

Forms of Healthcare Integration



Vertical Integration

This is the combination of functional components that would typically operate independently along the care continuum (Heeringa et al., 2020). It removes the "middle man" from the arrangement and provides cost efficiency and less duplication.

- A healthcare organization that delivers primary care services combining with a surgical center, a pharmacy, or drug manufacturer
- Hospital ownership of physician practices

Horizontal Integration

This is the joining of organizations or facilities that provide similar services or the same services. This may be to reduce competition in a service area or to expand a service area, to reduce duplication of support infrastructure like accounting and billing, or to expand service offerings or specialties.

- Multi-hospital systems, multi-specialty physician practices, association of independent physician practices, or virtual physician networks (Heeringa, et al., 2020)

Integration of Primary Care with Behavioral and Mental Healthcare

Traditional vertical and horizontal integration continue. However, primary care and behavior and mental healthcare are integrated. Evidence indicates that individuals with substance and mental health disorders live shorter lives than those without such conditions (SAMHSA-HRSA, 2020).

References

Heeringa, J., Mutti, A., Furukawa, M. F., Lechner, A., Maurer, K. A., & Rich, E. (2020). Horizontal and vertical integration of health care providers: A framework for understanding various provider organizational structures. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, 20(1), 2. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijic.4635>

SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions. (2020). What is integrated care. Retrieved from <https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/about-us/what-is-integrated-care>