

# Primary Care Behavioral Health Integration Program

The Primary Care Behavioral Health Integration Program is a collaboration between Children's Primary Care Medical Group and Rady Children's Hospital – San Diego that brings together Primary Care Providers (PCPs), Integrated Health Therapists (IHTs), Psychiatrists, and care coordinators to care for the whole child within a pediatric primary care office setting. Together, these providers offer holistic care and monitor patient progress to achieve treatment goals and improve physical and behavioral health status.

## What is an Integrated Health Therapist?

An IHT works as part of the primary care team to help families with behavioral and mental health needs in a holistic way. IHTs are available on the same day and in the same office as the child's pediatrician for seamless integration of behavioral and medical care.

IHTs provide the following services:

- Counseling
- Education on behavioral health topics
- Connection to community health
- Talk therapy
- Problem Solving
- Crisis intervention

Through this model, PCPs enhance their knowledge about how behavioral conditions impact medical treatment and behavioral health providers gain knowledge about how medical care affects behavioral conditions.

## How It Works

An IHT works alongside the child's pediatrician to serve as an integral member of the primary care team. This means that the child can access both medical and behavioral health services at the same location to create a longitudinal, comprehensive care plan.

On the day of the child's medical consultation with their pediatrician, if the pediatrician would like to refer the patient for behavioral health services, the patient will see an IHT, who will assess the level of behavioral health care that is needed. The IHT will work with the caregiver and patient to develop and help manage an evidence-based treatment plan.

If necessary, the IHT can also refer to community-based resources and behavioral health hubs that include psychiatrists, psychologists and clinical social workers who can provide the child with more specialized behavioral health services.

## Primary Care Behavioral Health Integration Highlights:

- Same-day access to an IHT ("Warm Hand-Offs")
- Evidence-based approaches with consistent protocols
- IHTs embedded in primary care practices for ease of access to mental/behavioral health resources
- A unified team, providing patients with more consistent care