

Addressing Illinois' Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage

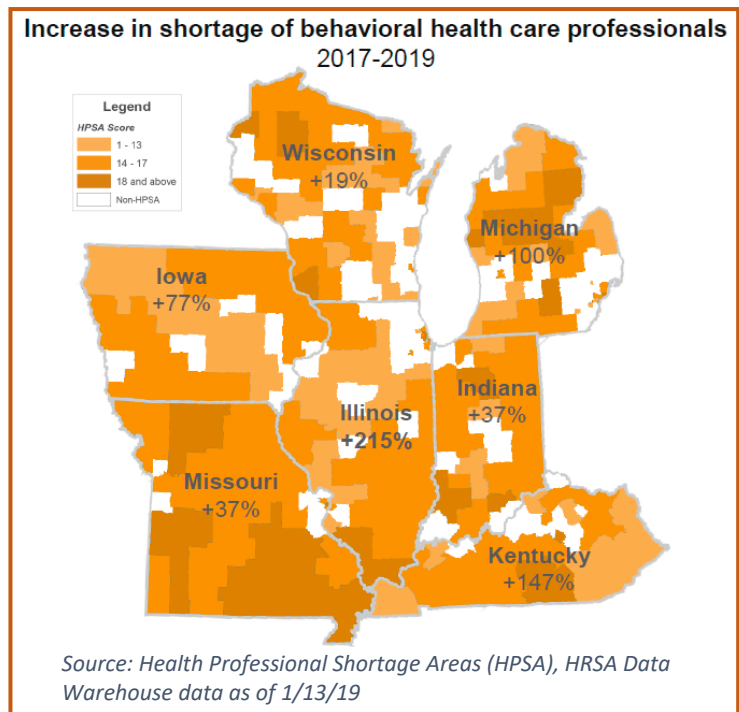
The Issue

An estimated 44.7 million American adults – around 18% of the population – live with some form of mental illness in any given year,¹ and there are only enough mental health care professionals available across the country to meet roughly 26% of the need for services.² Projections show that by 2025 the shortage will be astronomically worse, as six vital mental health provider types will have shortages of approximately 250,510 full-time equivalents (FTEs).³ An infusion of qualified behavioral health providers is needed to drive down avoidable hospitalization costs, reduce recidivism with justice-involved individuals, address the substance use epidemic and increase access to timely, evidence-based care.

Focus on Illinois⁴

Illinois is particularly hard-hit by the behavioral health workforce shortage. Illinois has only 13.8 behavioral health care professionals for every 10,000 residents, compared to the national average of 21.4. **Over 4.8 million Illinois residents** – or 38% of the population – reside in a designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area.

The state **needs to increase the current workforce over 3.5 times** to meet residents' need for services. Additionally, Illinois has seen a 215% increase in their behavioral health workforce shortage in the past years (see map), a rate that far outpaces its neighbors.



The Ask

Evidence-based treatments that serve individuals with behavioral health conditions cannot be effective without professionals to provide them. Illinois must invest in incentives for the workforce including reimbursement rates that match costs of care, the Community Behavioral Health Professional Loan Repayment Program, and more. Additionally, increasing support for telehealth across the state can help the current workforce cover more ground and reach more people, especially in rural settings.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rockville, MD: SAMHSA. www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FFR1-2016/NSDUH-FFR1-2016.pdf. Published September 2017. Accessed July 25, 2018.

² Kaiser Family Foundation. (2018). Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Retrieved from: <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/>

³ Provider types include psychiatrists; clinical, counseling, and school psychologists; substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors; mental health and substance abuse social workers; mental health counselors; school counselors. Health Resources and Services Administration/National Center for Health Workforce Analysis; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation. (2015). National Projections of Supply and Demand for Behavioral Health Practitioners: 2013- 2025. Rockville, Maryland

⁴ Heun-Johnson, H., Menchine, M., Goldman, D., Seabury, S. (2019). The Cost of Mental Illness: Illinois Facts and Figures.