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#### New Behavioral Health Workforce Database Paints A Stark Picture

Clese Erikson, Ellen Schenk, Sara Westergaard, Edward S. Salsberg

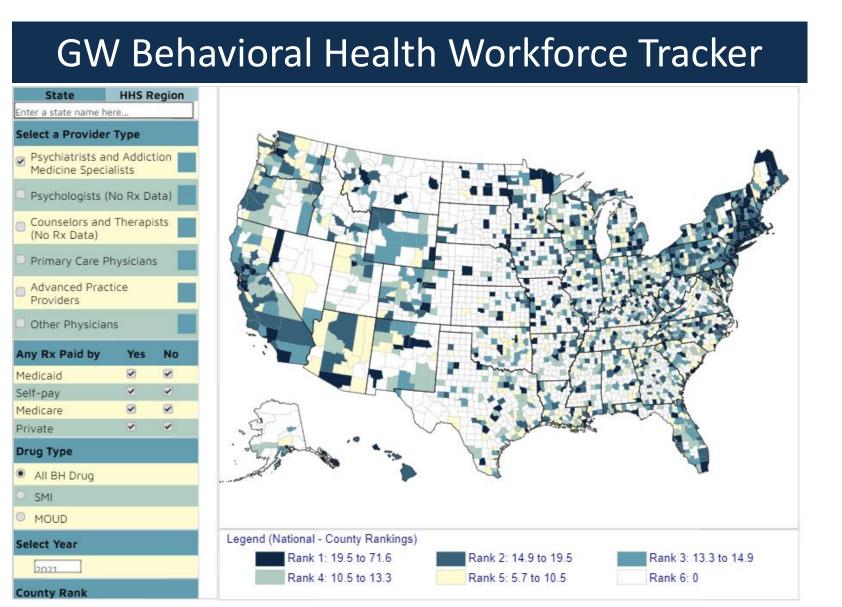
AUGUST 30, 2022

10.1377/forefront.20220829.640971



https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/new-behavioral-health-workforce-database-paints-stark-picture

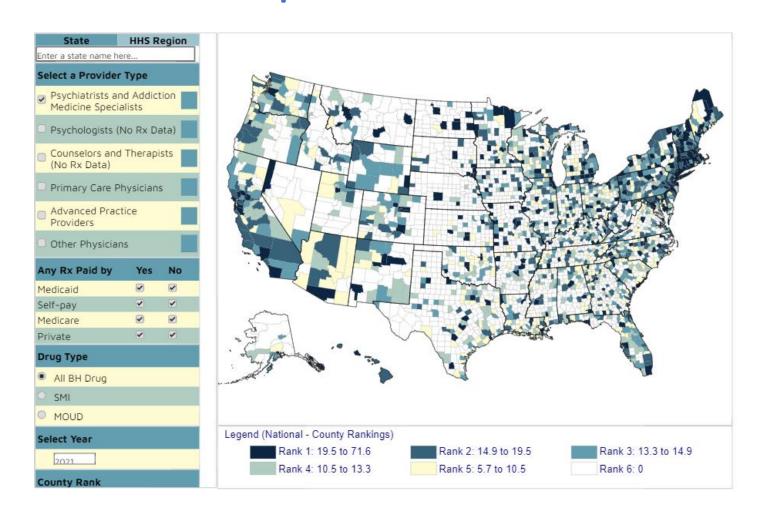
### https://www.gwhwi.org/behavioralhealth.html



