THE COST OF MENTAL ILLNESS:
KANSAS FACTS AND FIGURES

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INTRODUCTION

Improving access to high-quality medical and behavioral health care for patients with mental illness remains one of the most vexing problems facing the healthcare system in the United States. In Kansas, there is concern that access to affordable mental health care has been hampered by the state’s fiscal issues and policy decisions. This chartbook attempts to quantify the magnitude of the challenges facing Kansas in terms of the economic burden associated with behavioral health issues. We describe the size and characteristics of the population with mental illness and show the impact on the health care system based on high rates of hospitalization. We also note the unmet need in terms of behavioral health care professionals and discuss the implications for the criminal justice system in Kansas.
INTRODUCTION

Key findings include:

• The hospitalization rate of patients with serious mental illness is very high compared to other hospitalizations, which imposes a large cost on the health care system due to the relatively long length of stay, despite the general absence of procedures.

• Kansas has a lower number of behavioral health care professionals per capita compared to the rest of the U.S., and shortages are particularly evident in rural areas.

• People living with mental illness are more likely to encounter the criminal justice system, resulting in a large number of arrests and incarcerations. The overall annual cost of incarcerating people with serious mental illness in state prisons in Kansas exceeds $110 million.

The data presented in this chartbook are publicly available and represent the most recent numbers to which we had access. The term “behavioral health” is used to describe data related to mental illness and substance abuse, whereas “mental health” does not include substance abuse.

The data and methods are described in more detail in the appendix: http://healthpolicy.usc.edu/Keck_Schaeffer_Initiative.aspx
QUANTIFYING THE POPULATION LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN KANSAS AND THE U.S.
KEY POPULATIONS OF INTEREST

SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS (SPD)

When someone experiences serious psychological distress, he or she may have a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health condition, such as major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia (described below). Serious psychological distress is determined by six questions on the Kessler-6 screening instrument, which measures the frequency of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and emotional distress during a specific time period.

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

A mental illness that severely impairs a person’s ability to function, characterized by the presence of depressed mood, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or helplessness, reduced concentration, ability to think, sleep problems, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, and/or recurrent thoughts of suicide.

BIPOLAR DISORDER

A mental illness characterized by extreme shifts in mood and energy levels. During manic episodes, a patient has abnormally high energy and activity levels that lead to impairment in daily functioning or requires hospitalization to prevent harm to self or others. Delusions or hallucinations can also occur. Manic episodes may be alternated with major depressive episodes.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

A debilitating mental illness that distorts a patient’s sense of reality. Symptoms of schizophrenia include hallucinations, delusions, confusion, cognitive and mood impairments, and extremely disorganized thinking.

RISK FACTORS: GENETIC & EXTERNAL FACTORS

Many different genetic factors may increase risk, but no single genetic variation causes a mental illness by itself; specific interactions between the individual’s genes and environment are necessary for a mental illness to develop.
Many mental health conditions are fairly common in the general population.

Whereas any of these conditions can severely limit someone’s normal daily activities, three disorders are often labeled as **Serious Mental Illness**: major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. These three disorders will be the focus of this chartbook.

NB: Due to symptom overlap, diagnoses of mental illnesses are not mutually exclusive.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016 (SPD), NSDUH Mental Health Surveillance Study 2008-2012 (major depressive disorder) and National Institutes of Mental Health (other conditions – see appendix for original sources)
State variation in prevalence of serious psychological distress

KANSAS AND UNITED STATES 2016

The prevalence of serious psychological distress in the past year among adults in Kansas is 10.1%, which is slightly lower than the U.S. average of 10.5%.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016
An estimated 220,000 adults in Kansas experienced serious psychological distress in the past 12 months.

Note that a patient can receive multiple diagnoses of a serious mental illness due to a high degree of overlap between the mental health conditions.

Substance abuse in people with serious psychological distress

Percentage of adults in Kansas with substance/alcohol abuse and/or dependence in past year

- **Serious Psychological Distress**
  - Any substance: 16.3%
  - Alcohol: 10.7%
  - Any illicit drug: 6.5%
  - Prescription pain relievers: 1.9%

- **No SPD**
  - Any substance: 5.0%
  - Alcohol: 3.9%
  - Any illicit drug: 1.5%
  - Prescription pain relievers: 0.4%

Source: National Institutes of Mental Health, National Institutes of Mental Health, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016

People who experienced serious psychological distress in the past 12 months are more likely to abuse or be dependent on alcohol or illicit drugs during that same time period.
MENTAL HEALTH CARE COVERAGE, UTILIZATION & COSTS

Unmet mental health care needs

Approximately a quarter of adults with serious psychological distress in the past year reported an unmet need for mental health care. A common reason for not receiving care was the inability to afford mental health treatment, especially for people who do not have health insurance.
In Kansas, 24% of people with serious psychological distress have an unmet need of mental health treatment. In Kansas’ general adult population, 4.1% of people have a unmet need of mental health treatment.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016
Unmet need of mental health treatment due to costs

Percentage of adults who could not afford mental health care among those with past-year serious psychological distress and unmet need of treatment.

