OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the proposed study are to assess the incremental value of adding patient self-report measures to the clinician-rated Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) scale to: 1) compare sensitivity to change (improvement over the course of mental health treatment) of three patient self-report measures to the GAF; and 2) examine whether self-report measures provide extra explanatory power in predicting functional outcomes (employment, housing, social support, and psychiatric hospitalization). The three self-report measures selected for the study are the Veterans SF-36, Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), and revised Behavior and Symptom Identification Scale (BASIS-R).

RESEARCH PLAN: The study will use a prospective, observational design. The sample will include all inpatients and outpatients who present for treatment at one of two participating VISN 1 inpatient or outpatient mental health facilities (Bedford and Boston/Brockton) during the specified data collection period. We will recruit three cohorts of 450 patients from each site; the three cohorts will be new inpatients, new outpatients, and continuing outpatients. Assessments will be obtained at two time points: Time 1 will be the first time the patient appears for treatment during the data collection period. Time 2 will be the discharge point for inpatients, and three months after Time 1 for outpatients.

METHODOLOGY: Primary and secondary data sources will be used. Primary data will include SF-36, BSI and BASIS-R assessments, self-reported race/ethnicity, employment status, housing arrangements and social support. Secondary data sources will be used to obtain demographic and diagnostic data, (including comorbid psychiatric and medical conditions), GAF ratings, and psychiatric hospitalization after study enrollment. Data analyses will examine correlations between change in GAF ratings with change on each of the self-report measures, analysis of the Reliable Change Index to determine and compare meaningfulness of change on each measure, and multivariate logistic regressions to examine significance of change on self-report measures in predicting improvement in behavioral outcomes including employment status, housing, social support and hospitalization.

CLINICAL RELEVANCE: Results of this study will provide valuable information comparing sensitivity of self-report measures with the GAF for measuring change over the course of treatment. This information will be useful for deciding whether to incorporate a patient self-report measure into mental health outcomes monitoring efforts within the VHA at either the program or system level. In addition, the study will provide information regarding the utility of obtaining baseline assessments of mental health status, and will be useful to guide decision-making regarding which of three widely used self-report measures is most sensitive to measuring change over the course of treatment.