Follow-up with a behavioral health provider (BHP) can make the difference in a patient’s recovery. Dropping out of treatment after a psychiatric hospitalization increases the likelihood of readmission from 1 in 10 to 1 in 4.1

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) recommends having a follow-up appointment with a behavioral health provider within 7 calendar days after discharge. These standards are used for quality and regulatory purposes.

Best practices for patient follow-up and stabilization:

- Include the patient’s family or close friend in the discharge planning, with the patient’s permission.
- Schedule follow-up appointments as early as possible during the hospitalization to ensure appointment availability.
- Document phone numbers and addresses where patient can be reached after discharge.
- Ask patient to provide a phone number of someone else who will know how to reach the patient.

You can now use the MHN on-line search to find practitioners who offer appointments within 7 days. Login to the MHN Provider Site, go to Provider Search, enter patient information, add search criteria and select “Add Optional Criteria”. From the drop-down menu select “Post Discharge Follow-Up Appointment.”

Patients at high risk for not following-up with BHP after discharge:

- Individuals who prefer to follow-up with their primary care physician (PCP) instead of a BHP
- Individuals who prefer to see their previous psychiatrist but cannot get an appointment within 7 days
- Individuals who are from out of town
- Minor children with parents who want to consult with PCP/Pediatrician before scheduling with a BHP

We encourage you to please assist patients with scheduling appointments with a BHP even if:

- Patient wants to make their own appointment
- Patient prefers to see PCP
- Patient signs out against medical advice (AMA)

If you need assistance scheduling a BHP appointment, please call MHN at (888) 327-0010. We can help!

* A behavioral health provider can be a social worker, psychologist, counselor, nurse-specialist or psychiatrist.