In Kansas, 58% of people with serious psychological distress and an unmet need of mental health treatment did not receive this treatment due to costs.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016
Unmet need of mental health treatment due to costs differs by insurance coverage

Percentage of adults who could not afford mental health care among those with past-year serious psychological distress and unmet need of treatment:

- **Uninsured**: 75.0%
- **Private insurance**: 40.4%
- **Medicaid**: 28.4%
- **Medicare**: 25.0%
- **VA/military health insurance**: 13.2%

On a national level, the extent to which cost was a factor in driving unmet need for mental health care among those with serious psychological distress, varied by insurance status. People without health insurance were most affected by the inability to afford mental health treatment (75%), while those with VA/military health insurance coverage were least affected (13%).

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2016
There is significant unmet need for mental health care in Kansas

Among adults who experienced serious psychological distress during the past year:

- Unmet need: 24.2%
- Cannot afford: 57.7%

24.2% indicates an unmet need of mental health treatment. And 57.7% of these people did not receive mental health treatment, because they could not afford it.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016
MENTAL HEALTH CARE COVERAGE, UTILIZATION & COSTS

Medicaid & behavioral health care needs

Medicaid provides a safety-net for people with low income or qualifying disabilities, and a large percentage of people with Medicaid coverage experience behavioral health issues. However, it is often a financial burden for physicians to accept Medicaid patients since reimbursement rates are generally lower than for other patients. This can lead to access barriers for patients with Medicaid coverage that prevent them from receiving the behavioral health care they need.
People with mental illness have greater reliance on the safety net

**KANSAS 2016**

**Percentage of adults with serious psychological distress by insurance type**

In the Medicaid and uninsured population, a higher percentage of adults in Kansas reported serious psychological distress (SPD) during the past year compared to people with Medicare, VA/military, or private health insurance coverage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Adults with SPD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private health insurance</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA/military health insurance</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid/CHIP</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninsured</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016
Medicaid reimbursement rates to physicians are low

Medicaid-to-Medicare fee ratio, 2016

Low reimbursement rates are a disincentive for individual physicians to accept patients with Medicaid coverage and mental health problems. Compared to Medicare fee levels, Medicaid reimbursement rates are low in most states, including Kansas. This can be a barrier for these patients to obtain access to mental health care.

Source, Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicaid-to-Medicare Fee Index, FY 2016
Mental Health Care Coverage, Utilization & Costs

Hospital utilization & costs

For every 100 patients with a serious mental illness, there were approximately 47 hospitalizations in the U.S. and 29 hospitalizations in Kansas in 2014. The average length of stay for these hospitalizations is long compared to other hospital stays, and relatively little progress has been made in reducing the length of stay for a serious mental illness over the last decade. This imposes a large financial cost on the health care system and potentially diverts resources away from other sites of care.
In Kansas, the total number of hospitalizations is highest for adult patients with a principal diagnosis of major depressive disorder, whereas patients with schizophrenia disorder have a much higher rate of hospitalizations.

Compared to rest of the U.S., hospitalization rates in Kansas are slightly higher for patients with major depressive or bipolar disorder, but much lower for those with a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

3.4% of all hospitalizations in Kansas are due to SMI
Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014
Estimate of hospitalization rate: based on total state population (Census bureau data, 2014) and prevalence estimates reported previously
The average hospital stay duration for adult patients with serious mental illness is relatively low in Kansas compared to the rest of the U.S., but remains higher than the average stay in a hospital for any diagnosis.

The total time spent in the hospital by adults with a primary diagnosis of serious mental illness is approximately 50,000 days each year in Kansas.

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014
The length of stay in the hospital for serious mental illness in elderly patients is at least 60% higher on average than for younger adults with a similar diagnosis. Treatment of medical comorbidities due to aging, as well as difficulty finding long-term care environments may be at the root of this disparity.

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014
Trends in length of stay for schizophrenia hospitalizations

KANSAS 2000-2014

The average stay for a schizophrenia hospitalization in Kansas was several days longer than for a hospitalization as a result of a heart attack or hip replacement. Moreover, the latter have declined by at least 20% since 2000, while for schizophrenia the length of stay increased with 8%.

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014
Hospital costs in the U.S. and Kansas ranged from $4,600 to $9,000 per stay for patients with serious mental illness. This is despite a general absence of procedures or surgeries during a hospitalization for symptoms of serious mental illness.

