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# Olin's screening questions could detect depression

By [Emily Wilkins](#) (**Last updated:** 02/04/10 9:40pm)

Blood pressure, temperature and a two-question survey screening for depression soon will become part of a routine checkup for students seeking treatment at Olin Health Center.

Olin scanned about 10,000 students for depression since becoming partners with The National College Depression Partnership, or NCDP, in 2008.

The NCDP, which was founded in 2006, is partnered with 20 colleges, including MSU, to improve the methods colleges use to detect and treat depression.

"About 30 percent of students reported that they felt so depressed that they've felt it was difficult to function, but we weren't seeing that level of students seeking help," said Maureen Tyler, a counselor and care manager at Olin.

Olin's screening consists of two multiple-choice questions that ask how often in the past week students experienced little pleasure or interest in doing things and how often they felt depressed or hopeless. If depression is identified, Olin will help link the student with mental health services.

Currently, 50 percent of MSU students who visit Olin for primary care receive the screening. The goal is to increase that number to 80 percent, Tyler said.

Tyler estimated between 7 percent and 10 percent of students who are given the screening in primary care at Olin need further mental health services. Of those students, significant progress was seen when the initial test was re-administered after they received help for their depression.

"The opportunity to identify students who are depressed, but would be unwilling to go to counseling, is important," said Henry Chung, associate vice president of student health at New York University and national project director of the NCDP. "In most large to mid-sized universities, medical services are used by about 50 to 80 percent of students, where well-function centers serve between 5 to 15 percent."

Leigh White, the assistant director of psychiatry services both at Olin and at MSU Counseling Center, said the NCDP has strengthened the MSU program.

"They also have brought us access to the top experts in the country in what is the best public health approach for identifying and treating depression," White said.

Many students do not seek help for their depression because of the stigma that surrounds going to a counselor, said Jen Grzegorek, the program coordinator for the counseling center's part of the NCDP.

"The ones who come from primary care often are a little more reluctant to seek counseling, so what we have to do is work harder to try to help them feel comfortable," Grzegorek said. "I see it as a sign of strength because using the resources one has available is a sign of strength, not weakness."

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