

# Whole Person Care Improves Quality and Outcomes in Medicaid

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## OVERVIEW

**States can improve outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries by integrating physical healthcare benefits with mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) services through comprehensive managed care organizations (MCOs). An IBM Watson Health study found that beneficiaries experienced increases in outpatient visits and improvements in medication management following integration.**

Medicaid is one of the largest funding sources for MH/SUD treatment in the United States. While states take different approaches to provide these benefits, Medicaid programs are increasingly integrating MH/SUD services and physical healthcare benefits through MCOs rather than “carving out” MH/SUD services to a separate managed behavioral health organization (MBHO).

Although extensive research demonstrates the advantages of integrating physical healthcare benefits with MH/SUD services and supports generally, little research exists quantifying the impact of a carve-in (MCO) model versus a carve-out (MBHO) model. IBM Watson Health analyzed data from multiple states to assess the impact of integration over a two-year period following the move from a carve-out model to a fully carved-in model.

### Topics

- Integrating MH/SUD in Medicaid managed care
- Methodology
- Changes in service utilization
- Improvements in quality

## RELATED INSIGHTS

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