



**NEWS RELEASE  
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**AAAHC Publishes New Resource for Adult Depression**  
*In Conjunction with COVID-19 Guidance,  
Toolkit Emphasizes Comprehensive Screening, Systemized Evaluation*

**(Skokie, Ill.)** April 16, 2020 – The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) has released an updated Adult Depression Toolkit for primary care providers. With the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, now more than ever, this toolkit provides essential information for treating patients with the virus and people affected by the quarantine. As depression has become one of the most commonly encountered conditions in the primary care setting, this toolkit addresses health care issues facing millions of U.S. adults.

This toolkit is especially relevant during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has not only caused new high levels of social isolation, but also decreased protections against domestic and child abuse. Job loss and job stress for essential workers, as well as concerns about infection and critical supplies, may also contribute to anxiety and depression. Additionally, the symptoms, treatment, and deaths associated with the disease may be linked with substantial increases in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in survivors and their significant others.

Research indicates that 60% of people treated for depression receive their care from a primary physician.<sup>1</sup> The Adult Depression Toolkit outlines the importance of comprehensive screening for mental health in the primary care environment, as well as recommended courses of action when patients may benefit from referrals to behavioral health specialists. The toolkit further guides primary providers on depression screening tactics, including approaches for suicide screening.

“Using tested, established questionnaires and other well researched guidance, our toolkit is designed to help providers systemize evaluation and coordinate next steps for patient care depending on the issues the patient is presenting,” said Naomi Kuznets, PhD, vice president and senior director of the AAAHC Institute for Quality Improvement.

“AAAHC Behavioral Health Standards call for integration of behavioral health care into the overall care of the patient,” added Kuznets. “Ensuring patients are properly and consistently screened for depression, as well as managed or referred to specialists as needed, is vital to patient wellness.”

“Our toolkits and other educational offerings assist organizations with developing best practices and improving patient outcomes,” said Renee Greenfeld, MBA, senior vice president of

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<sup>1</sup> Barkil-Oteo A. Collaborative Care for Depression in Primary Care: How Psychiatry Could “Troubleshoot” Current Treatments and Practices. *Yale J Biol Med.* 2013 Jun; 86(2): 139–146. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3670434/>. Accessed July 2019.

marketing and business development for AAAHC. “All of our toolkits underscore the many ways AAAHC works with accredited organizations to help them be *1095 Strong, quality every day*, for the 1,095 days of the accreditation term.”

To order the updated Adult Depression Toolkit, please visit:

<https://www.aaahc.org/quality/patient-safety-toolkits/>.

### **About AAAHC**

Founded in 1979, AAAHC is the leader in ambulatory health care accreditation, with more than 6,100 organizations accredited. We accredit a wide range of outpatient settings, including ambulatory surgery centers, office-based surgery facilities, endoscopy centers, student health centers, medical and dental group practices, community health centers, employer-based health clinics, retail clinics, and Indian/Tribal health centers, among others.

AAAHC advocates for the provision of high-quality health care through the development and adoption of nationally recognized standards. We provide a valuable survey experience founded on a peer-based, educational approach to on-site review. The AAAHC Certificate of Accreditation demonstrates an organization’s commitment to providing safe, high-quality services to its patients—every day of the 1,095-day accreditation cycle. It is recognized by third-party payers, medical professional associations, liability insurance companies, state and federal agencies, and the public. For more information on AAAHC, please visit [www.aaahc.org](http://www.aaahc.org).

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