

Prop 63 Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) Evaluation Fact Sheet¹

ASSESSING CALIFORNIA'S MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Primary Purpose: Determine and describe the characteristics of California's adult population in need of mental health services.

Background: Understanding the need for mental health services is fundamental to understanding, planning, and tracking mental health services that are and should be provided in California. California households were surveyed on a number of health and related issues. This evaluation looks at California's population in need of mental health service rather than those who are most likely to use public community-based mental health services.

Major Findings:

- Of California's 26.9 million adults, 2.2 million (8.3%) have a mental health need.
- Those adults with a mental health need are more likely to be:
 - Female, younger in age, living in poverty below the federal poverty level (FPL), American Indian/Alaskan Native, and have no health insurance or public coverage.

- Higher rates of tobacco and binge drinking are found among those with mental health needs.
- Just over half (50.6%) of the 2.2 million adults in California who have a mental health need reported not receiving any treatment from a primary care physician nor from a mental health professional.
- Among those who reported receiving treatment for mental and emotional issues, about one-third also take a daily prescription medication for an emotional/mental health problem (32.2%).

Methodology: The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) mental health module from 2007 was administered to a random sample of California households through phone interviews. CHIS is a household survey and does not capture the prevalence of mental health needs among those who live in group quarters (e.g. nursing homes, dormitories, residential treatment centers, prisons, etc), or are homeless.

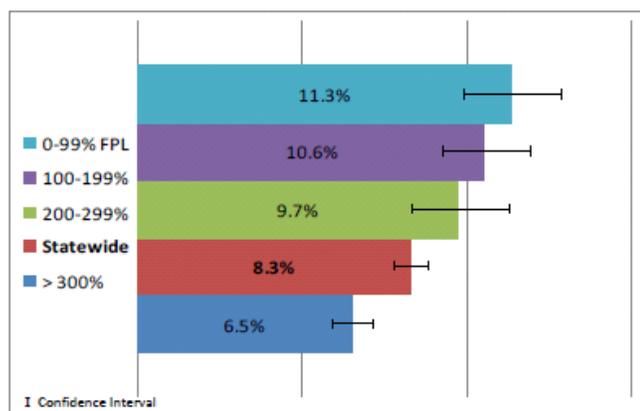
Principle Investigators: UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities and UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

Link to Study:
http://mhsoac.ca.gov/Evaluations/docs/Deliverable3_CHIS.pdf

Implications: Mental health needs vary along important socioeconomic and demographic characteristics that warrant further exploration. Periodic statewide surveys to determine the prevalence of serious mental illness and the needs of individuals with serious mental illness is a key component of any mental health tracking system. Surveys, like the CHIS, are essential for such tracking.

Recommendations: The MHSOAC should support continued funding of the mental health component of the CHIS and use this information to better understand Californian's need for and use of mental health services.

Figure 1: Rates of Mental Health Need by Poverty Level, CHIS 2007*



*adjusted for age and sex

Note. From "Assessing Adult Mental Health Needs in California Using the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)" by UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, p. 9.

¹This series of fact sheets provides brief summaries of MHSOAC evaluations of Prop 63 and California's public community-based mental health system. The MHSOAC is charged with providing oversight and accountability per the Mental Health Services Act (also known as Prop 63).