

UC San Diego

Family Medicine Research Day 2024

Title

What's in a WHO? Determining the Impact of Warm Handoffs (WHOs)

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8gz2j2x1>

Authors

Lebensohn-Chialvo, Florencia

Sudano, Laura

Sieber, William

et al.

Publication Date

2024-06-21

The warm handoff (WHO) has long been considered an essential and necessary element of integrated behavioral health (IBH). It is seen as critical to improving patient access and engagement with behavioral health care. While some studies have demonstrated that WHOs improve engagement with behavioral health care, other studies have revealed contradictory results. These mixed findings suggest that more nuanced examination may help elucidate other factors that increase the effectiveness of WHOs in improving access and patient engagement with behavioral health care. Our study seeks to expand on the existing literature by examining 1) whether WHOs increase patient engagement with behavioral health services, 2) what factors increase the likelihood of a WHO, 3) whether the content of the WHO (e.g., inclusion of brief intervention) or non-WHO factors (e.g., time on waitlist) impact engagement with behavioral health services. To address these questions, we extracted Electronic Health Record (EHR) data collected on IBH referrals and completed WHOs across 10 UC San Diego Health primary care clinics from 2018-2023. Specifically, we extracted a) patient demographic variables, b) patient health status data, c) referral information (e.g., referral date, date added to waitlist, date of first scheduled IBH visit), and d) warm handoff information (e.g., location and mode of consultation, consultation focus, and follow-up plan). We will present initial results, address limitations, including generalization of results, and discuss future directions.