



# Mindpath On Demand

Immediate access to behavioral health services keeps patients in care and has major cost-saving implications for patients and the healthcare system.

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## Pairing Clinical Expertise with Telehealth to Accelerate Access to Care

The behavioral health field has struggled for decades to meet a growing demand for care. Partially fueled by increased awareness and better screening, efforts to provide behavioral healthcare have been stymied by clinician shortages, sparsely distributed care, and insurance complexities. People want help, but they can't always access it.

In need of care, more patients are turning to emergency departments (ED) and acute care facilities. ED visits for mental health and substance abuse issues increased 44 percent from 2006 to 2014.<sup>1</sup> In addition, EDs are often ill-equipped to provide adequate psychiatric services. In 2016, some patients waited an average of 23 hours to receive urgent psychiatric care.<sup>2</sup> This can only lead to poorer patient outcomes.

38%

US adults reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty it's caused has only accelerated this problem. In 2020, 38 percent of adults in the United States reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, up from just 11 percent a year before.<sup>3</sup> EDs quickly noticed a shift in patients. More people sought treatment for suicide attempts, along with drug overdoses, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect.<sup>4</sup>

Unable to treat patients in-office, behavioral health clinicians quickly embraced telehealth as a tool to meet patients where they are. Initially considered a temporary fix, patients have embraced the convenience of telehealth, and many expect it to be offered.

In a 2020 survey, 80 percent of respondents who received a telehealth session indicated they were interested in continuing with online appointments. The study also found that the use of emergency and acute care facilities did not increase during this time.<sup>5</sup> Another study indicated that children who received telehealth services had significantly shorter median ED lengths of stay.<sup>6</sup>

On-demand telehealth is a valuable tool that can increase access to care. Patients who receive behavioral health treatments in an outpatient setting are kept out

of emergency rooms and inpatient hospitals. This creates \$3,000 in savings per person over two years in medical and pharmacy costs.<sup>7</sup>

The pandemic's effect on behavioral health will likely be felt for several years. Telehealth is helping to accommodate the surge in behavioral healthcare needs. Now telehealth has the power to go even further by providing on-demand care the moment patients need it most.

Mindpath Health, a leading, independent provider of high-quality outpatient behavioral health services, provides fast and effective telehealth to patients with its On Demand model. Launched in 2021, On Demand has the potential to divert demand away from emergency departments, give flexibility to clinicians, and transition patients into longer-term care.

## Pandemic

has only accelerated the demand for behavioral health services

## Evidence Supporting On-demand Telehealth

The behavioral health field has greatly benefited from growing acceptance and understanding around mental health. Yet, while more people are eager to begin their wellness journey, the behavioral health care industry struggles to increase capacity and streamline access to care. The pandemic has only accelerated the demand for services.

Without solutions, behavioral health patients can suffer from reduced quality of care, low satisfaction, poor outcomes, and higher costs. EDs and acute care facilities will continue to bear the brunt of care, often with inadequate resources.<sup>2</sup>

Those unable to get treatment may experience worsening outcomes. This can create a ripple effect, with consequences felt by families, workplaces, and the economy at large.

By combining on-demand mental healthcare and telehealth, patients are given immediate access to care, diverting them from EDs and acute care facilities. Commonly used to treat patients in a single visit, on-demand can adapt to smoothly transition them into ongoing care.

Patients have grown accustomed to on-demand telehealth and see it as an effective treatment option. After an on-demand session, the majority of patients reported<sup>8</sup>:

- Satisfaction with the service
- A decrease in symptom severity
- Less impairment related to their symptoms
- Improved ability to understand and manage their presenting problem

On-demand services also increase the likelihood that patients will bridge into the regular spectrum of behavioral healthcare and stay in treatment longer.<sup>9</sup>

Telehealth for mental healthcare is clearly here to stay. But successful on-demand models require a well-designed clinical structure to create a solid therapeutic alliance and motivate patients to stay in care.



## Our Model: Mindpath On Demand

Mindpath On Demand is the digital front door to our ecosystem of care. We increase access to licensed clinicians and provide patients with a high-quality starting point in their behavioral health journey.

Results have proven this model is an effective avenue for outpatient care that has the potential to save thousands of dollars per episode of care. Mindpath Health On Demand reduces the burden on higher levels of care and connects patients to longitudinal behavioral health services. It operates under the URAC telemedicine accreditation standards.

In 2021, Mindpath On Demand launched in our North Carolina market. Through the platform, licensed clinicians see patients as young as six, treating a spectrum of diagnoses and acuity levels with psychiatry and psychotherapy services. Findings in this paper are centered on data collected in this market.

Within the first year, Mindpath On Demand achieved the following outpatient results<sup>10</sup>:

- **Faster access:** Patients gained quick access to treatment, waiting an average of 16 minutes to connect with a licensed clinician. Additionally, 84 percent of patients transitioned into a regular continuum of care with Mindpath Health.<sup>10</sup>
- **Effective care:** Mindpath On Demand treats patients with medium to high acuity, keeping them in an outpatient setting. Each person diverted away from an ED or acute care facility represents an estimated savings of \$2,000.00 per patient.<sup>11</sup>
- **Operational and clinical excellence:** The Mindpath On Demand model operates under quality standards set by Mindpath Health's Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO) as well as URAC telemedicine accreditation standards. Together, these have shaped Mindpath Health On Demand's clinician profile to maximize effectiveness at the highest level of service.

**\$2,000**

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## Clinical Overview

Mindpath Health is a clinically led organization that combines best practices with advancements in technology, innovative models, and clinical research. As a medical practice, we understand the importance of creating clinical rigor around our offerings. Mindpath Health On Demand is no exception.

