

Primary care physicians at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers were faced with a lack of resources to address their patients' behavioral health needs. That's why the hospital decided to develop an integrated care model that provides convenient and effective care for patients' physical and mental health in the primary care setting.

"This initiative aims to help meet the needs of patients with mental health issues in a familiar setting—their primary care office," said Dr. Jennifer Thomas, Integrated Care's director and a family medicine physician at the Braidwood and Gardner Healthcare Centers of Morris Hospital. "Over half of the counties in the United States have a shortage of psychiatry providers, making it difficult for patients to access mental health care."

Integrated Care is structured after a collaborative care model developed at the University of Washington and involves three team members:

- Primary care provider;
- Behavioral health care coordinator; and
- Consulting psychiatrist.

Dr. Thomas has been working with the Advancing Integrated Mental Health Solutions (AIMS) Center at the University of Washington for several months in preparation for the program launch.

"The AIMS Center is dedicated to promoting and implementing programs like this across the country," Dr. Thomas said. "We've been fortunate enough to develop a partnership with them."

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