



Antidepressant Medication Management

As a care provider, those struggling with mental health issues often come to you before seeing a behavioral health provider. These patients may need help diagnosing their condition and rely on your guidance to help them determine the steps they need to take to get better.

Screening Your Patients

The American Psychiatric Association and The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recommend patients complete the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ)-9 screening tool as needed.¹ Please screen your patients and follow the instructions for diagnosis and treatment for depression before prescribing medication.

How You Can Help

The PHQ-9 instruction manual only includes medication as a proposed treatment for scores in the moderate to severe range (scores above 10). Consider the following if you diagnose the patient with depression and prescribe medication:

- Encourage them to attend psychotherapy.
- Let them know it can take several months for antidepressant medication to be effective.
- Remind them to continue their medication for at least six months.
- For patients with complex conditions, consider referring them to a psychiatrist.

Referring to a Mental Health Professional

If you need to refer your patient to a behavioral health specialist or need to request coordination of care, please call the number on the back of the patient's health plan ID card or search liveandworkwell.com.

Resources

- **PHQ-9 Screening Tool:** [Providerexpress.com](https://providerexpress.com) > Clinical Resources > Major Depression.
- **Behavioral Health Tools and Information:** [Providerexpress.com](https://providerexpress.com) > Clinical Resources > Behavioral Health Toolkit for Medical Providers.
- **Patient Education Information:** [Liveandworkwell.com](https://liveandworkwell.com) using access code "clinician." See "Mind & Body" at the top, scroll down to find the links to topics.

Questions

If you have questions, please call the number on the patient's health plan ID card.

¹ Chung H, Pietruszewski P. Clinical Staff Webinar, National Council Depression Care Collaborative. 2015.

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