



BACKGROUND

The traditional approach to healthcare focuses on addressing symptoms and paying for each service separately, which limits our ability to improve care and reduce costs. To truly improve health outcomes for all, we need to work together in a new way and embrace health integration.

Health integration is a collaborative approach to healthcare that focuses on the whole person. It involves a team of professionals who work together to address a person's physical, mental, behavioral, and social needs. By working together, teams can provide better care to meet a person's needs, helping them live healthier lives.

Health systems have implemented various health integration models to improve the health of people and communities while reducing overall costs. Examples include:

- ▶ Integrated Behavioral Health¹
- ▶ Public Health and Primary Care Integration²
- ▶ Healthcare and Non-medical Drivers of Health³
- ▶ Medical Neighborhoods⁴
- ▶ Medical and Dental Integration⁵
- ▶ Medical-Legal Partnerships⁶

These models aim to improve healthcare delivery and reduce overall cost of care. However, current efforts have not yet achieved widespread adoption and sustainability, limiting opportunities for people to pursue their best health.

OUR APPROACH

At Texas Health Institute, we view health integration with a systems lens. Doing so helps to promote progress along the health continuum, advance whole-person care, and encompass all aspects of life that can impact health. This approach includes:

- ▶ Addressing the barriers to widespread adoption of all models.
- ▶ Centering the work on population health, including communities and multiple disciplines.
- ▶ Identifying realistic strategies that transform the health continuum.

OUR STRATEGY

As an independent public health institute in Texas, our expertise, strategies, and nimble approach make us an integral and essential partner in driving systems change efforts. We aim to:

- ▶ **Unite Collaborators:** Convene payers, policymakers, clinicians, patients, and advocates.
- ▶ **Drive Actionable Change:** Identify and advance strategies for equitable, person-centered care and support efforts that promote statewide healthcare advancements.
- ▶ **Facilitate Knowledge Exchange:** Share best practices for integrated care improvements.

A CALL TO ACTION

Advancing health integration is more than any one sector, organization, or community can do independently. We need you to:

- ▶ **Share Your Insights:** Help us understand your health integration experience.
- ▶ **Collaborate with Us:** Shape a clearer view of current realities.
- ▶ **Envision the Future:** Explore new possibilities together to improve the health of all.

Definitions and References

1. "Integrated behavioral health care blends care in one setting for medical conditions and related behavioral health factors that affect health and well-being. Integrated behavioral health care, a part of 'whole-person care,' is a rapidly emerging shift in the practice of high-quality health care. It is a core function of the 'advanced patient-centered medical home.'" Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (n.d.). *About Integrated Behavioral Health*. Retrieved from integrationacademy.ahrq.gov/about/integrated-behavioral-health
2. "Integration of primary care and public health can foster an effective collaboration that understands that the health of a population is not simply a product of functionality or funding of health care services...it includes the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and encompasses inequities in power, money, and resources." American Academy of Family Physicians. (n.d.). *Integration of Primary Care and Public Health*. Retrieved from aafp.org/about/policies/all/integration-primary-care.html
3. "In 2023, HEDIS added the Social Need Screening and Intervention (SNS-E) measure that signifies a shift toward metrics that measure patient health outcomes and recognizes the importance of addressing non-medical needs as an indication of health care quality." Baker Institute for Public Policy. (2022). *Prioritizing Patient Health in Texas and the U.S. by Integrating Non-Medical Drivers of Health*. Retrieved from bakerinstitute.org/research/prioritizing-patient-health-texas-us-integrating-non-medical-drivers-health
4. "The 'medical neighborhood' provides a framework for structured, reciprocal relationships that integrate specialty care and extend the principles of the medical home to all practicing physicians." Meyers, D., Peikes, D., Genevro, J., Peterson, G., Taylor, E., & Grumbach, K. (2010). *The "medical neighborhood": what is it, and why is it important to the success of accountable care organizations?*. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 25(12), 1351-1357. pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24474526/
5. Medical-dental integration "is an approach to care that integrates and coordinates dental medicine into primary care and behavioral health." CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. (n.d.). *Medical-Dental Integration*. Retrieved from carequest.org/topics/medical-dental-integration
6. "At medical-legal partnerships, lawyers become an important part of the health care workforce, embedding in various care settings just like any other specialist. When some of the most complex and intractable problems—like an illegal eviction—are detected, clinical staff can refer patients directly for legal services. And like other members of the health care team, legal staff are available to consult with clinical and non-clinical staff about system and policy barriers to care. A number of these partnerships go further, leveraging their considerable knowledge and expertise to advance local and state policies that lead to safer and healthier environments." National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership. (n.d.). *Range of MLP Activities*. Retrieved from medical-legalpartnership.org/response/