

## **Mental Health Service Corps Mental Health Support in Primary Care Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Mental Health Service Corps?**

The New York City Mental Health Service Corps (MHSC)<sup>1</sup> is an unprecedented ground-breaking initiative to expand the workforce to close the gaps in mental health services and facilitate integration with primary care. Primary care practices, substance use programs, and mental health clinics in high-need communities throughout the city will receive full-time fully-funded masters or doctoral-level clinicians or physicians. Corps members will be trained to meet the diversity of the city and provide qualified mental health support for assessment, screening, and treatment for substance use and mental health issues.

### **Who are Mental Health Service Corps Members?**

The Corps is comprised of clinically trained early career masters (Social Workers) or doctoral-level clinicians (Psychiatrists) committed to working in high need communities that have experienced barriers to access to mental health care. The Corps members will be selected based on their experience and interest to work in diverse cultures (i.e., ability to speak languages and understand the culture specific to the patient population, oriented to ensure highest standard of social service).

### **How long will Mental Health Service Corps Members be available for a practice?**

Corps members are expected to commit from one to three years of service. The program is funded by New York City.

### **What will Mental Health Service Corps Members do?**

Corps members will be trained, coached, and supported in the use of evidence-based therapeutic interventions and mental health promotion methods. Corps members will be equipped to screen and treat patients for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. They will be trained to be sensitive to diverse cultural and linguistic environments. In addition to ongoing training and coaching, the Corps will provide a separate collaborating cadre of supervising psychiatrists and other clinicians. Corps members will have access to a team of a licensed clinical social work supervisor and consulting psychiatrist.

### **To be eligible to receive a Mental Health Service Corps Member, a primary care practice must have:**

- Clinical leaders at the site dedicated to collaborative care
- Exam room with table and chairs for Corps members and patients
- Electronic Health Record access for Corps members

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<sup>1</sup> MHSC is a key initiative of **ThriveNYC: A Roadmap for Mental Health For All**—a comprehensive public health approach to mental health. To read ThriveNYC, go to: <https://thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us>

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- Panel size of at least 1,500 unique patients per site
- Located in high-need area and/or serve a high percentage of medically underserved population
- Be willing to participate in site support and trainings offered by MHSC program to facilitate integration of Corps Member services
- Be willing to become a member of NYC REACH (note: membership is free)

**Primary Care practice sites selected to receive Corps Members will be expected to:**

- Designate leadership or primary care physician champion for collaborative care
- Establish processes to generate lists of patients in need of screening, outreach, and follow-up
- Meet regularly as a team with the Corps member to review cases, and discuss alternatives, especially for patients that do not show improvement
- Participate in trainings or practice collaboratives to learn about mental health treatment
- Participate in interviews, surveys, and share aggregated patient data as part of MHSC program operations and evaluation

**What are the costs to the practice?**

Costs of the Corps members and the added Corps team supervision and training they receive are covered by the city. In addition to a private space for consultation with patients, sites may need to cover costs associated with access to electronic health records or access to other systems used in the practice.

**Will the primary care practice be able to bill for the Corps member's services?**

No, not at this time.

**What is the timeframe?**

Sites will be selected after May 1<sup>st</sup>. Sites will be notified that they will receive a Corps member by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Corps members will be available to start in their clinical host site after July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**How can practices participate?**

Clinical sites can apply by completing a MHSC application, available here: <http://bit.ly/1q6eeRu>. As there are a limited number of Corps members, practice should complete applications as soon as possible to be considered.