



2026 MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

*Accelerating Next-Generation
Care Through Technology,
Integration and Evidence*

**JW Marriott Bonnet Creek
Orlando, FL
October 26th - 27th, 2026**

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About the Summit

Behavioral health stands at an inflection point. Digital therapeutics now valued at \$4.51 billion are projected to reach \$24.42 billion by 2035. AI-powered therapeutic chatbots demonstrate clinically significant reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms. Virtual reality transforms PTSD treatment. Yet access barriers persist—affordability, stigma, workforce shortages, fragmented care pathways.

Business Research Intelligence Network's Mental Health Summit convenes the decision-makers building tomorrow's mental healthcare: health plan leaders designing value-based models, provider leaders implementing integrated care, technology innovators developing AI therapeutics, investors funding breakthrough solutions and policymakers shaping regulatory frameworks. Over two days, participants will examine what separates theoretical promise from clinical reality in digital mental health.

Sessions tackle implementation challenges rarely discussed in vendor presentations: therapeutic chatbot safety concerns, VR-CBT evidence gaps, reimbursement uncertainties, workforce resistance to technology adoption, equity failures in digital access and regulatory complexity around AI-enabled diagnostics. Participants will leave with frameworks for evaluating digital therapeutics rigorously, strategies for scaling collaborative care financially, approaches to youth mental health that actually reach adolescents and roadmaps for responsible AI implementation prioritizing patient safety alongside innovation.

Agenda

Day One – Monday, October 26, 2026

7:15am – 8:00am

Registration & Networking Breakfast

8:00am – 8:15am
Welcome Remarks

8:15am – 9:00am

Immersive Healing: Integrating VR and Transdiagnostic CBT for Next-Generation Care

Mental healthcare undergoes simultaneous disruptions from multiple directions—digital therapeutics achieving FDA clearance, generative AI chatbots entering clinical use, integrated care mandates reshaping delivery models, workforce crises intensifying, payer expectations shifting toward outcomes-based contracts. Leaders managing health systems, payers, policy and clinical programs share perspectives on navigating rapid change while maintaining quality and safety. This session will address operational challenges, strategic priorities and collaborative opportunities required to accelerate evidence-based innovation without compromising patient protection.

Gwilym Roddick, DSW, LCSW
Founder & Psychotherapist
CBT of Central & South Florida

9:00am – 9:45am

Rebuilding Trust: Humanizing and Raising the Standard of Addiction Care

Healthcare systems have often struggled to respond effectively to stigmatized public health challenges, such as substance use. Rebuilding trust in these settings is complex but essential. This session explores strategies for creating protocols and practices that combine evidence-based care with compassion, fostering environments that are welcoming and supportive. Participants will learn how to better engage with communities at risk, addressing needs that impact quality of life, relationships, and overall physical and mental well-being.

Sandeep Kapoor, MD, MS-HPPL
Vice President, Addiction Services
Emergency Medicine Service Line | Northwell Health

9:45am – 10:15am
Networking Break

10:15am – 11:00am

Medicaid Policy Shifts Under H.R. 1: Implications for Behavioral Health Access

As states prepare for significant Medicaid changes proposed in H.R. 1, understanding the potential effects on mental health and substance use disorder services is essential for safeguarding continuity of care. These policy shifts introduce new operational and eligibility considerations, including how states determine and verify exemptions from community engagement requirements—often relying on existing eligibility data, cross-agency data-matching, or technology-enabled verification tools to identify individuals with qualifying conditions. This session will outline key Medicaid changes proposed in H.R. 1 and their impact

on mental health and substance use disorder services, including implications for coverage and continuity of care.

Maeghan Gilmore

VP Government Affairs

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

11:00am – 11:45am

Expanding Mental Healthcare Access Through Strategic Integration

Despite progress, Americans face steep barriers accessing mental healthcare—affordability challenges, provider shortages, stigma and confusing care pathways. This session will examine practical approaches to expanding access including integrating behavioral health with primary care, leveraging technology for patient navigation and building delivery models reaching underserved populations.

Dr. Les Cole, LPC, CCTP, CPCS, NBCC,

Chief Behavioral Health Officer

Ascend Medical

11:45am – 12:30pm

Building Sustainable, Outcome-Driven Mental Health Delivery Models

Rising demand and rapid system change require resilient mental health models delivering measurable outcomes while maintaining financial sustainability. This session will explore care pathway redesign, incentive alignment, workforce capacity strengthening and data utilization advancing results. Topics will include scalable strategies supporting long-term stability while improving access, quality and whole-person outcomes.

