2025 Mental Health INdex

COMPILED BY THE INDIANA MENTAL HEALTH ROUNDTABLE

FOREWARD

Mental Health America's "The State of Mental Health in America 2024" report ranks Indiana 24th overall in the nation, up from 42nd in 2022. A variety of factors shape this ranking, including prevalence of mental illness in youth and adults, access to care, and mental health workforce.[1] This progress reflects the state's commitment to improving the well-being of Hoosiers; however, the work is not finished.

42nd (2022) → **39th** (2023) → **24th** (2024)

By weaving together findings from diverse national, statewide, and local sources, the 2025 Mental Health INdex offers an overview of the mental health landscape in Indiana, including opportunities for continued improvement, especially those related to mental health system infrastructure, funding and workforce. Additionally, identifying the needs of both young and aging populations gives definition to the challenges facing the state.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The prevalence of mental health conditions and the associated economic burden underscore the need for continued investment in mental health services and resources in Indiana.

- A staggering number of youth report experiences of depression and/or suicidal ideation.[2] These challenges combined with lack of access to care—especially in schools and/or due to workforce issues—threaten student well-being and contribute to the ~$4.2B annual cost of untreated mental health challenges.[3]

- Further attention needs to be given to the behavioral health needs of the aging population (65+) to plan for the future of the state.[4]

- The implementation of Indiana's 988 Suicide and Crisis Response System has been significant, both regarding the amount of care provided to Hoosiers and the success based on where care was provided. There are, however, still many aspects that need to be improved in order to expand access and quality of care.[4]

INDIANA'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

INFRASTRUCTURE & FUNDING

Indiana's behavioral health care system is comprised of a variety of public and private services, providers, and programs. At the state level, the Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA) has built a comprehensive Crisis Response System that plays a critical role in ensuring Hoosiers have access to care. **Even with constant growth—a 115% increase from June 2023 to July 2024—Indiana ranks in the top 10 states nationwide regarding 988 call answer rate.**[4]

A key aspect of the Crisis Response System, Mobile Crisis Teams (MCTs) covered 65 out of 92 counties as of July 2024; though a significant growth since implementation, almost one-third of counties are still in need of coverage. Additional funding allotment and improved Medicaid reimbursement rates have been recommended by the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission in its 2024 Report.[4]

WORKFORCE

Images courtesy of Playbook for Enhancing Indiana's Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce

Indiana ranked 44th in the nation in 2024 for behavioral health workforce availability.[1]
All 92 of Indiana's counties lack the amount of mental health professionals needed for their population, and there are significant gaps around the state in terms of training opportunities for the behavioral health workforce. The Playbook for Enhancing Indiana's Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce, developed by the Bowen Center for Health Workforce Research and Policy, has outlined multiple other factors contributing to workforce shortage, including policies and training experience that don't support the development of mental health practitioners.[5] This is not a new issue; the 2022 Indiana Behavioral Health Commission Report also identified lack of workforce as a key challenge to responding to the needs of Hoosiers.[4]

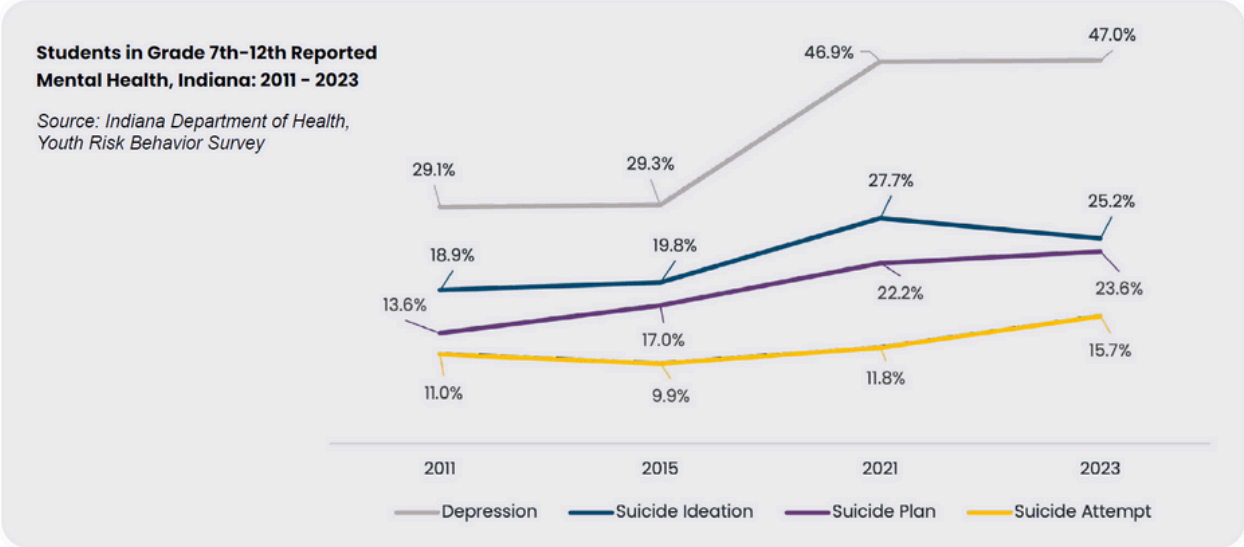
Workforce issues don't just pertain to the availability of workers; the needs of employers and employees also shape the full picture. For example, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (2008) outlines comprehensive health care insurance plans that include behavioral health coverage with no more restriction than physical care. Adoption of this legislature has been inconsistent.[4]

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

YOUTH

Almost one-quarter of Hoosiers are under age 18, placing Indiana within the top 15 states with the largest youth populations.[6]

47% of of middle and high school students surveyed in 2023 reported experiencing depression in the past year. Furthermore, more than half of Hoosier adolescents with depression do not receive the treatment they need. **25% of students surveyed reported that they had, "seriously considered attempting suicide."** [2] Youth have identified key factors adversely influencing their mental health, including, "social media, the pandemic, gun violence, climate change, and turbulent social climates." [4]



Source: 2024 Indiana KIDS COUNT® Data Book

School counselors provide social/emotional, academic, and workplace readiness support for youth in educational contexts. **The student-to-counselor ratio in schools doubles the professional recommendations outlined by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA)**. In 2023, Indiana sat at a 536:1 ratio, while the recommendation is 250:1.[6]

In 2024, Mental Health America ranked Indiana 40th for youth flourishing.[1] Not only does the lack of skills associated with flourishing—curiosity and interest in learning, resilience, and self-regulation—negatively impact youth immediately, it also creates gaps in the crucial soft skills expected by employers.

OLDER ADULTS (65+)

The population of Hoosiers aged 65+ grew 40% between 2010-2023. **The Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) predicts that this demographic will grow 31% between 2020-2040. 1 out of every 5 Hoosiers will be 65 or older by 2040.**[7]

Medical services and facilities—including behavioral health—need to prepare to meet the demands of the aging population. Additionally, addressing stigma around mental health, lack of social support, and the physical health needs of this population are critical action steps toward creating wellness.[4]

NEXT STEPS

Cross-sector collaboration must exist in order to continue Indiana's trend toward improved behavioral health care and to address the still unmet needs of many Hoosiers. Though individual actors have their own specific part to play, strategic partnerships between individuals and entities and adoption of an "all-hands-on-deck" mentality when it comes to addressing mental health will markedly reduce stigma around mental health challenges, scale the ability for practitioners to provide care, and increase wellness supports for Hoosiers.

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