



MENTAL HEALTH CLINICAL ADVISORY GROUP

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MARCH 2021

STAFFED BY:

HEALTH POLICY & ANALYTICS DIVISION

OFFICE OF DELIVERY SYSTEMS INNOVATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to ORS 414.359(6), the Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group (MHCAG) is required to report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to health on recommendations made to the Oregon Health Authority (Authority) and may include recommendations for legislation. The following report fulfills that requirement.

The MHCAG is an 18-member group of mental health professionals tasked with creating clinical practice resources and recommendations for the treatment of mental health disorders with mental health drugs. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and suspension of MHCAG meetings for half of the year, the MHCAG published six comprehensive resources on schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in 2020.

All resources published by MHCAG can be found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/OHP/Pages/PT-MHCAG.aspx>

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## BACKGROUND

The Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group (MHCAG) was established in 2017 by the Oregon Legislature with the passage of House Bill 2300. The MHCAG is charged with developing evidence-based algorithms for the treatment of mental health disorders with mental health drugs and making recommendations to OHA and the Pharmacy and Therapeutic (P&T) Committee.

Senate Bill 138, passed in 2019, extends the work of the MHCAG indefinitely. This legislation also established new requirements for the MHCAG, including posting of MHCAG-approved recommendations within 30 days of approval by the MHCAG membership and submission of an annual legislative report. This document fulfills the obligation for an annual report, and includes an overview of the work and recommendations made by the MHCAG as required in legislation, including:

- Implementation of evidence-based algorithms
- Recommended changes to any preferred drug list used by the Authority
- Practice guidelines for the treatment of mental health disorders including, but not limited to, mental health drugs
- Coordinating the work of the group with an entity that offers a psychiatric advice line

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## 2020 WORK

During 2020, the MHCAG was scheduled to have regular meetings on every odd-numbered month and special meetings during each even-numbered month. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted these plans. The group met as usual in January, February and early March, but then canceled meetings between April and August due to the high number of frontline healthcare practitioners seated on the group and their need to focus on and respond directly to the pandemic. The MHCAG resumed with virtual meetings in September and continued as scheduled through the end of the year. Despite the interruption, the MHCAG was able to publish the following six clinical practice resources and recommendation documents by the end of 2020: "Bipolar Diagnostic Criteria," "Differential Diagnosis- Differentiating Between Mania, Hypomania, Depression, Borderline Personality Disorder, PTSD and ADHD," "Bipolar Disorder Clinical Practice Pearls for the Treatment of Special Populations and People With Co-Occurring Disorders," "Management of Anti-psychotic Medication Side Effects," "Differentiating Between Cycling Mood Conditions," and "Education for Patients: Long Acting Medications (LAM's)."

The group reviewed scientific evidence, considered real-world practice dynamics encountered by

patients and practitioners, and heard public testimony prior to voting to approve content for publication.

In October 2020, the group presented its bipolar disorder algorithms to the P&T Committee.

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#### FUTURE MHCAG WORK

The MHCAG has committed to creating two-three clinical guidance documents each year. In 2021, the MHCAG expects to finalize one-three supplemental bipolar disorder white papers and then begin work on creating treatment resources for major depressive disorder.