

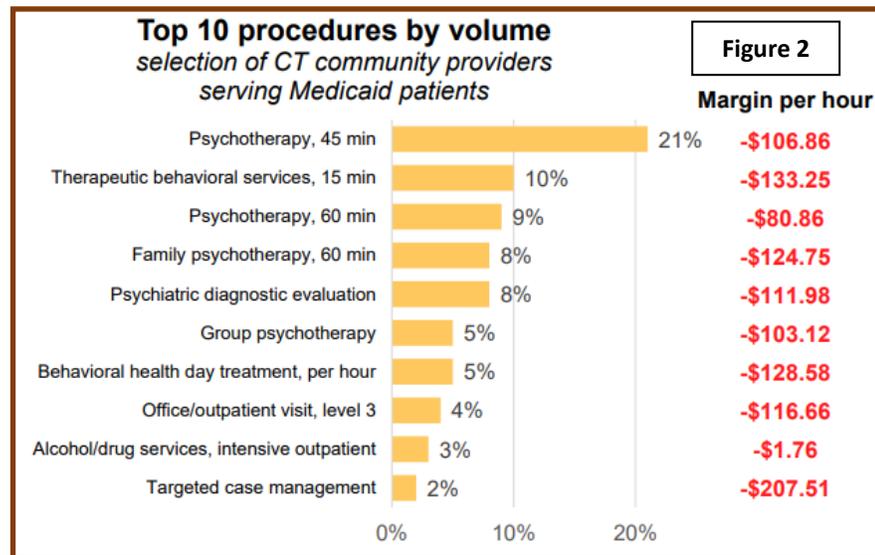
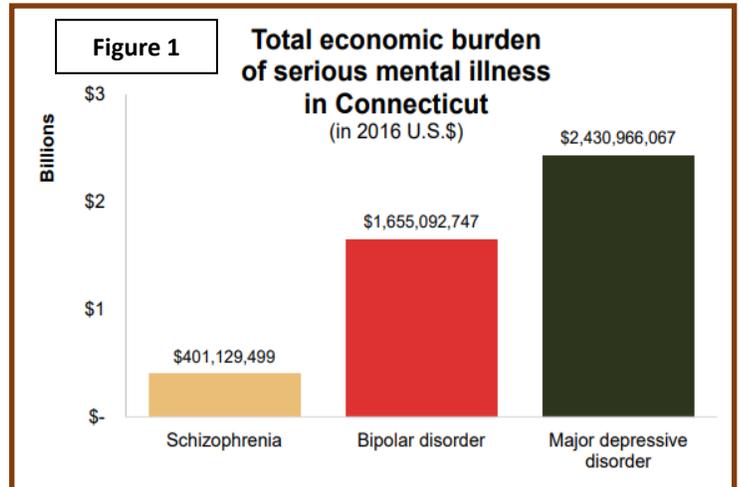
Snapshot of Behavioral Health in Connecticut

Scope of the Problem

This year, over 483,000 adults in Connecticut will experience a mental health concern.¹ Over 52 percent of those individuals will not receive the treatment they need² due to a number of barriers, including a shortage of behavioral health providers across the state³ and a lack of funding commensurate with the state's need. Additionally, the rate of deaths by suicide in Connecticut rose almost 20 percent between 1999 and 2016.⁴ These tragic numbers signal the need for investments in community-based services and supports for Connecticut residents living with mental illness.

Funding for Behavioral Health

Behavioral health treatment across the country is chronically underfunded, and Connecticut is no exception; the costs associated with serious mental illness in Connecticut exceed \$400 million per year per mental health diagnosis (Figure 1),⁵ and behavioral health providers are operating with negative margins when providing services to patients who rely



on the safety net for their health coverage (Figure 2).⁶ This underfunding contributes to a shortage of qualified providers within the behavioral health system, which makes it harder for patients to find care when and where they need it. In 1999, when psychiatric hospitals were closed following a U.S. Supreme Court decision, \$13.6 million in Connecticut's investments in mental health went back to the state's general fund, and investments in community-based behavioral health care have yet to recover according to the Keep the Promise Coalition: Advocacy & Action for Connecticut's Mental Health.⁷

¹ Mental Health America, The State of Mental Health in America 2018, Adult Prevalence of Mental Illness – Adults with Any Mental Illness (AMI). Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/mental-health-america-adult-data>

² Mental Health America, The State of Mental Health in America 2018, Adults with AMI who Did Not Receive Treatment. Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/mental-health-america-access-care-data>

³ Heun-Johnson H., Menchine M., Goldman D., Seabury, S. (2018). The Cost of Mental Illness: Connecticut Facts and Figures. Retrieved from <https://www.bhecon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CT-Chartbook-2018-Update.pdf>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). National Vital Statistics System. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/infographic.html#graphic1>

⁵ Heun-Johnson H., Menchine M., Goldman D., Seabury, S. (2018). The Cost of Mental Illness: Connecticut Facts and Figures. Retrieved from <https://www.bhecon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CT-Chartbook-2018-Update.pdf>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Keep the Promise Coalition: Advocacy and Action for Connecticut's Mental Health. (2014). Resource Binder. Retrieved from http://www.ctkeepthepromise.org/uploads/KTP_Resource_Binder_2014_complete.pdf

The Bottom Line

Too many Connecticut residents are living with mental health challenges and are unable to receive needed treatment for a variety of reasons, which places undue, preventable strain on the state's budget. Numerous policy solutions exist to bridge these gaps including investing in the behavioral health workforce to promote recruitment and retention of qualified providers, as well as enforcing mental health parity laws. These long-term investments have the potential to increase access to timely, evidence-based care, and ultimately save Connecticut money by reducing spill-over costs in other areas like the criminal justice and education systems.