2015. The overwhelming majority of people in the PBHS receive outpatient services, and very few individuals under age 16 enter the SRD treatment system. The six month limitation minimizes potential claims lag effects.

Nearly 120,000 individuals over age 15 sought outpatient treatment in the PBHS during this period. The first graph shows that nearly two-thirds were being treated only for MH issues, nearly one-quarter were being treated only for SRD issues, and more than 12% received treatment for both.

The second figure shows the breakdown by age and by race. Of those under 25, the greatest percentage is in MH treatment, while the greatest percentage of those between 25 and 54 are receiving treatment either for SRD or both. The distribution by race shows that those in MH only treatment were nearly evenly divided between African American and White races, while for those in SRD treatment or in treatment for both, the greatest percentage were White.

The third graph shows that women comprise a greater percentage of the MH system, but men comprise a greater percentage of the SRD system. There is an even split between genders for those receiving services in both systems. While less than one-third of those in MH treatment were in the Medicaid (MA) expansion category, just over one-half in SRD treatment or in treatment for both disorders were in this category. MA expansion raised the eligibility income limit from 113% of the poverty level to 138% and removed the requirements that the applicant either be pregnant, a single parent or have a disability, so many more women than men were eligible for MA prior to the expansion (see Data Short Vol. 4, No. 5, http://bha.dhmm.maryland.gov/Documents/DataShortVol.4_Issue5.pdf). This is part of the reason that, historically, adult women outnumbered men in the MH treatment system.

Generally, individuals in treatment for SRD or for both SRD and MH were more similar to each other than those in treatment for MH only. Those in the SRD only/both groups are more likely to be between the ages of 25 and 54, White, male, and part of the MA expansion population than those in the MH only group.

