

Access to Behavioral Health Care in Michigan

Total Michigan Population, 2022

Project Summary

Access to behavioral health care in Michigan remains a significant concern, with unmet needs leading to delays in care, financial strain, and reduced health and wellbeing. This study updates the assessment of mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment access using 2022 administrative claims data for those with private insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare. Access is measured by the percentage of individuals with behavioral health needs who received at least one treatment in the study year. While this measure doesn't evaluate care quality or completeness, it offers an updated view to track changes since 2019 and establishes a new benchmark for future evaluations of behavioral health needs after the pandemic.

Unmet Need for Behavioral Health Care in Michigan

- ▲ 676,400 (31%) of the estimated 2.16 million Michiganders that experienced any mental illness (AMI) in 2022 are not receiving care. The most common mental illnesses with unmet needs are *Anxiety Disorders* and *Depressive Episode*.
- ▲ While the total number of people with AMI increased between 2019 and 2022, access to care for AMI was similar to 2019, with the number of people untreated increasing slightly 641,000 to 676,400.
- ▲ Among the 595,000 Michiganders with a SUD, only 28% received treatment, leaving nearly 430,600 with an unmet need for care. Alcohol is the most common substance resulting in a disorder at about four times the rate of cannabis or opioid use disorders, with 81% untreated. Unmet need also continues to be high for cannabis use disorder at 70%, while unmet need among those with an opioid use disorder was 23%.
- ▲ The number of people receiving moderate or severe SUD treatment in 2022 remained the same between 2019 and 2022 with a slight increase from 160,500 to 164,400. However, when mild substance use disorder is included the prevalence of SUD more than doubles.
- ▲ Medicaid enrollees were most likely to remain untreated for AMI at 42%. While privately insured were most likely to remain untreated for SUD at 84%, Medicaid enrollees saw an increase of 12% between 2019 (46%) and 2022 (58%).
- ▲ In general men are at greater risk for SUD, with the highest prevalence among men aged 18 to 24. Overall, women have a higher prevalence of AMI. However, among children males had a higher prevalence of AMI than females.
- ▲ There is significant geographic variation in levels of unmet need across the state. In the areas of Michigan with the worst access to AMI treatment 47% are untreated. For SUD treatment 78% are untreated.
- ▲ Expanding access to behavioral health care in all of Michigan to the same rates of care seen in best access areas of the state would improve access for 437,900 people with a mental illness and 65,800 people with a SUD.

2022 Unmet Need for Mental Illness

Received Care

1,479,800
69%

Untreated

676,400
31%

2022 Unmet Need for SUD

Received Care

164,400
28%

Untreated

430,600
72%

Barriers to and Recommendations for Access for Behavioral Health Care

- ▲ While Michigan has made meaningful progress in maintaining and enhancing behavioral health service delivery, ongoing attention to the needs of young people and strategic policy development will be essential for future success.
- ▲ Although many improvements have been made in behavioral health provider capacity, with most regions showing marked improvements, there are still many opportunities to increase access specifically in the Southeast Michigan Region (Detroit-Dearborn-Livonia).
- ▲ To expand access, state policymakers and other stakeholders can continue to act to: reduce administrative barriers within schools, strengthen workforce development efforts for healthcare professionals, remove restrictions on scope of practice to fully leverage all members of the health care team specifically among nurse practitioners, and implement statewide data monitoring systems to monitor youth mental health programs and progress.