ADVOCACY ISSUE BRIEF

Access to Mental Health Care Matters

LACK OF ACCESS TO CARE IS THE ROOT CAUSE FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN THE U.S.[1]

Demand for mental health services is greater than ever and services are not keeping pace.[1]

58,557,000 people or more than **1 in 5 adults** live with mental illness[2]

123 million people live in a designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area[4]

27% of metropolitan counties and **65%** of non-metropolitan counties lack a single practicing psychiatrist[5]

53.9% **of adults** with mental illness received care in 2023[2]

50.6% **of youth** with mental illness received treatment in 2016[3]

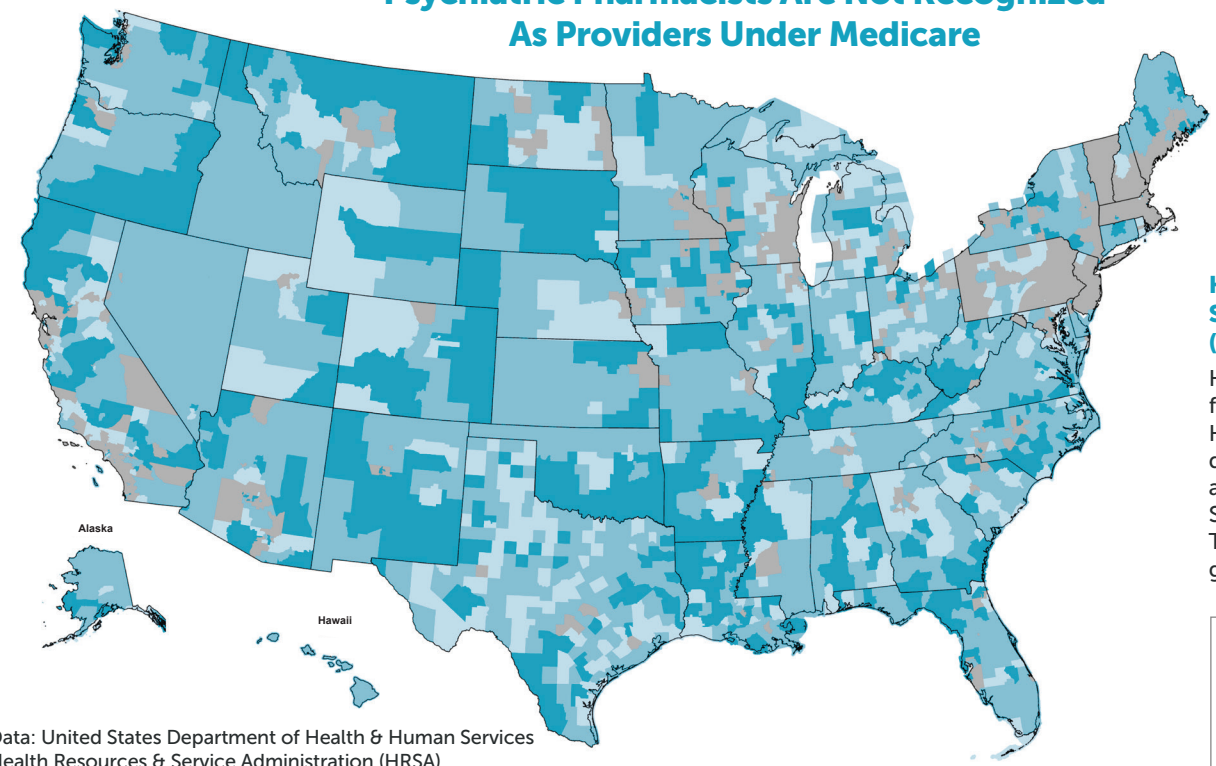
4,220,000 adults with serious functional impairment from mental illness **went untreated** in 2023 and **45.2%** reported a need for mental health care that was not received[2]

12.3% or **1 in 8** of all adult emergency department visits were due to mental health and substance use[6]

Few States Have Adequate Levels of Mental Health Providers[7]

More Than 6,200 Mental Health Providers Are Needed to Fill These Gaps

Psychiatric Pharmacists Are Not Recognized As Providers Under Medicare



Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA)-Mental Health

HPSA scores are developed for use by the National Health Service Corps to determine priorities for the assignment of clinicians. Scores range from 1 to 25. The higher the score, the greater the priority.

- States
- 1-13
- 14-17
- 18 and above
- Non-HPSA

Data: United States Department of Health & Human Services
Health Resources & Service Administration (HRSA)
https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/shortage-areas. Accessed 10/26/2024

PROBLEM: LACK OF ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE
SOLUTION: PSYCHIATRIC PHARMACISTS

Psychiatric Pharmacists Increase Access and Improve Patient Outcomes

- Psychiatric pharmacists are qualified to provide direct patient care through advanced training, experience, and board certification.
- Utilizing psychiatric pharmacists for medication management increases access to psychiatrists, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners resulting in decreased wait times for appointments.
- Patients treated by a psychiatric pharmacist have improved outcomes including[8,9]:
  - Consistency in taking medications
  - Improved symptoms
  - Higher satisfaction
  - Fewer primary care physician visits.

Patients deserve the high-quality, evidence-based care psychiatric pharmacists provide. This care, like care provided by other types of health care providers, should be reimbursed. AAPP urges federal policymakers to support legislation to:

- Require CMS and other payers to pay for services provided by psychiatric pharmacists.
- Expand the mental health and substance use disorder treatment workforce through integration of psychiatric pharmacists.
- Increase adoption of innovative care and payment models that integrate behavioral health and primary care services.

Barriers to Accessing Care from Psychiatric Pharmacists

Federal limitations on reimbursement and medication prescriptive authority impede psychiatric pharmacists in providing direct patient care services and increasing access.

Lack of recognition of psychiatric pharmacists as providers by Medicare translates to lack of recognition by Medicaid and private insurers.

Lack of reimbursement to health systems for psychiatric pharmacist services substantially reduces feasibility to employ enough psychiatric pharmacists to impact access and patient care.

The American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP) is a professional association representing psychiatric pharmacists nationwide. Our members integrate into teams of health care professionals, making a difference in overall costs, treatment efficiencies, patient recovery, and quality of life.

References available at: https://aapp.org/advocacy/access

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