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014
Total hospital costs for mental illness hospitalizations

KANSAS 2014

Total hospital costs (all ages, in 2016 U.S. $)

- SMI total: $49,830,608
- Schizophrenia: $19,556,316
- Bipolar disorder: $8,863,168
- Major depressive disorder: $21,411,124

Total hospital costs in Kansas for hospitalizations for serious mental illness together almost reached $50 million in 2014.

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014
Total hospital costs for serious mental illness hospitalizations by insurance type

KANSAS 2014

Total hospital costs (all ages, in 2016 U.S. $)

Serious mental illness

- Medicare: 36%
- Medicaid: 18%
- Private insurance: 26%
- Other: 12%
- Uninsured: 9%

$50 million

All hospitalizations

- Medicare: 49%
- Medicaid: 10%
- Private insurance: 31%
- Other: 6%
- Uninsured: 4%

$3 billion

Compared to all hospitalizations, the expected payer for hospitalizations involving serious mental illness is much more likely to be Medicaid or the patients themselves, and less likely to be Medicare or private insurance.

Only a small fraction of the $3 billion in total hospitalization costs is covered by other programs (including VA/military health insurance), or paid by patients without health insurance.

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUPnet) 2014.

‘Other’ includes Worker’s Compensation, TRICARE/CHAMPUS, CHAMPVA, Title V, and other government programs. ‘Uninsured’ includes ‘self-pay’ and ‘no charge’.

Hospitalizations for which the primary payer is ‘missing’ (0.1%) are excluded.
Mental Health Care Coverage, Utilization & Costs

Investment in community-based programs

For several decades, a shift from hospital inpatient care towards community-based clinic outpatient treatment has taken place, as is exemplified by the budget trends of state mental health agencies. On average, approximately 72% of their budgets is now spent on community-based programs, compared to 33% in the early 1980s. Compared to the U.S. average, the Kansas state mental health agency spends a similar total amount per capita.
Kansas’ state mental health agency spending on mental health services per capita is very similar compared to the U.S. average ($129).

Expenditures include (on average):
- 72% Community-based mental health programs funded and/or operated by state mental health agencies
- 26% Mental health services in state psychiatric hospitals
- 2% Administration/training/research/evaluation to support these services

Source: State Mental Health Agency-Controlled Expenditures for Mental Health Services, FY 2013 National Association of State Mental Health program Directors Research Institute, Inc (NRI)
AVAILABILITY OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Kansas has a smaller number of overall behavioral health care professionals and hospital beds per capita in comparison to the U.S. average. There are many areas and facilities in Kansas that have a shortage of behavioral health care professionals; 38 full-time professionals are needed in addition to the current workforce in designated “shortage areas” to reach an acceptable provider-to-patient ratio.

This shortage is also present in the criminal justice system, where many people are in need of behavioral health treatment.
Availability of behavioral health care professionals

KANSAS AND UNITED STATES 2017

There are approximately 17 behavioral health care professionals for every 10,000 residents in Kansas, which is slightly lower than the average in the U.S. of 20 professionals per 10,000 residents.

Note that the U.S. average does not represent the optimal number of behavioral health care professionals.

Behavioral health care professionals include: psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapists, and advanced practice nurses specializing in behavioral health care.

Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.
Availability of behavioral health care professionals and hospital beds

KANSAS AND UNITED STATES 2013

Behavioral health care professionals

Per resident, Kansas has slightly fewer psychiatrists, but more psychologists, compared to the U.S. average. The number of primary care physicians and hospital beds dedicated to psychiatric care are very similar in comparison to the average in the U.S.

Note that the U.S. average does not represent the optimal number of behavioral health care professionals or hospital beds.

Hospital beds

Although the optimal number of beds is unknown in our current health care infrastructure, there are estimates that 5 beds per 10,000 residents are minimally required assuming sufficient availability of outpatient programs for long-term treatment.

Source: Area Health Resource Files 2013 (psychiatrists, physicians and psychiatric care beds), and 2005-2013 Demographics of the U.S. Psychology Workforce, American Psychological Association (psychologists)

Treatment Advocacy Center, “The Shortage of Public Hospital Beds for Mentally Ill Persons”
Currently, Kansas has 27 full-time equivalent behavioral health care professionals in designated shortage areas and facilities with behavioral health care professional shortages. In order to address the shortage issue, 36 more full-time professionals are needed in these areas, 4 of whom are needed in correctional facilities.

