

Specialty Innovation Summit Highlights

Behavioral Health

(New Orleans)



The American Hospital Association (AHA) convened hospital and health system leaders for a day of collaborative design focused on reducing disparities in behavioral health outcomes. Using a human-centered approach, participants co-designed solutions and opportunities for action.

This one-page brief highlights the collective insights and priority areas identified by participants, offering actionable strategies to support hospitals and health systems in improving behavioral health outcomes.

Practical Takeaways

1 Implement strategies to enhance patient care, such as language access and health literacy.

- Partner with schools and universities to ensure students are trained on behavioral health disorders and well-equipped to enter the workforce as the next generation of healthcare leaders.
- Expand technology access and broadband so patients, families and caregivers can obtain healthcare information.
- Allocate funds towards services that can improve care such as bilingual courses or additional health literacy training for staff.

2 Use quantitative and qualitative data to inform, design and evaluate improvement strategies.

- Establish a process to review and share behavioral health community data (crisis response, social service referrals) with community partners to support bidirectional learning.
- Implement a standardized strategy to collect, validate and analyze evidence-based behavioral health data indicators ensuring consistency across departments.
- Partner with local community-based organizations and stakeholders, including law enforcement, to analyze resource utilization data, identifying zip codes with highest behavioral health related services.

3 Foster healthy communities by investing in strong partnerships between the community and their hospitals.

- Develop partnerships with trusted local institutions (i.e., churches, schools, barber shops and community centers) to train leaders to properly address and report behavioral health challenges.
- Leverage the subject-matter expertise of established community and regional organizations to strengthen behavioral health interventions and improve outcomes.

Call to Action:

- **Consider:** How well do our workforce training and education pipelines align with the behavioral health needs of the communities we serve, and how are we identifying and addressing gaps in care delivery?
- **Engage:** What opportunities exist to engage universities and community leaders to strengthen the future behavioral health workforce?
- **Integrate:** How can we integrate community insights and patient stories into organizational decision-making and drive meaningful improvement in behavioral healthcare?