



 Behavioral Health Business

# VOICES

## Vatsala Kapur

Vice President of External Affairs

Bamboo Health

In this Voices interview, Behavioral Health Business sits down with Vatsala Kapur, Vice President of External Affairs at Bamboo Health, to discuss the challenges and barriers care navigation teams must solve to ensure their patients receive the appropriate treatment. She breaks down the importance of addressing these challenges and the steps Bamboo Health is taking to help providers overcome them.

---

Editor's note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

To learn more about behavioral health care support, visit: [Behavioral Health Solutions – Bamboo Health](#).

The Voices Series is a sponsored content program featuring leading executives discussing trends, topics and more shaping their industry in a question-and-answer format. For more information on Voices, please contact [sales@agingmedia.com](mailto:sales@agingmedia.com).

---

**Published:** December 3, 2024

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

 **Bamboo Health**

**Q: Behavioral Health Business:**  
**What is the role of care navigation and why is it so important, especially in behavioral health care?**

**Vatsala Kapur:** Care navigation — the process of assisting individuals and families in finding providers and treatment — is fragmented and challenging for many people. To truly improve outcomes and reduce overall health care costs, it is critical for providers to ensure that care navigation runs smoothly so appointments and medications aren't missed. One way to address this challenge is with technology supported by care navigators specifically focused on guiding vulnerable populations to care. This is especially important given that the Medicaid and Medicare programs bear much of the cost associated with behavioral health care in the U.S., making this a key issue for federal and state budgets.

Organizations need a streamlined care navigation process and a bolstered workforce to do so. With Bamboo Health, organizations can leverage timely intervention insights in real-time or near real-time across the health care system. Our goal is not only to provide data but to empower life-improving actions during pivotal moments for maximum impact. But we also go beyond the technology to expand the workforce during a time of increased labor costs and staff burnout. With the help of Bamboo Health care navigators, organizations can allocate dedicated, qualified behavioral health staff without adding full-time employees.

**Q: Behavioral Health Business:**  
**What are the key financial challenges facing the behavioral health industry today, and how can providers overcome them?**

**Kapur:** One major area is cost. We know that individuals with any behavioral health condition incur \$8,720 more in costs than those without a behavioral health condition. This is particularly true for individuals insured through Medicaid or Medicare. Additionally, individuals in this population often miss appointments, fail to fill or refill prescriptions and have repeated emergency room visits and inpatient hospitalizations — all of which strain community services, including health care providers and law enforcement. The costs of not addressing these issues are borne across the entire system.

Many individuals who need services and want to access them simply don't know where to go. For others, they can't afford the care due to lack of insurance, insurance that doesn't cover necessary treatments or high copays and cost-sharing.

Finally, while there's been considerable progress in reducing the stigma around mental health and substance use disorders, certain populations still experience significant stigma that discourages them from seeking treatment. This is especially true in rural and frontier communities where accessing behavioral health services can be more visible to others, creating a reluctance to pursue care due to stigma.

**Q: Behavioral Health Business:**

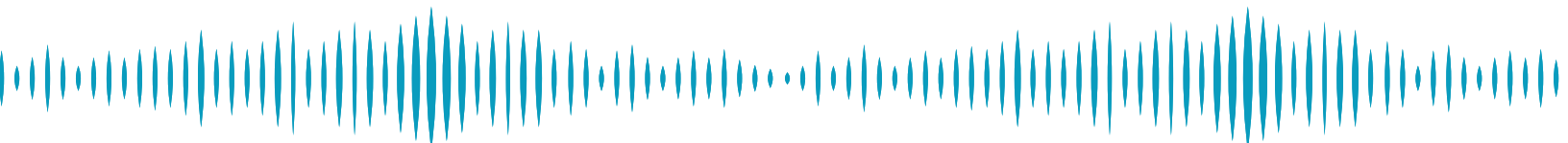
**Taking that a step further, can you talk about why it is so important that this vulnerable population get the treatment they need?**

**Kapur:** Everyone has been touched by this crisis in our country. First and foremost, it's the right thing to do; we need to figure out how to properly improve crisis response because our family members, friends and communities are being affected. Beyond the human impact, we know that mental health and substance use disorders make up about 10% to 15% of total health care expenditures.

For anyone concerned about rising health care costs, this is critical. It's also a major issue for employers, as depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy a trillion dollars in lost productivity. Addressing this issue not only benefits individuals but also contributes to overall economic growth in the U.S. Additionally, young people, especially those coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, are facing an elevated burden of concerns in this area.

High school students with significant symptoms of depression are twice as likely to drop out compared to their peers, and students aged 6 to 17 with mental, emotional or behavioral concerns are three times more likely to repeat a grade. This issue has economic impacts, affects the entire health care delivery system, disrupts families and impacts young people's chances of successful adult lives.

At Bamboo Health, we're deeply committed to improving behavioral health outcomes — not only for better outcomes for individuals but also because we know addressing it will support the economic growth of our communities.



**Q: Behavioral Health Business:**

**What does this all mean for states in terms of reducing administrative burdens?**

**Kapur:** State governments are struggling yearly with budget challenges, trying to close gaps and address the needs of their citizens. Alongside these fiscal pressures, we also see health care providers, particularly in behavioral health, facing high levels of burnout, leading many to leave the profession due to the intense stress.

Real-time care navigation technology can significantly ease these burdens on providers, potentially keeping them in the field longer and allowing them to improve more individuals' lives. It also has the potential to save state governments money, allowing for a shift in funds from health care expenses toward other crucial areas, like early childhood education, transportation, and other community needs. In this way, technology offers a pathway to help states address budget gaps while supporting their communities.

**Q: Behavioral Health Business:**

**What life and career experiences do you most draw from, in your role today?**

**Kapur:** From a personal perspective, being a mother of two and watching them go through their educational journeys into young adulthood has really shaped my thinking. I want to ensure they can lead fulfilling lives, and part of that means contributing to advancements in health care delivery. I want to help create a health care system that supports a better world for them and future generations.

**Q: Behavioral Health Business: Finish this sentence:**

**In the behavioral health space, 2025 will be defined by...**

**“...increased behavioral health need and care delivery innovation.**

**We expect to see more organizations investing in solving these access issues, including investing in real-time technology programs and workforce solutions as burnout and rising costs continue to strain individuals, families, and communities.”**