



Telepsychiatry: A Partnership Solution for CCBHCs, Now

CCBHC expansion grants have created an exciting opportunity for organizations to increase access to care, a critical need that is growing with each passing day. So what does success look like? A collaboration between innovaTel Telepsychiatry, a strategic partner with the **National Council for Behavioral Health**, and Minnesota-based CCBHC, Northwestern Mental Health Center, is a perfect example.

At innovaTel, we know innovative workforce development solutions help community mental health clinics deliver on their unwavering desire to provide high quality, timely care for their patients. We know because we've seen the results. Northwestern Mental Health Center, a CCBHC that became one of the first agencies in Minnesota to utilize telepsychiatry, is just one success story.

“ We chose innovaTel because the founders come from a community mental health background. They understand our service delivery model and the needs of our clients.”

— Shauna Reitmeier, CEO, Northwestern Mental Health Center

Their challenge: Northwestern Mental Health Center covered six rural and frontier counties in northwestern Minnesota, so recruiting for the most challenging disciplines such as psychiatry was difficult due to their location. On top of that, they had recently lost a staff provider who moved away from the area. While they did start using a remote telehealth provider, they still had capacity challenges — and recruiting providers proved an additional challenge, again, due to their location.

Their solution: In 2015, Northwestern Mental Health Center had added a part-time child psychiatrist to their team through a partnership with innovaTel. When they became a CCBHC, they needed additional help fulfilling the role of medical director, which is a CCBHC requirement. innovaTel was able to provide a remote medical director, who now works as part of their team, 8 hours a week. As their agency grew and they continued to increase access to care in their community, they needed even more prescribers, and have since added an additional psychiatric nurse practitioner to their team through innovaTel.

What started as a single, part-time solution six years ago has evolved into a long-term, collaborative partnership that has alleviated capacity and recruitment issues, met demand and allowed Northwestern Mental Health Center to do what they do best — provide the best care to their patients.

Northwestern Mental Health Center's partnership with innovaTel has led to — and continues to lead to — positive outcomes, including:

- The ability to achieve and maintain CCBHC requirements
- Gaining the support and leadership of an experienced psychiatrist serving as their medical director
- Increased access to care in their community
- Reduced no-shows for appointments
- More clients able to get the service they need at a time that works for them, preventing increased symptoms
- Increased coordinated care
- Improved ability to meet their clinic's overall mission to care

Northwestern Mental Health Center is a textbook example of how telepsychiatry can ease clinic and provider burdens and improve outcomes — goals innovaTel shares with the clinics we partner with.