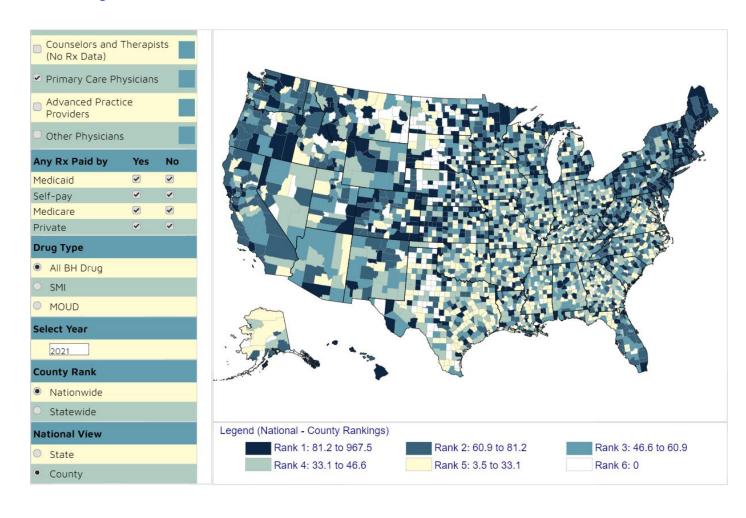




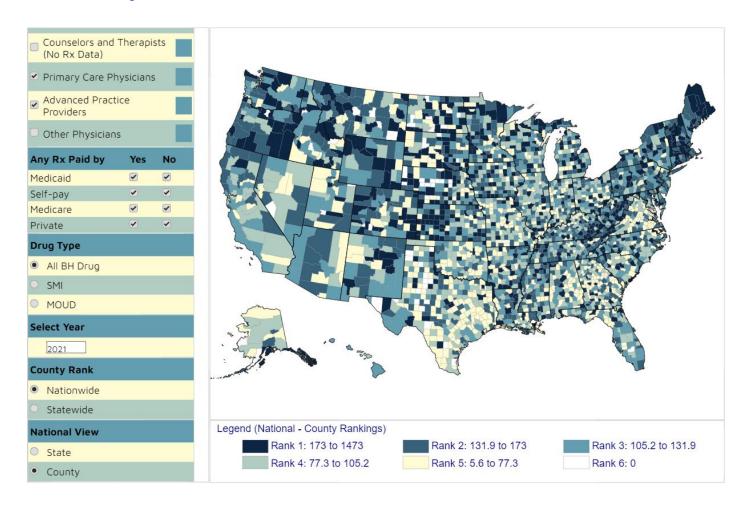
# 50% of counties do not have a psychiatric or addiction medicine specialist



# Primary Care Physicians Help Fill Gaps in Access to Specialists

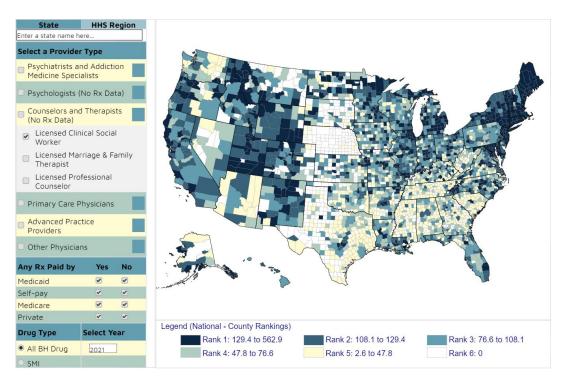


# NPs/PAs fill even more gaps – particularly in underserved, rural communities

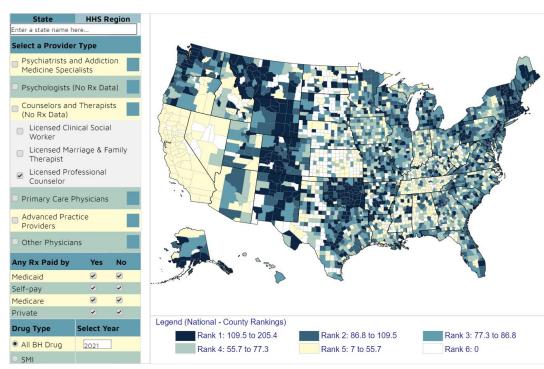


### Variation across states in use of LCSWs and LPCs

#### **Licensed Clinical Social Workers**



#### **Licensed Professional Counselors**



Some of the most frequently employed clinical staff members most difficult to recruit and retain

Licensed professional counselors **LCSWs** Substance use/addiction counselors **RNs** Psychiatric NPs Psychiatrists - Adult Licensed marriage & family therapists Psychiatrists - Child & Adolescent LPN/VPN **Psychologists** Primary care providers Addiction Psychiatrists Addiction Medicine Specialists PAs providing psychiatric care Psychiatric clinical nurse specialists **Pharmacists** 

Speech and language therapists

**Employed by Organization** 92% 87% 73% 64% 63% 54% 49% 47% 43% 33% 32% 26% 21% 17% 13% 13% 9% Occupational therapists/physical therapists

Counselors

employed at nearly

all sites

Source: 2021 Survey of Employers of Behavioral Health Providers

"I never thought I would say this...but right now I can hire a psych ARNP, off the street tomorrow. I can't find a licensed social worker to save my life."

Mental Health Center

**Employed by Organization** Challenges Hiring 92% 59% Licensed professional counselors **LCSWs** 87% 60% Substance use/addiction counselors 73% 39% 64% **RNs** 35% Psychiatric NPs 63% 34% Psychiatrists - Adult 54% 33% Licensed marriage & family therapists 49% 34% 47% 32% Psychiatrists - Child & Adolescent 43% 21% LPN/VPN 33% **Psychologists** 16% Primary care providers 32% 11% 26% 24% Addiction Psychiatrists Addiction Medicine Specialists 21% 15% PAs providing psychiatric care 17% 11% Executive Director. 13% 9% Psychiatric clinical nurse specialists 2% **Pharmacists** 13% 9% Occupational therapists/physical therapists Source: 2021 Survey of Employers 1% Speech and language therapists

