

Testimony of Corwin (Corey) Rhyan  
on  
Access to Behavioral Health Care in Michigan, Results from a 2022 MHEF Study  
before the  
Michigan House Subcommittee on Behavioral Health  
January 25, 2024

Good morning, Chairwoman Brabec, and Subcommittee members.

I am Corey Rhyan, a Research Director on the Health Economics and Policy Team at Altarum. Altarum is a Michigan based non-profit organization that conducts work with states, foundations, and the federal government to improve the health for those with fewer financial resources and populations disenfranchised by the health care system.

I am the lead author of a report published in December 2022 that assessed access to behavioral health care services in Michigan and estimated the level of unmet need for mental health and substance use disorder treatment within the state. The report was commissioned by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (MHEF) and was a continuation of work that began in 2018 studying this topic. The most recent work updates the estimates of behavioral health access from 2016, with new data for 2019 and compares trends in behavioral health use and access in Michigan over time.

The work estimates the overall need for behavioral health care services in the state and compares that need to the number of individuals who received care, using a basic definition of access: how many individuals with a behavioral health need in Michigan received care at least once within the year.

Before I discuss the study findings, it's important to acknowledge and recognize the state's ongoing commitment to improving access to behavioral health services for all Michiganders and that this study's data are through the year 2019.

The work has found that between 2016 and 2019, the rates of those receiving care for behavioral health conditions improved, likely driven in part by an increase of behavioral health providers. However, during this same period, the prevalence of behavioral health conditions increased in Michigan, following the nationwide trend of a higher prevalence of both mental illness and substance use disorder needs across the country.

In 2019, 20.2% of Michiganders had any mental illness and 5.9% of all Michiganders had a substance use disorder. This means nearly 2 million Michiganders had any mental illness and 580,000 had a substance use disorder. Among those with a behavioral health need, the share of Michiganders with a mental illness who received care increased from 62% to 68% and the share of Michiganders with a substance use disorder who received care increased from 20% to 28% in 2019.

Mental illness rates and unmet need in 2019 were highest among adolescents, women, those who were uninsured and those on Medicaid. Anxiety disorders and depression were the most common mental health conditions seen in the state over that time period. Substance use disorder rates and unmet need in 2019 were highest among adolescents, men, and those who were uninsured. Alcohol use disorder was the most common SUD in Michigan in 2019.

As a result of ongoing nationwide trends in prevalence, the level of unmet need for both mental illness care and substance use disorder treatment remained high. An estimated 640,000 Michiganders (or 32%) with mental illness and 420,000 Michiganders (or 72%) with a substance use disorder were untreated in 2019.

While the number of behavioral health providers increased in Michigan between 2016 and 2019, provider capacity remains constrained, particularly in the northern half of the lower peninsula and portions of the upper peninsula. In 2019, 22 counties in Michigan were without either a psychologist or a psychiatrist and 9 counties had neither. Twenty counties in Michigan lacked a dedicated SUD treatment facility in 2019, as well.

Given the continued level of need for behavioral health care services, these reports made a variety of recommendations for how Michigan can continue to improve access to care for all Michiganders. These recommendations include opportunities to increase the effective supply of providers and ways to make those providers more accessible to those living in all parts of the state; recommendations to improve the affordability of care; and ways to improve the willingness of the public to seek treatment for their mental health and substance use disorder needs. Alongside these recommendations, it is also important to recognize MDHHS investments in behavioral health services and its continued commitment to ensuring Michigan families can more easily access behavioral health care services.

The complete series of reports are available at the provided link to the Altarum website and I look forward to any questions you have for me about the report. Thank you.

## Michigan Behavioral Health Access Study

- ▲ The Michigan Health Endowment Fund contracted with Altarum to study access to behavioral health care in Michigan
  - Study conducted in 2021-2022 and published December 2022
  - Includes new Michigan data for 2019 and updates from our initial study [published in 2019](#)
- ▲ Measure access to behavioral health care in Michigan
  - Population need for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment
  - Estimates of the number of Michiganders receiving care
- ▲ Study Definitions
  - Includes mild, moderate, and serious mental illness, and SUD
  - Basic definition of access: at least one visit for a condition within the year



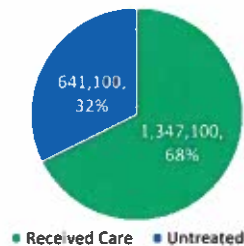
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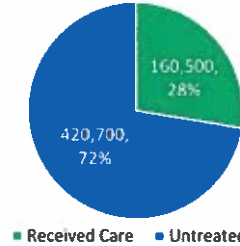
## Behavioral Health Access in Michigan

- ▲ Key Report Findings
  1. Between 2016 and 2019, prevalence of behavioral health conditions in Michigan increased, following a national trend of increasing need.
  2. Rates of access to care improved: for mental illness 68% received care in 2019 (up from 62%) and for SUD 28% received care in 2019 (up from 20%).
  3. An increase in behavioral health providers from 2016 to 2019 likely contributed to this.
  4. Yet, unmet need remained high in 2019 – an estimated more than 640,000 Michiganders with any mental illness (32%) and 420,000 with SUD (72%) were untreated.

