Access and Unmet Need for Behavioral Health Services in Michigan: Assessment, Policy, and Recommendations

What We Investigated

- Of the estimated 1.76 million Michigan residents with a mental illness in 2016, only 62% received outpatient mental health care.
- The 446,000 Michigan residents with a SUD had the highest rates of unmet need.
- Medicaid beneficiaries and privately insured had the highest rates of unmet need.
- Medicaid had the highest percentage of uninsured, with 32.1%.
- Overall, 29% of Michiganders with a SUD had unmet need.
- Among the 640,000 Michiganders with a SUD, rates of unmet need were far greater, with 80% not receiving care.
- Medicaid and Medicare enrollees had the highest rates of unmet need.

What We Found: Unmet Need

- Of the estimated 1.76 million Michigan residents with a mental illness in 2016, only 62% received outpatient mental health care.
- The 446,000 Michigan residents with a SUD had the highest rates of unmet need.
- Medicaid beneficiaries and privately insured had the highest rates of unmet need.

Learning Objectives

Alim 1: Analyze unmet need and gaps in access to behavioral health services using results from patient surveys and medical claims analyses

Alim 2: Develop policy recommendations and potential investments to improve access to outpatient behavioral health care based on the results of unmet need assessments.

Our Framework and Methods

Study Design

To assess gaps in access, we compared rates of behavioral health condition prevalence from surveys with observed rates of behavioral health outspur visitors from medical claims.

Population Studies

Rates of unmet need and observed utilization were computed to be representative of all Michigan residents during 2016. Populated used to estimate condition prevalence were samples from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health and National Survey of Children's Health. The populations studied to estimate rate of outpatient behavioral health care were Michigan residents covered by public and private insurers, including complete Michigan Medicaid claims, a sample of commercial claims from Truven Health MarketScan, and a sample of Medicare Fee-for-Service claims.

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Implications for Policy and Practice

- For the full report scan...

Strategies to Increase Access in Michigan

- 15 recommendations in three categories
- Increase the effective supply of providers
- Address affordability
- Increase willingness to seek treatment

Conclusion

High rates of unmet need for outpatient behavioral services exist in Michigan, particularly for SUD treatment. Major access barriers include lack of behavioral health providers, patient cost burden, and reluctance to seek care.