



## Overview

### The challenge

Rogers Behavioral Health partnered with Watson Health Simplr to identify workflows that could be improved to allow staff to treat more patients and improve the patient and family experience.

### The transformation

By working with Simplr, Rogers Behavioral Health streamlined its screening process and benchmarked its evidence-based treatment plans against industry best practices.

### The results

Rogers Behavioral Health has reduced its process for admissions from area emergency departments from three hours to 64 minutes, its patient screening process from two hours to 40 minutes, and as a result, is seeing 1,000 more patients per year and achieving better outcomes.



# Rogers Behavioral Health

Bringing evidence-based mental health treatment to more patients with IBM Watson Health Simplr®

Today, nearly 1 in 5 adults in America are living with a mental health illness.<sup>1</sup> That has left many providers struggling to match increasing demand with patient access to care. Too often, patients go unseen, community needs are unmet and providers miss opportunities to serve.<sup>2</sup>

For Rogers Behavioral Health, a Wisconsin-based health system providing specialty mental health and addiction services through a multi-state network of hospitals and residential and outpatient centers, that pressure was palpable.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/state-mental-health-america>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.modernhealthcare.com/reports/behavioral-health/#/>

In fiscal year 2016, Rogers Behavioral Health served more people than ever before, recording 16,000 admissions of children, teens and adults across the system. But despite the system's commitment to meet the growing need for mental health services, Rogers Behavioral Health's leadership wasn't satisfied with its ability to consistently provide accessible, well-coordinated care.

"The number of patients calling in for our services has never been higher, and as we've undergone quite a bit of growth in the last five years, we wanted to set ourselves up with a platform that would allow our patients to get higher quality services without having to go through the various arduous processes that they've had to experience in the past," said Brian Kay, Vice President Of Continuous Improvement at Rogers Behavioral Health. "There is less stigma related to mental illness, so more people are understanding the need to seek out help, and it's our job to provide quicker and better access to services for individuals who need them."

### Increased efficiency leads to happier, more productive culture

The Rogers team sought out a partner to help make their organizational processes more manageable, all in the hopes of helping more patients.

"When we opened up our selection process that ultimately led to our collaboration with Simplr, we were looking for a firm that had a defined platform, a clear path for implementation, and from a principle standpoint, aligned well with our goals. We found that in Simplr," Kay said.

Once the Rogers leadership team selected Simplr, the first priority was to improve patient access to care by making the process of procuring services shorter and easier.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot of places to go through to get access to behavioral healthcare – screenings, recommendations, referrals and more. It's not as straightforward as going into an emergency department and getting seen right away," Kay said. "When people are in acute distress and they are forced to go through phone screens and wait for a doctor recommendation, that isn't providing a high level of service. So the challenge we faced was trying to streamline these processes and get treatment in an expedited manner."

Simplr began with a systemic appraisal of Rogers Behavioral Health's workflows and employee engagement. What they found was that the Rogers Behavioral Health staff had the capability to see more patients, but their employees were spending too much time on redundant processes.

"The first aspect we wanted to look at with Simplr was how many patients are seeking our services versus who is enrolled in our services, and there was a large discrepancy there. We wanted to know why," Kay said. "One of the problems we uncovered was ambiguity in our staff roles. If we defined those roles, we could help our staff handle more volume while reducing turnover."

Simplr addressed this issue by helping the Rogers team identify pain points in their screening process. For example, screeners were

asking patients redundant questions and making too many calls to chase down doctors and call patients back. By removing the inefficiencies in this process, the screeners' productivity increased. The average length of a patient screening went from few hours down to 40 minutes, which increased the number of screens that one screener can handle over the course of a month from 18 to 33. With more manageable workloads, job satisfaction also increased.

**"Just by streamlining some of our practices and procedures, our admissions process for patients coming from emergency departments has gone from a three hour to 64 minute process."**

– Brian Kay, Vice President Of Continuous Improvement

That led to decreased employee turnover, which also reduced training costs and allowed more experienced personnel to stay on the job longer. That experience ultimately allowed the screeners to do a better job placing patients in services.

## More patients receive repeatable, evidence-based care

As more patients made it into Rogers Behavioral Health, the level of care they received improved as well. Simpler's business transformation processes allowed Rogers Behavioral Health employees to check their evidence-based treatment plans against industry best practices to ensure that patients were getting the best quality care.

“One major facet that has improved is our clinical protocols for the treatment of depression,” Kay said. “A lot of providers don’t put evidence-based protocols at the forefront of their treatment plans, but over the last few years, behavioral health has really shifted from armchair medicine to being evidence-based. We want to make sure we’re giving our patients the best care that is proven to help and able to be repeated.”

By evaluating its clinicians’ treatment plans against fact-based benchmarks, Rogers leadership saw its Clinical Global Impression-Improvement (CGI-I) – a scale that requires the clinician to assess how much the patient’s illness has improved or worsened relative to a baseline stat at the beginning of the intervention – tick up eight points to 82 percent of patients that are much-to-very-much-improved.

Overall, the Rogers team has not only been able to make sure the level of care they provide is fact-based and effective, but they’re also able to ensure that more patients are able to receive it.

“Just by streamlining some of our practices and procedures, our admissions process for patients coming from emergency departments has gone from a three hour to 64 minute process; we’re able to get out-of-state residents into our system faster; and we have defined protocols to get our patients who need more intensive care into treatment more quickly,” Kay concluded. “These improvements have allowed us to see one thousand more patients per year that we couldn’t get to before, and those patients are enjoying a greater experience and better outcomes.”





## For more information

For more information on IBM Watson Health visit: [ibm.com/watsonhealth](http://ibm.com/watsonhealth).  
To learn more about Rogers Behavioral Health, visit [rogersbh.org](http://rogersbh.org).

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## Solution components

Watson Health Simplr®

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## About IBM Watson Health

Each day, professionals throughout the health ecosystem make powerful progress toward a healthier future. At IBM Watson Health, we help them remove obstacles, optimize efforts and reveal new insights to support the people they serve.

Working across the landscape, from payers and providers to governments and life sciences, we bring together deep health expertise; proven innovation; and the power of artificial intelligence to enable our customers to uncover, connect and act — as they work to solve health challenges for people everywhere.