1.99 million Michiganders with Any Mental Illness in 2019



580,000 Michiganders with a Substance Use Disorder in 2019

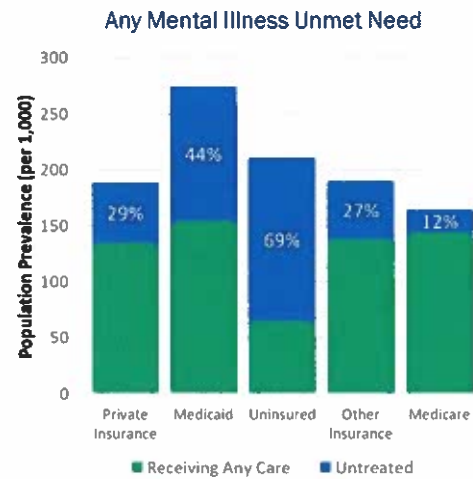


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## Behavioral Health Access in Michigan

### ▲ Any Mental Illness

- Prevalence of mental illness in Michigan increased from 17.7% in 2016 to 20.2% in 2019
- The number of individuals with any mental illness increased from 1.76 million to 1.99 million
- The share of all Michiganders with mental illness receiving treatment increased from 62% to 68%
- But, the number remaining untreated remained about the same: 640,000 in 2019 compared to 670,000 in 2016
- Mental illness rates and unmet need remain highest among adolescents, women, those uninsured, and those on Medicaid
- Anxiety disorders and depression are the most common mental health conditions

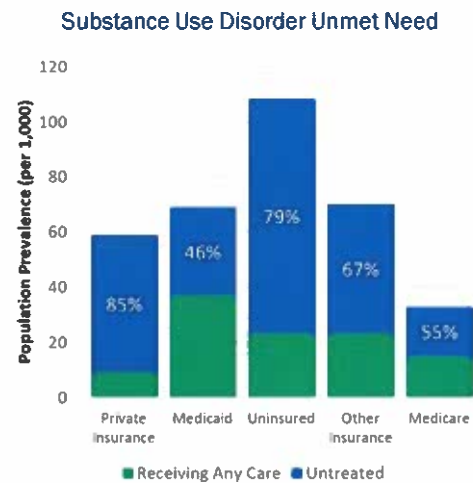


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## Behavioral Health Access in Michigan

### ▲ Substance Use Disorder

- Prevalence of substance use disorders in Michigan declined slightly from 6.4% in 2016 to 5.9% in 2019
- The number of individuals with a substance use disorder fell slightly from 640,000 to 580,000 in 2019
- The share of all Michiganders with a SUD receiving treatment increased from 20% in 2016 to 28% in 2019
- The number remaining untreated fell from 510,000 in 2016 to 420,000 in 2019
- Substance use disorder rates were highest among men, adolescents, and those uninsured
- Alcohol use disorder was the most common SUD in 2019

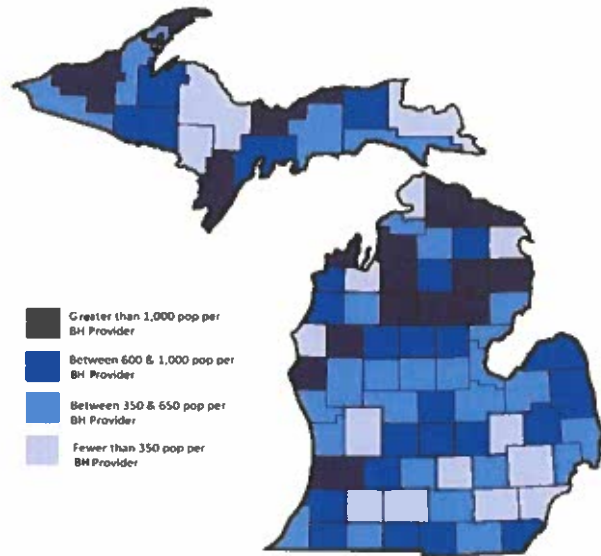


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## Behavioral Health Providers in Michigan

### ▲ Behavioral Health Providers

- The number of behavioral health (BH) providers has increased, from 1 BH provider per 463 Michiganders in 2016 to 1 BH provider per 373 residents in 2019
- But, provider capacity remains constrained, particularly in the northern half of the lower peninsula and portions of upper peninsula
- 22 counties in Michigan in 2019 were without a psychologist or psychiatrist (9 counties had neither)
- 20 counties in Michigan in 2019 were without a SUD treatment facility



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## Recommendations and Ongoing Initiatives

### ▲ Report Recommendations

- Increase the effective supply of providers
- Address affordability for care
- Increase willingness for the public to seek treatment

### ▲ Recognition of Behavioral Health Initiatives in Michigan

- MDHHS investments in behavioral health services and continued commitment to ensuring Michigan families can more easily access behavioral health services
- Michigan Crisis and Access Line (MiCAL): Suicide and crisis access line
- MC3: Provides psychiatric support to primary care providers through connections to BH specialists
- TRAILS: Participating school training and ongoing support to implement school-appropriate mental health programs, cognitive behavioral therapy, and mindfulness

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## Full Report Link

- ▲ The complete series of 2022 Access to Behavioral Health Care in Michigan reports are available at:
  - <https://altarum.org/publications/access-behavioral-health-care-michigan-2019-data-update>
  
- ▲ For any additional questions on data or report findings, please reach out to
  - [Corwin.Rhyan@altarum.org](mailto:Corwin.Rhyan@altarum.org)
  - [press@altarum.org](mailto:press@altarum.org)