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## Streamlining the Referral Process for a Mental Health Clinic: A DNP Project

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# Eastern Kentucky University

College of Health Sciences

School of Nursing

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**Doctor of Nursing Practice Program**

DNP Project Final Report

Streamlining the Referral Process for a Mental Health  
Clinic: A DNP Project

DNP Student: Ashley Barr MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC

Date: 29 November 2022



DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

The DNP Project Final Report is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU).

**Student Acknowledgement**

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**EKU DNP Student: Ashley Barr MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC**

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Barr', is written over a horizontal line.

**Date:**

**11/29/2022**

**Review & Approval of DNP Project Final Report**

The DNP Project Final Report has been reviewed and approved by the DNP Project Team, which includes the DNP Project Chair and the DNP Project Team Member(s). The DNP Project meets the satisfactory requirements for the DNP Project Final Report outlined in the EKU DNP Project Guidelines. The EKU DNP Project Guidelines are based on best practices outlined by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and external evidence-based sources. The DNP Committee develops, maintains, and monitors these standards on behalf of the Department of School of Nursing at Eastern Kentucky University.

**List of DNP Team Members for this Project:**

Dr. Molly Bradshaw O'Neal DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, WHNP-BC, CP-C

Dr. Wanda France, DNP, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC

## **Streamlining the Referral Process for a Mental Health Clinic: A DNP Project**

**Ashley Barr MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC**

### **Abstract**

Mental health providers are in short supply in the United States. Access to mental health is impacted by the process used to refer patients. To bridge this gap, this DNP Project sought to increase mental health referrals to the partnering organization through strategic outreach to primary care and an online social media presence. After IRB approval, outreach to twenty-one primary care providers across eleven clinics was completed, a social media campaign was conducted, and the intake form for the partnering organization was updated for tracking the source of the referral. Results of the interventions included high satisfaction on the information received and high self-efficacy in providing referrals to psychiatry from outreached providers. Results showed a 21% increase in completed new client intake appointments during the DNP Project, with five reporting being directly referred from outreached clinic. There was no significant increase of referrals generated from the social media campaign and further participation in this area is needed.

*Keywords:* mental health, mental health practice, referral process, referral, referral pathway, and care pathway