



# COVID-19's Impact on Behavioral Health Offerings

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**October 14, 2020**

# The emotional toll of COVID-19

**96%** of all U.S. adults say the pandemic has impacted their overall stress

**55%** of Americans say they have felt lonelier since social distancing began

**53%** of all U.S. adults say the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health

**300%** increase in rate of depression

Chapter

# 01

# What we have seen

# Key data points

- 110X times higher use of telehealth; overall outpatient use has remained relatively flat
- Telehealth leading diagnoses are stress/anxiety and depressive disorder
- Average length of stay (ALOS) for mental health and substance use inpatient stays have increased across all lines of business (up 29% for commercial line of business)
- 10% increase in unique utilizers with a suicidality diagnosis
- Increase in individuals reporting SDOH needs (food, transportation, unemployment, etc.)

Chapter

# 02

# How the industry responded

# Impact on BH delivery system

## Telehealth adoption:

- Rapid shift to telehealth – for a historically slow moving industry
  - Beacon trained 4700 providers over 18 trainings
  - 74% of providers reported providing services mostly or exclusively via telehealth
- Treatment done almost exclusively face-to-face required the most evolution (IOP, PHP, SAP/DOT)
- Many plan administrators had to make changes to grant permission for this modality
- Many telehealth restrictions were lifted:
  - Site restrictions were removed
  - “Established relationship” waived
  - State licensure flexibility

## Additional adjustments:

- Pivoted call center activity from resource connection to “in-the-moment support”
- Repositioned many roles and responsibilities to adapt to the need (CM began proactive outreach to the most at risk)
- Communication of useful information and access to helpful tools was imperative

# Integrated, Multi-Channel Campaigns

## Panel Discussion

## Blogs

Coronavirus anxiety: Identify, address and ease it

Coronavirus, including public health emergencies such as COVID-19, affect mental health both at the individual and population levels.

Indeed, people experience a wide range of mental health issues during and long after emergencies, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Stay Informed

## Social Media

**Beacon Health Options**  
13,492 followers  
1w · 🌐

This is a stressful time for children and young adults having to deal with remote learning as well as for workers who are making the transition to remote working. The new environment could impact everyone's well-being. Check out [Be ...see more](#)

**Member Resources**  
beaconhealthoptions.com

Beacon Health Options is striving to ensure that men...

## Newsletters

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**Caring through COVID Connection**  
Insights and resources to help you navigate COVID-19

Explore and share the latest insights and tools from Beacon's experts to help manage the stress and anxiety related to the evolving COVID-19 crisis. And, for more information, visit [https://www.beaconhealthoptions.com/covid-19](#)

**How to help your children navigate back-to-school anxiety:** Starting a new school year is full of unknowns in a "normal" year. Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is adding a host of new concerns to the list. It's important to recognize your child is likely to experience heightened back-to-school stress and anxiety. Before these tips help prepare for a school year full of unknowns.

**How to help your extrovert with at-home learning:** Does your child miss the back-and-forth of the classroom? Does the isolation and quiet of online education not quite fit their learning style? If your community has decided to delay returning to school full-time, here are ways to help your extrovert adjust to at-home learning.

Join us for a webinar!

**beacon** **Caring through COVID-19**

**COVID-19's impact on employee and member behavioral health programs**

June 10, 2020, 3 P.M. ET

Please join us for an insightful panel discussion exploring COVID-19's impact on mental health today and into the future. With mental health issues on the rise, preparing for tomorrow's challenges is more critical than ever. Hear expert panelists discuss key issues related to the spectrum of mental health disorders, access to care and the economic impact of mental illness. Panelists include, BNY Mellon, Emblem Health, Hazelden Betty Ford, Yale New Haven Hospital and Marsh.

Dr. Prakash Patel, Executive Vice President and President for Anthem, Inc.'s Diversified Business Group, will moderate this virtual, 60-minute, panel event on June 10, 2020, at 3 P.M. ET.

Reserve your spot by registering today.

[REGISTER NOW >>](#)

## Client FAQs

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**General Questions**

**What is a coronavirus and what is COVID-19?**  
There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease caused by a new coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.

**How do people become infected and how does it spread?**  
Current understanding about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**  
Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

## Tip Sheets

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**Social distancing for the social animal**

"Man to be sure a social animal" pointed Aristotle in his treatise Politics, and since that time, scientists have confirmed that humans are indeed social animals. Our brains are quite literally wired to be social.

Therefore, when we are called upon to engage in "social distancing" during the coronavirus pandemic, it's not our nature to do so. What, then, does it mean to "socially distance"? Does it mean not going to parties? Not going on a date or taking a trip? Consulting guidance can answer those questions. Below are links to help you guide your "social distancing" behavior.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/physical-distancing.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/physical-distancing.html)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:**  
[www.samhsa.gov/system/files/15m1141484.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/system/files/15m1141484.pdf)

**What about social isolation?**  
There is an availing social distancing to combat this pandemic. Of course, the people who are most threatened by the pandemic—people older than 65 and those with preexisting conditions—are the ones most vulnerable to isolation. However, all of us face loneliness as we agree to social distance in being coronavirus under control.