In partnership with our clinical leaders, we have created a Mindpath On Demand clinician profile that allows us to recruit and hire high-quality licensed clinicians. These clinicians are trained to recognize and treat a wide variety of disorders. They have extensive inpatient and urgent care experience and can manage the exacerbation of mental illness. Other skills and characteristics include:

- Crisis assessment and de-escalation
- Ability to recognize medical emergencies and serious medication side effects
- Effective engagement during short-term clinical interactions
- Broad clinical experience in diverse care settings
- Our licensed clinicians are supervised by Mindpath Health's OCMO, which has created quality-assurance procedures to guarantee all patients receive the best care.
- We obtained URAC telemedicine accreditation in 2021, a testament to its clinical and operational rigor.

Our clinical leaders have created a set of outcomes that allows us to track patient progress. These metrics focus on:

- Diversion from a higher level of care
- Acuity levels during the session
- Measurement-based care tools for clinical and operational workflows

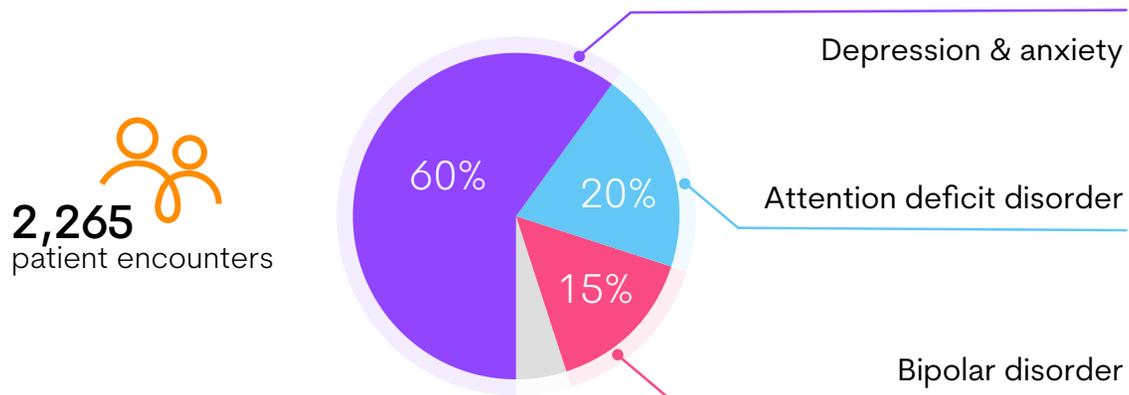
Continuous evaluation of these metrics is being conducted by clinical and administrative leadership as we continue to grow.

## Observed Findings and Results

There were 2,265 patient encounters through Mindpath Health On Demand in 2021. Of these, 80 percent involved medication-related concerns and 20 percent were for psychotherapy services.

About 56 percent of Mindpath On Demand patients identified as female, 68 percent were younger than 40. About 60 percent presented with a diagnosis of depression and anxiety, followed by close to 20 percent for attention deficit disorder and 15 percent of bipolar disorder.

With the Mindpath On Demand model, our intention is to increase access and connect or reconnect patients to longitudinal care. Approximately 84 percent of On Demand patients stayed in treatment for at least one additional session with Mindpath Health.



With this model, 65 percent of patients are seen once in Mindpath On Demand. The rest are seen an additional two or three times. Patients who receive an evaluation or measure as having a high acuity level should have at least one additional On Demand session. This ensures patients are at a clinically appropriate state to transition to outpatient services in our broader ecosystem.

In August 2021, we layered in clinical outcome measures and generated findings across 839 patients. Here is a snapshot of our clinical outcomes<sup>9</sup>:

- **Acuity:** 43 percent of On Demand patients were deemed medium- or high-acuity by our licensed clinicians.
- **Higher level of care:** 5 percent were recommended and referred to a higher level of care by our clinicians.
- **Kept in outpatient treatment:** Of the medium- or high-acuity patients, 89 percent were kept in Mindpath Health's outpatient ecosystem.

89%

Kept in Mindpath  
Health's outpatient  
ecosystem

The initial findings support our hypothesis that our On Demand model increases access, keeps patients in care, and has major cost-saving implications for patients and the healthcare system.

## Go-to-market Approach

The challenges that prevent patients from accessing mental healthcare support the need for Mindpath Health's On Demand model.

Our model was successfully implemented in a saturated market where wait times for treatment exceed three weeks.<sup>9</sup> We've made the model accessible to patients through our website and our centralized intake process.

On Demand provided immediate care, often within minutes, and helped stabilize and bridge patients until their scheduled appointment with a Mindpath Health clinician. It also diverted patients away from higher levels of care, potentially saving thousands of dollars per patient.

This model also offers incredible flexibility when exploring additional deployment scenarios. On Demand can be adapted to any number of strategic partnerships, such as employers, brokers, payors, and accountable care organizations.

In these market conditions, we can open a digital front door and provide access to care within minutes.

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Dr. Diego Garza has been in the medical field since 2013 and joined Mindpath Health in 2017. Dr. Garza developed and implemented a telepsychiatry service that employs over 800 providers and sees more than 30,000 patients per month. This places the program as the largest telepsychiatry/teletherapy program in North Carolina and has presence in multiple other states. He has over eight years of telemedicine program development and implementation experience. Dr. Garza was awarded the 40 Under 40 Award in 2020 and the Health Care Hero Award in 2018 by the Triangle Business Journal. He received his medical degree from el Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico and his master's degree in public health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Mindpath On Demand offers a fast and convenient way to get same-day online treatment, providing patients with rapid care.

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