Mehul Mankad, MD, DFAPA

Chief Medical Officer

NovumHealth

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Networking Lunch

1:30pm – 2:15pm

Collaborative Care Implementation—Whole-Person, Team-Based Approaches

Whole-person, team-based mental healthcare models reshape access, coordination and outcomes across care settings. This session will explore practical strategies for scaling collaborative care, improving navigation and aligning stakeholders around shared goals. The session will highlight how integrated teams deliver more seamless, effective and patient-centered behavioral health support while addressing reimbursement, workflow and regulatory obstacles.

Bibhas Singla, MD, MBA, FACHE, CPE
Chief Medical Officer
Sanford Behavioral Health

2:15pm – 3:15pm

Panel: Youth and Emerging-Adult Mental Health in the Digital Era

Technology, media and digital platforms fundamentally alter how youth and emerging adults experience mental health challenges and access support. Panelists will examine how digital tools can support prevention, engagement, resilience and early intervention while addressing online safety and equity concerns. The discussion will provide insights into leveraging digital platforms for scalable, impactful solutions reaching younger populations effectively.

Ritu Goel, MD, DFAACAP

Integrative Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Clinical Researcher, Founder & CEO
MindClaire PC | Forbes Business Council Expert Panel Member

Bibhas Singla, MD, MBA, FACHE, CPE
Chief Medical Officer
Sanford Behavioral Health

Nicholas Beller, Psy.D., LP, CADC
Vice President of Mental Health Services
Horowitz Health

3:15pm – 3:45pm
Networking Break

3:45pm – 4:30pm

Integrating Data Intelligence with Compassionate Mental Healthcare

This session will examine how data-savvy systems support deeply compassionate mental healthcare delivery. The speaker will highlight innovations in care coordination, coverage design and value-based mental health models expanding access and improving outcomes. Attendees will gain practical ideas for bridging payer, provider and public health perspectives making mental healthcare both smarter and more human-centered.

Dr. Ronke Komolafe, MBA
Founder Advancing Integrated Health
Mental Health Chair Forbes Business Council

4:30pm – 5:15pm

From Burden of Illness to Breakthrough: Innovating and Scaling Mental Health Care

This session explores how recent advances in psychiatry—including interventional treatments like TMS, ketamine, and emerging psychedelic and digital therapies—are reshaping mental health care. It will focus on the real-world challenge of translating scientific innovation into

scalable, sustainable, and patient-centered systems. Drawing on experience building integrated interventional and women's mental health programs, the discussion will highlight practical strategies for designing care models that combine clinical rigor, operational efficiency, and adaptability. Participants will gain a framework for implementing high-quality mental health systems that can evolve with ongoing scientific breakthroughs.

Rachel Dalthorp, MD, MHSA, DFAPA
Interventional and Reproductive Psychiatrist
Founder, Balance Women's Health
Co-Founder, International Society of Reproductive Psychiatry

5:15pm
End of Day One

Day Two – Tuesday, October 27, 2026

7:30am – 8:00am
Registration & Networking Breakfast

8:00am – 8:15am
Chairperson's Remarks

8:15am – 9:00am
Responsible AI and Digital Therapeutics in Mental Healthcare

AI and digital therapeutics promise to enhance access, personalize treatment and improve outcomes but raise critical questions about safety, privacy, equity and regulatory oversight. Digital therapeutics market growth from \$3.74B (2025) to projected \$24.42B (2035) reflects rapid adoption, yet therapeutic chatbot safety concerns emerge, evidence gaps persist and regulatory frameworks lag innovation pace. This session will explore how to integrate tools responsibly while addressing implementation challenges clinicians and payers encounter. Topics include generative AI chatbots, VR-based psychotherapy evidence, regulatory pathways and ethical considerations around AI-enabled diagnostics. Topics will include:

- FDA regulatory frameworks for digital mental health medical devices
- Evidence requirements for therapeutic chatbots and VR interventions
- Privacy, equity and safety considerations in AI deployment
- Reimbursement models supporting digital therapeutic adoption

Anup Sharma, MD, PhD
Clinical AI Researcher & Psychiatrist
Founder, Keystone Neuroinformatics

9:00am – 9:45am
Workforce Crisis: Burnout, Retention and System Sustainability

Ninety-three percent of behavioral health workers report experiencing burnout, with 62% experiencing moderate to severe levels. Nearly half consider leaving the profession due to workforce shortage impacts—increased caseloads, higher client acuity, administrative burden consuming time that could support patients. With many states projected to face severe localized shortages and provider populations aging rapidly, the workforce crisis threatens system sustainability regardless of technological advances or innovative delivery models. This session will examine root causes beyond individual resilience including systemic inequalities, secondary traumatic stress, poor organizational support and compensation inadequate for emotional labor demands. The speaker will highlight retention strategies showing measurable impact: reducing administrative tasks through automation, implementing sustainable caseload standards, providing clinical supervision supporting emotional processing, creating pathways reducing documentation burden and offering competitive compensation recognizing expertise required.

