

UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

2025 HAP Achievement Award Excellence in Care Award—Small/Medium Division

Increasing Access to Perinatal Mental Health Through a Multi-Faceted, Multidisciplinary Approach

The Goal

Maternal mental health is a leading cause of mortality, yet access remains limited. Rising demand and staffing shortages led to long waits and high no-show rates, prompting efforts to expand access and improve continuity of care.

The Intervention

To address rising perinatal behavioral health needs, the team quadrupled therapist staffing, launched an “intake blitz” to reduce wait times, and introduced perinatal-specific intensive outpatient programs, including virtual care and tracks for anxiety and OCD. Telepsychiatry became the default, supported by a remote consult program to



promote early screening and referral. A warm handoff program was launched to improve hospital-to-outpatient transitions, and a trauma-informed, CBT-based pathway is being piloted to better support patients with histories of intimate partner violence.



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

2025 Achievement Award— UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

Page 2



Results

The initiative delivered major gains in access and engagement. Wait times dropped from four months to one week, and patient volume in one county rose from 23 to 317. Median days to appointment fell from 22 to 8. Telepsychiatry supported 82 percent of outpatient visits, and a new hospital site completed more than 160 consults in six months, with half referred for follow-up. Early data also show improved engagement through warm handoffs and trauma-informed care.