

4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on

# Clinical Trials

 September 11-13, 2017 San Antonio, USA

## Utilizing emerging virtual care methods to improve access to behavioural health services within the ambulatory care setting

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In March 2014, the Behavioral Health Service Line within Carolinas HealthCare System launched a transformative integrative care model utilizing virtual and population health management tools to reach out to patients with behavior health symptoms through ambulatory care settings (primary care, internal medicine, and pediatric clinics). The goal of the collaborative care initiative is to improve access to behavioral health services by providing evidence-based, innovative, timely, seamless and coordinated care that meets patients' individual needs; by increasing the detection of mental illness through appropriate screening; increasing access to behavioral health coaching; providing treatment and medication oversight, improving clinical outcomes; strengthening relationship with ambulatory care providers; decreasing avoidable healthcare utilization and achieving higher rates of treatment adherence; while decreasing the overall cost of care overtime. In 2016, the program achieved a dramatic 43% decrease in depression (PHQ-9) and 38% decrease in anxiety (GAD-7) symptoms scores. 49% of the patients achieved 50% or more reduction in their raw depression scores as a result of telephonic health coaching. Over 80% of the program participants with suicidal ideations at baseline denied suicidal ideations at the completion of the program. Through implementation of the virtual model, ambulatory care clinics have immediate access to behavioral health services via video technology and other resources. Thus, assessment and treatment planning can begin immediately, and follow-up care can be coordinated between the behavioral health team and medical providers all in one visit.

### Biography

Manuel A Castro has been with Carolinas Healthcare System for 9 years and serves as the Vice-Chief Department of Psychiatry, Medical Director of Behavioral Health Integration, and Assistant Medical Director of Outpatient Medication Services. In 2016, he was honored to become a Fellow for the American Psychiatric Association. He leads the Behavioral Health Integration team in servicing ambulatory care practices across the healthcare system through a virtual platform. He is Board Certified in Adult Psychiatry. He is the recipient of the Brian R Nagy MD teaching award at CMC-Randolph and is an adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry with UNC-Chapel Hill.

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