



New Innovation in Behavioral Health

Maintain your Independence while Benefiting from Group Affiliation

Mark P. Hansen, Ph.D., L.P.
Clinic Director

We believe in providing optimal care to our patients and want to preserve the private practice of mental-health services, offering patients quality care in a personal setting. The challenge for independent providers is that current economic trends tend to favor large systems. Is there a way private practice can remain viable in the changing healthcare economy while providing patients excellent care choices? To survive and even thrive under recent industry changes, there is a unique opportunity for providers to focus on clinical services and patient needs, while receiving dedicated business support. The solution is for providers to join together in a new and innovative practice model.

This model is an affiliation; a management services organization (MSO), and it allows providers to practice independently, in their own office, while gaining the advantages of being in a larger group. This arrangement offers centralized phone answering, scheduling of patients, contracting with insurance companies, credentialing services, accounting, billing, collections management, after-hours crisis coverage, oversight for regulatory compliance requirements (HIPAA), a customized electronic health record with training in its use, an outcome measure system, and marketing support.

If we are essentially competitors, how do we collaborate? The MSO model evolved in the 1990s to allow independent healthcare practices to affiliate. Medical practices adopted this model and recently, mental health practices have also begun to work in partnership in response to current changes. A requirement of this model is that the practices have clinical and financial integration, such as centralized scheduling, use of a common EHR and billing system, and common practice standards. Most importantly, each provider makes the treatment decisions that are best for their patients.

FAQs

- **Will I still be able to put my name on my office door, business, cards, and website?** You can maintain your own practice name and branding. You will need to add that you are an affiliate of the MSO.

www.rivercityclinic.com

Tel 651/646-8985 | Fax 651/646-3959

1360 Energy Park Drive, Suite 340, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108

FAQ's Continued

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- **Will I have to agree to work a minimum number of hours?** When and how much you work is completely up to you. You decide when to take vacations or how many days to work. We just ask that you keep us updated about your schedule openings.
- **I have some long-term patients and referral sources already in place. Can I see them outside of the MSO?** Because of the nature of the legal arrangement, providers have to be either all in or all out. The benefit of being affiliated is access to a referral base, and the ability to see clients covered by a variety of insurance payers, providing financial balance and opportunity.
- **Will I be forced to only make referrals through the MSO?** You make the clinical decisions and recommendations you see fit. While we all benefit by mutual referrals, it is not required.
- **Can I opt out of Electronic Health Records if I have privacy and security concerns?**
The evolving healthcare system requires mental health providers to use an EHR and to electronically exchange limited amounts of authorized information to partners in care for clients.
- **What do you mean by “clinical integration”?** One example is the use of a SAMHSA approved outcome measure. Patients complete a brief measure assessing their distress and provides the clinician with insight about the therapeutic alliance. Patients often comment that they feel better understood and more positive about therapy when this measure is used. It also allows the MSO to market itself to insurance providers, noting that research studies demonstrate the use of this measure reduces costs and improves outcomes. Comprehensive training on the measure is provided. Other examples of clinical integration are regular case consultations and peer chart reviews.
- **Why are you doing this?** Our mission is to develop a larger private practice group, throughout the state of Minnesota, where providers maintain independence and patients have an alternative to large, impersonal systems of care. We want to provide patients with the choice of a private, high quality and high value therapeutic experience. Our goals for providers are to free them from time spent on business aspects of practice so they have more time to care for patients, enjoy their personal lives, and improve their practice with access to referrals and the economies of scale that can occur in larger groups.

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