

# Health Career Observer



Official Newsletter of WNY R-AHEC

May, 2026

## Behavioral Health Care Manager

A **Behavioral Health Care Manager** is a specialized clinician, often a social worker, counselor, or nurse who coordinates and integrates mental health with physical health. They oversee, coordinate and enhance mental health and substance use services, bridging the gap between patient care, primary care providers, clinical teams and psychiatric specialists. They manage patient caseloads, conduct assessments, develop treatment plans, and track progress. Behavioral Health Care Managers work in integrated and collaborative care settings. They may work in hospitals, primary care clinics, community health centers and managed care organizations.

**What is Collaborative Care?** Collaborative care is a team-based approach to healthcare where providers (across all disciplines) work together with a behavioral health care manager and tele-psychiatrist to support a patient's physical and mental health. Collaborative care aims to improve access to behavioral healthcare, integrates physical and mental health in one setting, and is adaptable to special populations. Organizations using collaborative care often claim better self-reported patient outcomes and higher satisfaction among both patients and providers.

**Average Annual Pay: \$80,000**



*"What I find most meaningful in this work is the opportunity to meet patients where they are and support them through their unique journeys."*

-Christine Kalinik, MSW, LCSW, Behavioral Health Therapist III

## How Do I Become a Behavioral Health Care Manager?

**PROJECTED JOB  
GROWTH RATE IS  
23% BY 2034**

### Education

A Master's degree in Social Work, Counseling, Psychology, or a related field is typically required. Active, independent licensure (Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LCMC), Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT), or Registered Nurse) with experience, is often necessary.

### Experience

2-5+ years in behavioral health settings, case management, or clinical supervision.

### Skills

Includes strong communication, proficiency in electronic health records and knowledge of community resources.

## What Does a Behavioral Health Care Manager Do?

- ✓ Screen and assess patients for common mental health and substance use disorders.
- ✓ Develop and implement treatment plans, insuring follow up care and coordination between primary care, specialists and community resources.
- ✓ Track treatment response and side effects, frequently using tools like the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) for depression.
- ✓ Provide brief, evidence-based interventions (e.g., Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, motivational interviewing).
- ✓ Tracking treatment responses and monitoring patient progress to reduce hospital readmissions.
- ✓ Manage high-acuity, complex cases and facilitate crisis intervention.



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<https://www.r-ahec.org/>

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## A Professional Account

Christine Kalinik, MSW, LCSW, Perinatal Behavioral Health Care Manager at Western Behavioral Health at UPMC Magee shares insight into a career in Behavioral Health Care Management for the perinatal population.



### Tell us a little bit about yourself.

*"Women's health has been a central focus throughout my career. I began my work in social work services at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, gaining experience across multiple departments before advancing to Manager of Social Work. I value Magee's mission of supporting women across their lifespan, which continues to inspire my work."*

### How did you get started in the behavioral health care field?

*"Pursuing my Master of Social Work marked a significant and rewarding career transition. This decision has been transformative for both my professional path and my family. I have always been deeply committed to addressing mental health, viewing individuals holistically rather than separating physical and emotional well-being. This integrated perspective is especially important when working with the perinatal population."*

### What part of your job is most rewarding?

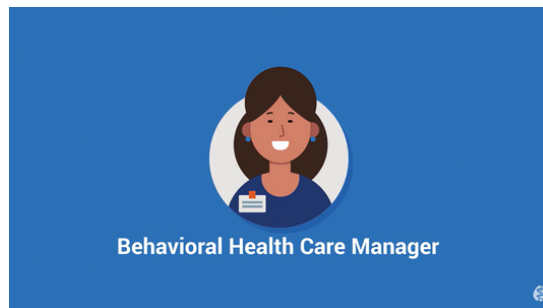
*"What I find most meaningful in this work is the opportunity to meet patients where they are and support them through their unique journeys. Whether assisting new mothers who may feel overwhelmed or supporting those preparing to expand their families, I am dedicated to providing guidance, reassurance, and practical support."*

### How do you engage patients who are hesitant or reluctant to participate in behavioral health care?

*"Working with the perinatal population requires adaptability and a patient-centered approach. When individuals express hesitation, I prioritize exploration over pressure, recognizing that each person's journey is their own. By maintaining this perspective, I strive to create a safe, therapeutic environment where patients feel comfortable seeking support."*

### What makes collaboration with an OB/GYN practice different than a primary care physician office?

*"Collaboration with OB/GYN providers has been particularly effective due to our shared commitment to comprehensive patient care. Building strong relationships with providers and clearly communicating my role fosters mutual trust, which is essential to ensuring coordinated, high-quality care for patients."*



Click on the image for information on The Collaborative Care Model and Behavioral Health Care Managers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXZTgg3GyPw>



Click on the image for a professional account from a Behavioral Health Care Manager

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aoz53tAeJ6o>



For more information visit the American Psychiatric Association

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/professional-interests/collaborative-care/learn> or for information on perinatal mental health visit <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/perinatal-mental-health/>

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## ST. BONAVENTURE HEALTH CAREERS CAMP



### Explore Your Future in Healthcare!

Discover what a future in healthcare can look like at this one-day camp! Connect with students and professionals, gain hands-on experience, and explore a wide range of healthcare careers.



#### CAMP INFO:

- 📅 July 30, 2026
- 🕒 9 AM - 3 PM
- 📍 261 W State St, Saint Bonaventure, NY 14778

Apply Now!



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SBHealthCareerCamp26>

Deadline to Apply: June 15, 2026



Questions? Contact WNY R-AHEC (585) 786-6275 info@r-ahec.org



Health Career Resource Guide

## Join Yes & Know: A Virtual Health and Wellness Study

**The Yes & Know study is a nationwide virtual education program for 14- to 19-year-olds, combining live group-based education with an interactive website.**

**Earn up to \$300 in gift cards and learn about life skills while supporting research to improve health education.**

**Includes topics such as:**

- Sexual Health Education
- Building Healthy Relationships
- Nutrition and Healthy Eating Tips
- Reaching Your Education and Career Goals

**The study is entirely online.** Attend 10 Zoom sessions, take 4 short surveys, and complete activities on a website to earn gift cards!

**Is this you, or do you work with youth who meet these criteria?**

- Age 14-19
- Can participate in English
- Live anywhere in the U.S. or U.S. territories

**Questions?**  
Email [yesandknow@etr.org](mailto:yesandknow@etr.org)  
Phone 510-379-5399

**Interested?** Scan the QR code with your phone to answer a few screening questions.



## EMS CAMP

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

**Experience the Thrill of Saving Lives!**

Step into the shoes of a first responder and learn about different EMS healthcare careers and the requirements, skills, and job duties. Experience hands-on training, real-life emergency simulations and guidance from certified EMS professionals.

**CAMP INFO:**

- 📅 July 22, 2026
- 🕒 9 AM - 3 PM
- 📍 Wyoming County Training Grounds 3651 Wethersfield Road Warsaw, NY 14569

Deadline to Apply: June 15, 2026

Apply Now!



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EMSCamp26>

**Free Camp!**  
For Students in 9-12<sup>th</sup> Grade.  
Spots Limited!



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