ISSUE BRIEF: MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is essential to a person's well-being, healthy family and interpersonal relationships, and the ability to live a full and productive life. People with untreated mental health disorders are at high risk for many unhealthy and unsafe behaviors, including substance use, violent or self-destructive behavior, and suicide. Mental health disorders can have harmful and long-lasting effects—including high psychosocial and economic costs—not only for people living with the disorder, but also for their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. Fortunately, a number of mental health disorders can be treated effectively, and prevention of mental health disorders is a growing area of research and practice. Early diagnosis and treatment can decrease the disease burden of mental health disorders as well as associated chronic diseases. Assessing and addressing mental health remains important to ensure that all Americans lead longer, healthier lives.

Key Facts:
- Many mental health disorders are preventable and treatable. Early identification and treatment can prevent the onset of disease, decrease rates of chronic disease, and help people live longer, healthier lives
- Approximately 1 in 4 adults in the US have had a mental health disorder in the past year—most commonly anxiety or depression—and 1 in 17 had a serious mental illness
- 1 in 5 children in the United States have had a mental health disorder, most commonly AD/HD
- A child experiencing mental health issues is more likely to have problems at school and is at greater risk of entering the criminal justice system
- In a given year, less than half of the people diagnosed with a mental illness receive treatment. The unmet need is greatest among underserved groups, such as older adults, minorities, those without health insurance, and residents of rural areas
- More than 34,000 Americans die as a result of suicide every year—approximately 1 suicide every 15 minutes. Suicide rates are highest among American Indian/Alaska Native youth.
- Risk factors for suicide include substance use, isolation, extreme emotional stress, a history of child maltreatment and mental health conditions such as depression
- Racial discrimination is associated with chronic stress and can lead to negative health outcomes such as hypertension

Impact on Physical Health

Mental health and physical health are inextricably linked. Evidence has shown that mental health disorders—most often depression—are strongly associated with the risk, occurrence, management, progression, and outcome of serious chronic diseases and health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, and cancer. This association appears to be caused by mental health disorders that precede chronic disease; chronic disease can intensify the symptoms of mental health disorders, in effect creating a cycle of poor health. This cycle decreases a person's ability to participate in the treatment of and recovery from mental health disorders and chronic disease. Therefore, while efforts are underway to reduce the burden of death and disability caused by chronic disease in the US, simultaneously improving mental health nationwide is critical to improving the health of all Americans.

Emerging Issues in Mental Health

New mental health issues have emerged among some special populations, such as veterans who have experienced physical and mental trauma; people in communities with large-scale psychological trauma caused by natural disasters; older adults, as the understanding and treatment of dementia and mood disorders continues to improve. As the Federal Government implements health reform legislation, it will give attention to providing services for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders, including new opportunities for access to and coverage for treatment and prevention services.

Social Determinants of Health

Several factors have been linked to mental health, including race and ethnicity, gender, age, income level, education level, sexual orientation, and geographic location. Other social conditions—such as interpersonal, family, and community dynamics, housing quality, social support, employment opportunities, and work and school conditions—can also influence mental health risk and outcomes, both positively and negatively. For example, safe shared places for people to interact, such as parks and churches, can support mental health.

Adapted from **Healthy People 2020** *and the* **National Prevention Strategy**

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2015 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSSESSMENT

Alpena, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego, and Presque Isle counties

Tip of the Mitt Data

Suicide: Age-adjusted suicide rates are higher than State (10.2 per 100,000) for the 6 counties reported (unable to calculate for Montmorency and Presque). Rates range from 12.5 per 100,000 in Emmet County to 20.5 in Antrim County

Depression among older adults: The proportion of adults enrolled in Medicare ranges from 13% in Charlevoix County to 18% in Otsego County. Rates are higher than State (17%) in Alpena and Otsego (18%) only.

Inadequate social support: Of the 7 counties reporting (unable to calculate Presque Isle), the proportion of adults who report they have inadequate social support ranges from 12% in Charlevoix County to 20% in Alpena, Cheboygan, and Otsego counties. For comparison, State rate is 20%.

Poor mental health days: Of the 7 counties reporting (unable to calculate Montmorency), the average number of days per month adults experience a poor mental health day ranges from 2.5 in Cheboygan County to 5.4 in Antrim County. Emmet (3.9 days), Otsego (4.1 days), and Antrim (5.4 days) exceed State rate of 3.7 days per month

Community Conversations

117 community members and representatives from local health departments, hospitals and other health care providers, social service agencies, schools, business, and government participated in a Community Conversation to answer the question, "What can we do here in this county to move closer to our vision of a healthy community?" Addressing prevention, treatment and/or access to mental health services was identified as an action in the following counties:

ALP	ANT	CHX-EM	CHB	MON	OTS	PI
X	X	X		X	X	

It is noteworthy that the #1 action identified in the Charlevoix-Emmet Conversation was to *intentionally integrate accessible behavioral and physical health services*

What Matters to You? Survey N= 1,220

When asked what are the 3 most important factors for a healthy community, top responses were: access to health care (69%); good jobs/healthy economy (50%); access to affordable healthy food (33%); affordable housing (27%); and good schools/high value on education (28%). Community members identified these problems most often: substance abuse (48%); overweight/obesity (42%); chronic disease (33%), mental health issues (27%) and lack of affordable housing (26%). When asked what barriers to care they experience, 87% said their health insurance policy does not cover behavioral health; 80% indicated they have problems finding a behavioral health provider and 78% said their health insurance policy does not cover medications. 63% of respondents indicated transportation issues present a problem in getting health care services.

Major Forces of Change

Mi-Connect: Mi-Connect is led by Alcona Health Centers, a system of federally-qualified health centers with federal funding. A key goal is to increase integration of primary care and behavioral health across an 11-county region.

Child and Adolescent Health Centers (CAHC): There are 6 school linked or school based health centers in the 8-county region. Each one offers mental health services to students and families at no charge. Primary care and mental health services are fully integrated at CAHCs in Antrim and Emmet counties

Northeast Michigan Children's Behavioral Health Initiative: The WK Kellogg Foundation funded the Initiative to provide families and children age 0-12 with education and services in collaboration with several community partners

Primary care-behavioral health integration at FQHCs: Several federally qualified health centers across the region now co-locate primary care and mental health services, often in partnership with the regional community mental health agency.

Health Care Provider Survey N=126

When asked what are the 3 most important factors for a healthy community, top responses were: access to health care (69%); good jobs/healthy economy (51%); healthy lifestyles (39%); good schools/high value on education (32%); and access to healthy foods (23%). Physicians, nurse practitioners and physicians assistant identified these community health problems most often: overweight obesity (58%) mental health issues (43%), lack of access to health care (38%), substance/tobacco use (35%)

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