

HEALTH

Good Health is More Than What You Eat

NewsUSA

(NU) - Behavioral health issues are more common today. According to a study by the American Psychological Association, about 25 percent of all adults in the United States have a mental illness and 50 percent will develop one in their lifetime.

Mental health diseases affect not only the mind, but the body too. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that “[mental illness] is associated with chronic medical diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity.”

Public health surveillance, the continuous collection and analysis of health-related data, can help ensure high-quality health care. Monitoring mental health illnesses via population-based surveys and other methods can provide valuable information on how to run effective treatment programs. If behavioral health problems are managed successfully, the effects of mental illness and chronic diseases can be minimized, leading to improved general health.

Currently, companies and institutions around the country are working to provide better access to mental health treatment services. Humana, a leading health and well-being company, has pilot programs and initiatives as part of its Bold Goal aimed at making communities 20 percent healthier by 2020. To do this, they tackle barriers that prevent good mental health, as well as food insecurity and social isolation. Program objectives of the Bold Goal include: providing remote access to behavioral health within a primary care setting, teaching educational classes that discuss nutrition and health literacy, and addressing suicide prevention.

Try these ideas, from Humana’s Dr. Lawrence Weinstein, Chief Medical Officer for Humana Behavioral Health, to enhance your own mental health:



As part of Humana’s Bold Goal, Louisville, Kentucky’s Health Advisory Board Behavioral Health committee hosted the first-ever Bold Moves Against Suicides Summit.

Exercise: There is overwhelming evidence that indicates physical exercise helps to lessen the effects of depression. This is due to the release of endorphins, or “feel-good” hormones, in the brain.

Eat a Healthy Diet: A diet high in sugar consumption is strongly correlated with mental health problems. Eating whole foods and limiting intake of processed foods are important habits to maintain.

Go Outside: Get enough exposure to sunlight to maintain healthy vitamin D levels. Low levels of vitamin D are associated with psychiatric and neurological disorders.

Eliminate Bad Habits: Both smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol can cause increased levels of stress and tension. Over time, this can lead to mental illnesses, such as depression.

Get Help When Needed: Getting help from a friend, family member, or professional is highly likely to improve behavioral health. Actively seeking guidance can lead to a quicker recovery from mental illnesses and mental disorders. And this will ultimately allow you to live a healthier, fuller life.

For more information, visit www.humana.com