Katie Vokes

Chief Operating Officer

Sanford Behavioral Health

9:45am – 10:15am

Networking Break

10:15am – 11:00am

Trauma-Informed Care Beyond the Buzzword—Practical Implementation Across Settings

Trauma-informed care appears in mission statements yet remains inconsistently applied in clinical encounters. With 61% of adults experiencing at least one adverse childhood experience, organizations claiming trauma-informed approaches often lack concrete protocols—staff unknowingly re-traumatize patients through coercive interventions, rigid policies trigger fight-or-flight responses and clinical environments fail to communicate safety. This session will explore actionable modifications including creating physical spaces signaling safety, redesigning intake processes reducing unnecessary disclosure repetition, training staff to recognize trauma responses versus "difficult behavior" and implementing universal precautions. The speaker will present scenarios where safety protocols conflict with trauma-informed principles and measuring fidelity ensuring genuine transformation rather than superficial rebranding.

Micah Krempasky, MD

Chief Medical Officers

WakeMed Health & Hospitals

11:00am – 11:45am

Proactive Mental Health—Wellness, Prevention and Early Intervention

Traditional mental healthcare operates reactively—treating illness after it manifests. Proactive approaches emphasizing wellness, prevention and early intervention offer opportunities to reduce illness burden, promote resilience and support mental well-being across diverse populations. This session will examine strategies integrating mental health and addiction

services with primary and specialty care, leveraging technology to expand access and prioritizing patient voices. The discussion will highlight evidence-based approaches for building systems supporting mental well-being rather than merely treating dysfunction. Topics will include:

- Population-level screening and risk stratification identifying individuals before crisis
- Technology-enabled early intervention reaching people disengaged from traditional care
- Integration of mental health promotion into primary care and community settings
- Measurement frameworks tracking prevention effectiveness and population mental well-being

Ritu Goel, MD, DFAACAP

Integrative Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Clinical Researcher, Founder & CEO
MindClaire PC | Forbes Business Council Expert Panel Member

11:45am – 12:30pm

Addressing Social Determinants in Mental Health Treatment Plans

Mental health treatment isolating symptoms from social context—housing instability, food insecurity, transportation barriers, employment challenges, discrimination—delivers suboptimal outcomes regardless of therapy quality. Most treatment plans ignore social determinants, clinicians receive minimal training addressing them and billing structures reimburse symptom treatment but not social needs navigation. This session will examine practical approaches including screening tools identifying needs, care coordination connecting patients to resources, partnerships enabling warm handoffs and advocacy skills training. Discussion topics will include boundary questions around clinician roles, measurement challenges and equity considerations ensuring screening doesn't become another burden disproportionately affecting marginalized patients.

Nicholas Beller, Psy.D., LP, CADC

Vice President of Mental Health Services
Horowitz Health

12:30pm

Conference Concludes

12:45pm – 2:45pm

Workshop

Is Your Organization Ready for AI? Assessing Your Readiness for Digital Mental Health Tools

Learn about the types of AI and digital mental health tools, Identify key components of organizational readiness, Prepare to develop/ or lead your organization to develop an action plan for assessing organizational readiness, implementation planning and governance planning for your organization

Behavioral health providers are under growing pressure from workforce shortages, constrained funding, and rising expectations to demonstrate quality and outcomes. However, unlike physical health providers, behavioral health providers were unable to leverage meaningful use dollars to invest in their technology infrastructure and digital tools. As a result, providers face pressures to continuously enhance their capacity to track data elements, while also having to stretch their budgets to invest in digital infrastructure. This makes it essential for providers to have support and tools to help them evaluate and implement digital mental health technologies (DMHTs), including AI-enabled tools. This presentation introduces the Digital Readiness and Implementation Suite Toolkit for Behavioral Health Providers, a practical, vendor-neutral framework designed to help organizations cut through the hype and make informed, strategic decisions about digital adoption.

Drawing on deep Medicaid, policy, and implementation expertise, the toolkit provides a structured approach to assessing organizational readiness, aligning digital solutions with clinical and operational priorities, and supporting successful implementation. Attendees will learn how readiness assessments, standardized and customizable vendor evaluation rubrics, and targeted training resources can reduce administrative burden, support workforce optimization, strengthen fidelity to evidence-based practices, and improve outcomes for clients.

The session will highlight real-world use cases across behavioral health providers, associations, and public-sector organizations, demonstrating how a disciplined, phased approach to digital transformation can unlock long-term value while mitigating risk. Participants will leave with actionable insights and thought-provoking questions they can apply within their own organizations to determine the best way to navigate digital innovation with confidence and clarity.

Allie Franklin, MHA, MSW, LICSW
Managing Director
HMA

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