

BRIDGING THE GAP:

*ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH CARE
IN RURAL TEXAS*

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RISING NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE

3.3 Million

**Texans Reporting
Mental Health
Conditions**

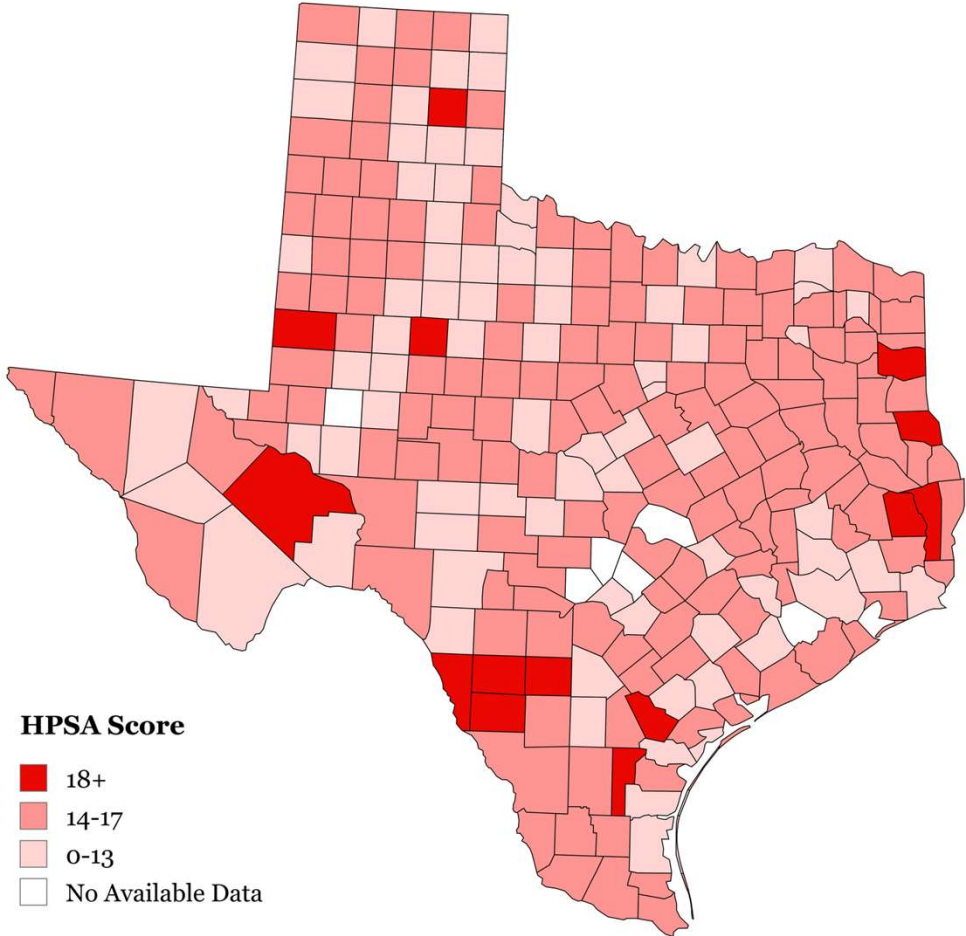
51st

**Ranking Out of 50
States and District
of Columbia for
Mental Health Care
Access**

\$1.4 Billion

**Spent on
Emergency Care for
Mental Health &
Substance Use
Disorders**

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS BY COUNTY



Note: HPSAs are measured on a scale of 0 – 26, with higher scores indicating more extreme shortages

CHALLENGES FACING RURAL POPULATIONS

- Shortage of Trained Professionals
- Limited Funding & Resources
- Long Distances to Mental Health Facilities
- Unique Hardships Associated with Rural Living
- Experience a Higher Number of Mentally Unhealthy Days Per Month on Average than Urban Populations



AVERAGE NUMBER OF MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS IN URBAN VS. RURAL COUNTIES

	Average Number of Mental Health Providers Per 100,000 People		
	2018	2020	2023
Majority Urban Counties	68	76	104
Majority Rural Counties	34	38	43

***WHEN THE NEED FOR CARE
GROWS AT A RATE FASTER
THAN THE GROWTH OF THE
WORKFORCE IT CREATES
THE GAP***



***EXISTING
POLICY MEASURES
IN PLACE***

- Texas Plan for Mental Health of 1964
- Substantial Funding Increases in 2013
- Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan in 2019
- Continued Mental Health Funding for
 - Mental Health Workforce Training
 - Educational Loan Repayment
 - Rural Residency Training Grants
 - Rural Facility Development Grants

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Short Term

Expand Telehealth Services to Alleviate the Gap Between Rural Need for Care and Access to Care

Long Term

Recruit New Talent Into the Industry and Retain Existing Professionals in Rural Areas to Meet Workforce Demand

TELEHEALTH EXPANSION

- Telehealth Utilization During COVID-19 Pandemic
Improved Access to Mental Health Care in Rural Areas
- Audio-Only Services Provide Unique Access
- Maintaining and Expanding These Allowances for
Telehealth is Imperative to Bridge the Gap

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PROGRAMS

- Workforce Shortages Remain the Root Cause of the Gap in Mental Health Care
- Recruiting New Talent
 - Early Exposure Programs
 - Scholarships for Rural Service Commitments
 - Partnerships with Universities to Create Rural Mental Health Tracks

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PROGRAMS

- Creating Strong Retention Programs Prior to New Talent
Workforce is Key to Long Term Success
- Retaining Talent
 - Competitive Salary Structures for Public Providers
 - Housing Stipends & Relocation Assistance
 - Public-Private Partnerships to Create Mental Health Hubs

***HOW CAN WE
SUPPORT OUR
COMMUNITIES***

- Be An Advocate
- Volunteer and Support Local Mental Health Initiatives
- Support Mental Health Organizations
- Encourage Dialogue and Reduce Stigma
- Get Trained in Mental Health First Aid

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