Source: Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), HRSA Data Warehouse, 03/16/2018

Behavioral health care professionals:
- psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurse specialists, and marriage & family therapists

Facilities:
- Federal & state correctional institutions, state & county mental hospitals, community mental health centers, and other public or nonprofit private facilities

Geographic high needs area based on population-to-provider ratio, poverty levels, elderly and youth ratio, alcohol and substance abuse prevalence, and travel time to nearest source of care outside area
Shortage of behavioral health care professionals in the Kansas region

This map shows widespread shortages of behavioral health care professionals in Kansas and bordering states, especially in rural areas. The severity of the shortage is measured on a Health Professional Shortage Area scale from 0 to 25, with 0 indicating no shortage, and 18 and above a severe shortage.

Source: Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), HRSA Data Warehouse, 01/01/2018
State population in designated behavioral health care professional shortage areas

KANSAS AND UNITED STATES 2018

1,388,836 people in Kansas (48% of the state population) reside in designated shortage areas and/or are served by a facility with shortages of behavioral health care professionals. This is higher than the U.S. average of 30%.

Source: Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), HRSA Data Warehouse, 03/16/2018, and Census Bureau data (2017)
Mental Health Conditions & The Criminal Justice System

People living with mental illness are more likely to encounter the criminal justice system and to be arrested, suggesting that mental illness is a factor in incarceration risk. Whereas state and federal prisons have resources to provide mental health care to prisoners who were not receiving this before incarceration, local jails appear particularly unable to meet the health care needs of people with mental illness.

In Kansas, the prevalence of serious mental illness is relatively high compared to the U.S. average. The overall cost of incarceration of the roughly 3,000 prisoners with serious mental illness in the state of Kansas exceeds $110 million per year.
Contact with criminal justice system

KANSAS 2016

People who experienced serious psychological distress (SPD) are more likely to have been arrested or be on parole or probation in the past year.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, R-DAS) 2015-2016
Survey does not include current institutionalized population
A large percentage of the U.S. adult prison and jail inmate population currently experiences serious psychological distress compared to the non-institutionalized population.

Additionally, these mental health issues are observed at higher rates in local jails than in prisons.

Source: National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2016
Bureau of Justice report: Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011-12, based on data from the National Inmate Survey
State prison population with serious mental illness

In Kansas state prisons, approximately 31% of prison inmates previously have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, which is much higher than the overall U.S. prison population. Many patients have been diagnosed with two or three mental illnesses, confirming the presence of overlap in symptoms in this population.

Source: Survey of Inmates in State Correctional facilities, BJS, 2004. Includes juveniles

Due to rounding, percentages of separate parts may not add up to the total percentage
Change in treatment before and during incarceration in prison and jails

UNITED STATES

The increase in mental health care treatment in federal and state prisons after admission to prison suggests that these institutions are making up for the gaps in mental health treatment in the general health care system.

At the same time, local jail inmates do not have the same access to medication and counseling while incarcerated as federal and state prisoners.

Mental health conditions include prior diagnosis of depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and/or schizophrenia. Medication and counseling data includes treatment for any mental illness.

Source: SISFCF (Survey of inmates in states and federal correctional facilities) 2004 & SILJ (Survey of inmates in local jails) 2002
Estimated number of Kansas state prison inmates in 2016, previously diagnosed with serious mental illness:

3,011

Estimate of overall annual costs in 2016:

$110,212,130

Overall annual costs based on 2016 average of all state prison inmates in Kansas
Source: Annual Survey of State Government Finances 2016
Survey of Inmates in State/Federal Correctional facilities, BJS, 2004
Kansas State, Department of Corrections Annual Report FY 2016
TOTAL ECONOMIC BURDEN OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

The economic burden of each serious mental illness in adults is estimated to be at least $35 billion for the U.S. and $300 million for Kansas per year.
Economic burden of serious mental illness

The economic burden of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder in adults in Kansas is estimated to be at least $300 million for each serious mental illness.

Due to symptom overlap, diagnoses of mental illnesses are not mutually exclusive, therefore, patients with two or more diagnoses may be represented in multiple categories.

The economic burden of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder in adults in the U.S. is estimated to be at least $35 billion for each serious mental illness.

Due to symptom overlap, diagnoses of mental illnesses are not mutually exclusive, therefore, patients with two or more diagnoses may be represented in multiple categories.

Lost productivity is the largest contributor to economic burden of serious mental illness.

Most of the total economic burden of serious mental illness is due to **lost productivity** (unemployment, lost compensation (incl. caregivers), or early mortality). Only 12 to 47% of the total burden is resulting from direct **medical costs** (including substance abuse treatment), and an even smaller percentage from law enforcement, incarceration, shelters, or research & training (**other costs**).

This highlights the large potential economic and societal benefits from improving treatment for serious mental illness even if it means spending more on care.

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References, data sources and methods are described in more detail in the online appendix. This chartbook and the appendix can be downloaded at:
http://healthpolicy.usc.edu/Keck_Schaeffer_Initiative.aspx