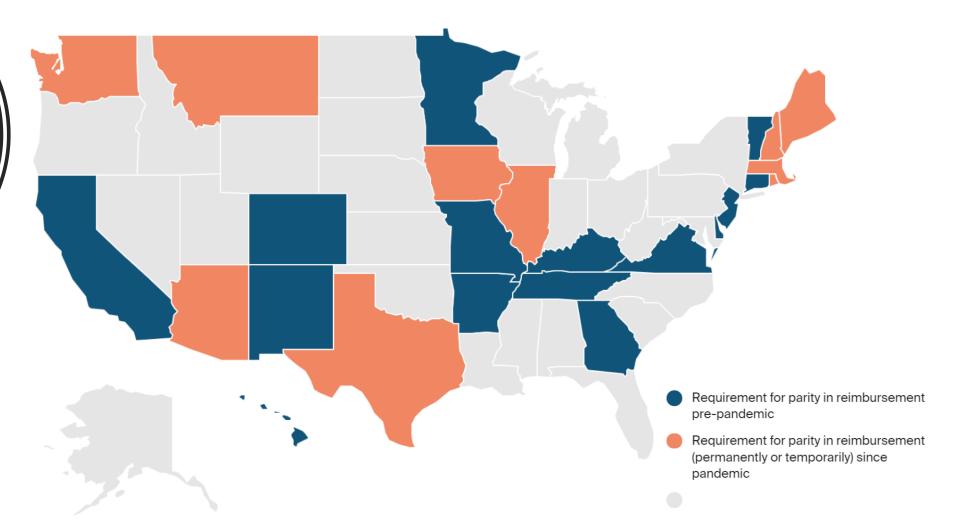
of Behavioral Health Providers



- Higher Medicaid reimbursement
- Allow accredited/licensed clinics to bill for master's level trained but not independently licensed (yet) staff under supervision
- Independent practice for psych NPs
- Loan repayment
- Reduced documentation and paperwork

### Payment parity for privately insured

State policies for privately insured



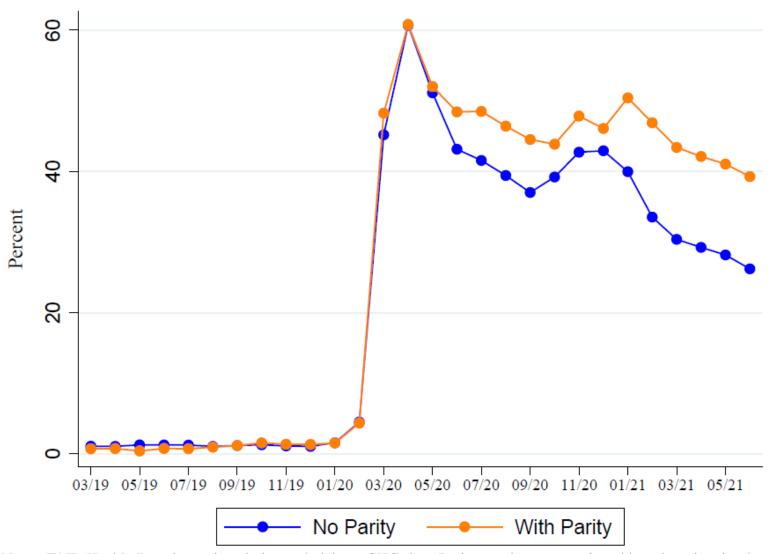
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Source: Center on Health Insurance Reforms, Georgetown University Health Policy Institute; Commonwealth Fund analysis.

## Percent of CHC sites that used telehealth by state reimbursement parity requirement for private insurers

Payment parity and CHC telehealth use



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Notes: FAIR Health. Based on privately insured visits at CHC sites. Parity requirements assigned based on time implemented (i.e. CHC sites located in states that adopted parity requirements in response to the pandemic would be included in the "No Parity" group prior to 03/20, but in the "With Parity" group starting in 03/20).

Erikson C, Herring J. et al, 2022 <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocac104">https://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocac104</a>

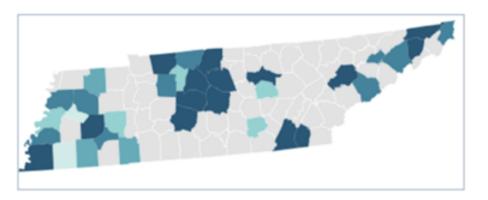
### **Collect and Liberate your Data!**

Figure 1. Counties with Counselors or Therapists in Tennessee, 2021

#### a. Counties with Any Counselors/Therapists



#### b. Counties with 1+ Black Counselors/Therapists



Source: Author's analysis of Tennessee Licensure Data, <a href="https://apps.health.tn.gov/licensureReports">https://apps.health.tn.gov/licensureReports</a>
Note: Shading in panel b represents the density of the overall counselor therapist supply (same as presented in panel a) but gray counties now indicate lack of any Black counselors/therapists.

# "Health workforce policy is increasingly a health equity battlefield." — Fitzhugh Mullan

Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity

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