



# Integrating Medical & Behavioral Health

## Parent/ caregiver guide

Some health systems have begun incorporating behavioral health care into primary care. Integrated care can respond more effectively to physical symptoms that may be caused by behavioral issues or behavioral issues that any number of physical symptoms may cause. Use this guide to help understand the link between medical and behavioral health and to advocate for an integrated approach.

## What common medications can contribute to challenging behavior in tweens and teens?

### Prescription

- Albuterol (asthma)
- Prednisone
- Antihistamines
- Montelukast (asthma/allergies)
- Levetiracetam (anti-seizure)
- Topiramate (anti-seizure)
- Thyroid medications
- Any psychotropic medication
  - SSRIs
  - Stimulants

### Over-the-counter

- Cough syrups and medications
- Cannabidiol (CBD)

## What are some other common issues that may have both medical and behavioral components?

- Seizures
- Sleep disorders
- Nutrition deficiencies
- Pain
- Sensory impairment
- Chronic health conditions



---

## If I suspect a medication may be causing a behavioral issue, what's the most effective way to communicate this to our provider team?

Bidirectional communication between families, primary care teams, and behavioral health providers is critical. This means raising concerns when they occur. At times, there may be indications that a medication should be discontinued. Deprescribing should be done carefully, with awareness among the entire team.

---

## Our primary care and behavioral teams are in different provider groups and don't consult together. What can I do?

- Advocate.
- Ask for and sign all appropriate consents.
- Ask if there is a care coordinator who can help.
- Ensure a system for obtaining releases of information at each provider.
- Ask providers to contact each other and exchange direct emails and phone numbers. Technology has made it easier than ever to coordinate care, but sometimes providers in smaller systems may not have access to the family's electronic medical record.



**Andrew Barnes, MD, MPH**, is an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School, where he directs the fellowship program in developmental-behavioral pediatrics.