Isolation and loneliness are significant mental health challenges, and so we need to take care of both our mental and physical health (linked), our mental and physical health are intertwined. Following are some tips to help you stay connected during this public health emergency.

- 1. Mitigate your own risk.** If you're young and healthy, take recommended health precautions accordingly. Young people are among the lowest risk for transmitting the virus to others. Wash your hands frequently, stay away from crowded public spaces (keep a distance of six feet between you and others), and leave the house only when necessary.
- 2. Get together outdoors and not in tight crowded spaces.** Take a walk in the park or the woods. Do not get in a car or sit in a restaurant. Be sure to check with your community's guidance as some areas are advising against this type of activity.
- 3. Virtual connection.** During times like these, virtual connection is critical. For people who are not technology savvy, be sure to provide needed technical support, the technology such as video chat or text. Share those that way to have a virtual book club meeting.
- 4. Be proactive about staying in touch.** Sometimes we need to control ourselves to make the telephone call, text or video chat. Now may be the best time to reach out to that long-lost friend.
- 5. Keep your coffee handy.** If you have a focused project, you have less time to think about your social isolation. In having a project around the house you've been meaning to do, such as clean out the garage? How about tidying, a rework, or a project?
- 6. Limit media overload.** Too much news about the coronavirus can accelerate our sense of isolation. Watch a movie or read a book that connects you to the human experience and the resiliency people can have to overcome challenges.

If you need further guidance, call your company's employee assistance program, which specializes in addressing mental health and other life challenges. You can also contact local hotlines, such as the Samaritans Helpline at 877-870-4673.

888-887-2037 | [beaconhealthoptions.com](#) | [socialdistancing@beaconhealthoptions.com](#)

## Living in Uncertain Times

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**Living in Uncertain Times**

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**The Intersection of Uncertainty and Parenting: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

## Webinars & Podcasts

## Leader Videos



## Web content

**FEATURED TOPIC**

**Coronavirus and Your Mental Health**

The recent appearance of coronavirus in the U.S. has created public concern, and for some, feelings of fear and anxiety.

# Tools and Resources

**Anthem**  
EAP

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health options



  
sydney  
care

 **ab** auntbertha

  
my Strength

  
PsychHub™



Chapter

# 03

# What to expect

# Key External Projections

1

## McKinsey

- BH need prevalence could experience a 50% increase after the COVID-19 pandemic; 35 million additional people may experience BH conditions
- 1 in 3 individuals in US could have BH need in 2021
- Frontline health workers & newly unemployed are projected to have heightened need.

2

## WellBeing Trust

- Across nine different scenarios, the additional deaths of despair range from 27,644 (quick recovery, smallest impact of unemployment on deaths of despair) to 154,037 (slow recovery, greatest impact of unemployment on deaths of despair)

3

## The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

- Reduced per capita GDP & associated rises in unemployment will be directly associated with increases in BH issues
  - Each percentage point increase in unemployment results in 1.6% increase in the suicide rate.
  - Each percentage point increase in unemployment associated with an increase of 0.334 overdose deaths per 100,000 people.
  - Each five percent increase in unemployment is associated with an additional 20,000 American veterans suffering from SUD.

# Behavioral Health demands will increase overall

- Telehealth use will continue
  - Policymakers will work to relax regulations permanently
  - 98% of Beacon OP providers report plans to continue telehealth post-COVID.
- Greater recognition and normalization for seeking help
  - Pent up demand will strain the system
  - Projected 2-5% increase in BH use in 2020 despite COVID dip
- Substance use disorder diagnoses will increase
  - 13% of adults had increased alcohol consumption or drug use\*
- Key events will drive further emotional health needs
  - Social unrest, national election and future spikes in cases
- Suicide rates will increase\*
  - “seriously considered suicide in the past 30 days?”
    - 11% of all adults
    - 25% of adults ages 18-34

Chapter

# 04

# What to consider

# Percentage of employers who say benefit has increased in importance due to COVID-19

**75%** Telehealth benefits

**58%** Employee Assistance Programs

**60%** Mental health benefits

**53%** Paid Family Medical Leave

# How Funds can adjust

## Increase emotional wellbeing support in both traditional and nontraditional ways

- Expand coverage to allow telehealth for most levels of care
- Expand EAP coverage to offer a richer benefit or to cover more members
- Add tools and resources designed to promote self help (cCBT, peers support websites, resiliency tools)
- Remove copays or coinsurance for routine outpatient therapy and/or for anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications
- Add behavioral health resources to onsite/near site clinic strategies
- Create Peer Support training for frontline managers, business agents and benefits teams
  - Training on active listening, supportive conversations and effective connections to services
  - Resiliency campaigns with senior leadership as champions

# Thank You

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## Contact Us



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