

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: HHS CENTER LAUNCHES COORDINATION MODEL FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS & ADDICTION DISORDERS – HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS A FOUNDATION FOR THE EFFORT
*PRESS RELEASE***

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS FOUNDATIONAL FOR MULTI-FACETED, SILO-SHATTERING INITIATIVE

WASHINGTON, DC- JANUARY 18, 2024 – Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition praised today’s introductory announcement of the Innovation in Behavioral Health Model (IBH), a new initiative from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through the CMS Innovation Center. The new model is designed to utilize interprofessional care teams to improve access to integrated, coordinated comprehensive, community-based mental health and substance use treatment services, coordinated care physical health conditions, and connection to resources to address health-related social needs.

The Behavioral IT Coalition applauds CMS for making behavioral health information technology a required component of the IBH model. Specifically, the program seeks to expand the health IT capacity of Community Mental Health Centers and other community behavioral health organizations to achieve the multiple objectives of care coordination with primary care providers; efficient referrals across providers; effective care management to achieve desired health outcomes; and improved quality reporting and data sharing across health care systems and with community partners.

“Healthcare technology is critical to the success of the IBH Model care delivery framework, with its complexities of care coordination, care management, referral management, and the need for real-time data for effective diagnosis and treatment,” said Kevin Scalia, Executive Vice President of Netsmart, a longtime Coalition member. “Today’s announcement signals a major step toward the integration of physical health and mental health for a significant number of Americans who have life-limiting behavioral and physical health co-morbidities.”

“We commend Secretary Becerra and CMMI for developing new resources to continue facilitating integrated care, including much needed funding to bolster health IT capacity and Electronic Health Records (EHR). This model will help better coordinate care between community mental health and substance use care organizations, primary care physicians, hospitals, and other medical specialists – which is critical to improving health outcomes and promoting health equity,” said Chuck Ingoglia, President & CEO of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

CMMI will select eight state Medicaid agencies to participate in the IBH Model. A more detailed Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will be released in the spring of 2024 and the model will launch in fall of 2024. Eligible participants will be adults enrolled in Medicaid and/or Medicare (or both) who are experiencing behavioral health conditions and receiving care from a participating practice. Rep. Doris

Matsui (D-CA) and then Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) introduced legislation in the 117th Congress that would have provided financing for what is now the IBH Model.

Discussions of financing models and technology shouldn't obscure the most fundamental reality. Persons with mental health and substance disorders experience extraordinarily high levels of mortality and morbidity in large measure because of poorly managed comorbid chronic diseases. The IBH Model is exciting because it seeks to finance an on-the-ground, provider level initiative to coordinate care and facilitate access to primary care and specialty medical services to Americans desperately need it.

The Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition is the unifying voice of America's mental health and IT providers comprised of organizations and companies such as American Psychological Association (APA), Centerstone, National Association of Counties, National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, National Association of Social Workers, National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, The Jewish Federations of North America, Netsmart Technologies, National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness, amongst others.

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