

# **Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Clinical & Population Health Research Program**

Announces the PhD Thesis Defense of

## **JULIE HUGUNIN**

### **Healthcare Utilization in Youth with Mental Health Conditions**

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 11 a.m. via Zoom Meeting

**Background:** Youth and young adults represent a critical time for early detection and intervention of serious mental health conditions (SMHCs); however, of all age groups, health care use is lowest in young adults. Continued access to health services, especially during the transition from pediatric to adult care, is important to improving outcomes in those with SMHCs.

**Methods:** Stakeholder engagement and a mixed-method design were used. We leveraged the IBM® MarketScan® Commercial Database and semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of pediatricians and child/adolescent psychiatrists.

**Main Results:** The prevalence of outpatient mental health care and primary care decreased with age. Having established mental health care strongly predicted follow-up after acute mental health service use, and more so than having established primary care. Providers described poor communication systems, no organized process for the transition from pediatric to adult care, a lack of time and reimbursement, and inadequate connection to community supports as key barriers to continuous, coordinated care for youth with serious mental health conditions.

**Conclusion:** Findings provide foundational knowledge to inform efforts to provide a comprehensive continuum of care for people with serious mental health conditions, potentially through increased access to primary care and specialized mental health care via enhanced care coordination of providers.

#### **Mentor**

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