



Healthcare

Using AI in Mental and Behavioral Healthcare

Risks, Policies, and Human Oversight

History of AI Implementation in Mental and Behavioral Healthcare

In 1966, MIT computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum created a chatbot program, ELIZA, which simulated a Rogerian psychotherapist response to a patient. While ELIZA was simplistic, it provided insight into clinical use of technology in mental and behavioral healthcare.

How AI is Used in Mental and Behavioral Healthcare Today

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing mental healthcare. While exact numbers of mental healthcare hospitals and professionals using AI are not available, as many as two-thirds of physicians and over 65% of hospital systems currently use AI. As AI implementation increases, risks related to bias, accuracy, privacy, and cybersecurity also increase. AI function requires programming to self-audit and alert humans to identified risks. Human oversight is necessary to ensure AI programs do not become biased and/or “hallucinate” and provide bogus material. For healthcare organizations and providers, addressing these risks requires clear policies, strategic risk management, and commitment to human oversight.

AI is used in administrative tasks including automating appointments and sending patient appointment reminders. Billing practices are enhanced with AI influence as verification of assets and accurate billing codes are generated more easily. Clinical use of AI directly impacts patient care and quality outcomes through early diagnosis, clinical notetaking, and digital therapeutics. AI tools are helpful in identifying and verifying evidence-based diagnoses based on patient history and symptom description, frequency,

and intensity. Treatment plans can be tailored more specifically using the evidence-based diagnostic criteria. Just as acute care hospitals use AI to monitor symptoms to detect subtle health changes and alert the provider for immediate attention, AI in mental healthcare can also provide real-time alerts to subtle changes.

Training and education are areas of considerable opportunity for providers, employees, and patients. AI-generated education directed toward providers and employees can detect gaps in knowledge, practice, and process and generate necessary training to fill those gaps. Patients can receive person-centered education and treatment plans, specifically tailored to their identified symptoms, history, and needs.

Implementation of AI in the Mental Healthcare Setting

As of 2025, the federal government has been working to make AI implementation easier. Prior to 2025, there was an emphasis on an AI Bill of Rights. From a cybersecurity and best practice perspective, CAC Specialty encourages aligning compliance and ethics programs with AI implementation. Having solid policies and procedures in place before implementing AI into practice, with sound legal counsel involvement, decreases risk of ineffective AI processes and tools.

The APA and AMA encourage the following strategic actions to remain on course with AI implementation and use:

- Remain current on healthcare AI legislative and regulatory oversight and regulations.
- Establish when and what to disclose to advance AI transparency.

- Develop comprehensive generative AI policies and governance.
- Identify practice and provider liability for use of AI-enabled technologies.
- Ensure AI data privacy and cybersecurity risk management is intact and robust.
- Encourage payer use of AI and automated decision-making systems.
- Include AI use and auditing as part of compliance and ethics programs with scheduled AI performance audits.
- Implement continuous training and education programs.

Protecting AI Assets and Cybersecurity

Mental and behavioral healthcare organizations can take the following steps to proactively protect AI assets:

- Secure appropriate insurance coverage for AI use.
- Review existing insurance policies to identify potential gaps related to AI integration.
- Consider obtaining specialized AI liability insurance to protect against risks such as data breaches, system failures, or algorithmic errors.

By developing clear policies and procedures that prioritize safety, transparency, and a culture of collaboration between humans and technology, healthcare organizations can navigate the challenges to leverage the power of AI to drive successful mental and behavioral healthcare innovation.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

If you would like to learn more or have questions, please reach out to your local CAC specialist or visit our website at: cacgroup.com.

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