

## Background and Need

In the winter of 2007, the Illinois Departments of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Healthcare and Family Services (Illinois' Medicaid agency), with support and input from the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, released a request for proposals for a primary care consultation line. The University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Psychiatry was awarded the grant and implements the primary care consultation line as the Illinois DocAssist. Illinois DocAssist has been in existence since June 2008 and providing consultation services since September 8, 2008.

### Mission

The mission of Illinois DocAssist is to help primary care providers screen, diagnose, and treat the pediatric mental health problems of children and youth through training, consultation and referral assistance.

#### Problem 1: High Prevalence of Pediatric Mental Health Problems

- Up to 20% of children and adolescents in the United States experience significant mental health disorders; only 1 in 5 of the 20% are receiving mental health treatment.
- Approximately 270,000 children enrolled with HFS have a diagnosable mental illness but are NOT receiving treatment.
- About 75% of youth with a psychiatric disorder are seen in the primary care setting.

#### Problem 2: Shortages in Pediatric Mental Health Resources

- Access to child and adolescent psychiatrists (only about 190 statewide concentrated in Chicago and the environs) and other pediatric mental health specialists is limited.

#### Problem 3: Primary Care Providers' Pediatric Mental Health Training

- The average pediatric resident only receives about three months of pediatric mental health training in three years of general pediatric residency. Most PCPs report being inadequately trained to detect, diagnose and treat pediatric mental health disorders.
- A growing number of PCPs are prescribing psychotropic medications to children with psychiatric disorders.

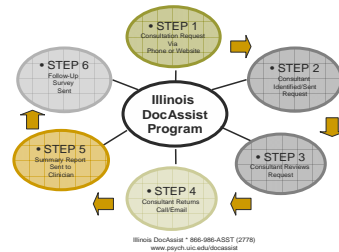


## Methods

### Consultation Services

- Warmline consultation services (Monday-Friday, 9a-5p); not a hotline
- Consultants are Child/Adolescent Psychiatrists
- Consultant dialogues with provider providing guidance and recommendations on the problem(s)
- Consultant provides recommendations verbally and in a report to the provider

### Consultation Line Process



- Step 1: Consultation request via phone or website  
Step 2: Consultant identified/sent request  
Step 3: Consultant reviews request  
Step 4: Consultant returns call/email  
Step 5: Summary report sent to clinician  
Step 6: Follow-up report survey sent

### Referrals

- Consultant may determine a need for more intensive services than can be provided in a primary care setting
- DocAssist Social Worker identifies whether a prescribing clinician, a non-prescribing clinician, or a combination of both practitioners is warranted
- Referral information is obtained from three main online sources:
  - 1) Illinois Department of Children and Family Service Provider Database
  - 2) American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Psychiatrist Finder
  - 3) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator.

### Continuing Medical Education Workshops

**Depression 1:** Identifying and Diagnosing Adolescent Depression in the Primary Care Setting

**Depression 2:** Initiating Treatment and Ongoing Management of Adolescent Depression in the Primary Care Setting

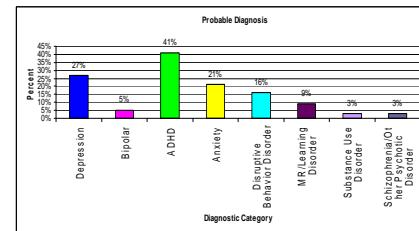
**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 1:** Identifying and Diagnosing Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder ADHD in the Primary Care Setting

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 2:** Initiating Treatment and Ongoing Management of ADHD in the Primary Care Setting

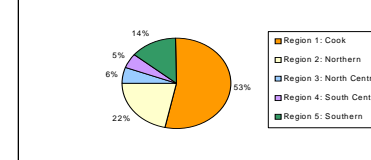
## Results

### Consultation Services (September 2008 - 2009)

- 241 contacts
- 172 (71%) consultations
- 69 (29%) inquiries
- 225 (93%) phone/in person
- 16 (7%) email



### Regional Distribution of Consultations



Consultation Service Follow-up Survey: 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Agree, 4 - Strongly Agree	Average Response (n=20)
1. The DocAssist consultation was helpful	3.75
2. The DocAssist consultant was knowledgeable and efficient	3.88
3. Your consultation request was answered promptly	3.63
4. Resources/educational materials provided were useful	3.47
5. I would use the DocAssist service again	3.82
6. DocAssist Consultation Service increased my comfort level in managing child/adolescent behavioral health issues	3.44

### Referrals

- 185 referrals have been given for 61 consultations
- 35% of consultations include a referral
- 36% of referrals need a psychiatrist

### Continuing Medical Education Workshops

- 227 providers trained
- Pre-test average score: 44%
- Post-test average score: 88%

## Conclusions

### Consultation Services

The consultations within the first year have been highly complex indicating that PCPs are attempting to treat increasingly complex cases and usually only calling regarding those cases that are most difficult. DocAssist consultants will provide basic clinical information as well as more complex clinical knowledge to support PCPs treating more complex cases.

The top three "probable diagnoses" for DocAssist consultation requests were ADHD, Depression and Anxiety. Accordingly, these are the topics of the first five CME modules.

Many providers called the DocAssist line after receiving informational notices from the State's Medicaid agency and indicated that this was the source of information for them regarding DocAssist services. The HFS Notices seemed to have a positive impact on the number of consultation requests as well as general inquiries about DocAssist. Workshop requests were also generated from the notices.

Small promotional items had a big impact on provider awareness. For instance, the pens with the DocAssist web address and phone number were very popular with physician's offices.

Marketing DocAssist services through multiple outlets and diverse methods will continue to increase DocAssist consultation requests.

### Referrals

Many communities, especially rural ones, lack access to appropriate mental health care for children and adolescents. DocAssist helps close this gap in services by assisting primary care providers in accessing the resources that may exist in their area. For instance, some local organizations provide telepsychiatry, training, consultations and referral assistance specifically for rural communities.

### Continuing Medical Education Workshops

DocAssist provides training through formal educational presentations and workshops as well as via the case-based model of learning utilized during consultations.

Future workshops will expand to other topics including substance use and anxiety disorders. Workshops will also be offered online via the Illinois DocAssist website at [www.psych.uic.edu/docassist](http://www.psych.uic.edu/docassist).

### Contact Us

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