

Technical Assistance on the Development of Comprehensive PhilHealth Benefits for Mental Health

Implementing Agency: Alliance for Improving Health Outcomes (AIHO)

Cooperating Agency: Philippine Council for Health Research and Development & Philippine Health Insurance Corporation

TECHNICAL ABSTRACT

Mental health is defined as the state of well-being, wherein an individual can realize his/her own potential and live their lives fully. This means that an individual should be able to cope with the stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to society (World Health Organization, 2013). Thus, disturbances or disorders to mental health and well-being can significantly affect an individual, his/her family and the community, posing emotional, psychological, social and financial burden. Currently, PhilHealth only covers mental health conditions such as dementia, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders, under Mental and Behavioral Disorders by in-patient admission case rates, only amounting to Php 7,800. This project aims to improve health outcomes, quality of life and productivity of Filipinos with mental health conditions through development of comprehensive PhilHealth benefits to ensure financial risk protection.

The project included three main methodologies all of which were completed in 10 months. This study is divided into three streams of work: 1) Evidence Synthesis and Standards Setting; 2) Costing Analysis; and 3) Epidemiologic Analysis. The Evidence Synthesis and Standards Setting aimed to determine priority components of the benefit package, status of mental health services in the Philippines, and key stakeholders and partners in the development and implementation of the benefit packages. The Costing Analysis aimed to determine the direct and indirect costs in the provision of the services. The Epidemiologic Analysis aimed to provide data on the prevalence and incidence of mental health illnesses in the country to inform package development.

The algorithm of care and menu of services for the provision of mental health services were developed through evidence synthesis. The project was done through close coordination with technical officials of PhilHealth and DOH, along with key stakeholders such as professional societies, patient organizations, and health facilities. The team developed benefit packages for mental health which cover emergency services, psychiatric and neurologic services, and mhGAP services. While the development of the benefit packages is a significant milestone in enhancing access to health care, new challenges in implementation exist in ensuring that facilities are capacitated. An important consideration prior to implementation of the benefit packages is contextualization within the mechanisms of the Universal Health Care law, which puts emphasis on stronger primary care services, and financing of services through health care provider networks.