

South Carolina Behavioral Health 2021 Progress Report:



South Carolina Institute of
Medicine & Public Health



Successes and Opportunities in Transforming Behavioral Health Care Systems across South Carolina

One Pager: MAY 2021

Executive Summary

In May 2021, the South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH) and the South Carolina Behavioral Health Coalition (SCBHC) published the *South Carolina Behavioral Health 2021 Progress Report*, an update to the original 2015 report *Hope for Tomorrow: The Collective Approach for Transforming South Carolina's Behavioral Health Systems*. This update outlines five successes in transforming behavioral health care systems throughout the state since the original report was published and five opportunities for future growth to reach the goal of providing access to behavioral health services to all who need them.

The five successes identified in the report include the development and implementation of the following:

1. South Carolina Mobile Crisis Program
2. Opioid Emergency Response Plan and Team
3. Improved Access to Safety Net Outpatient Mental Health Services
4. Expanded Access to Telebehavioral Health Services
5. Behavioral Health Specialists in Communities and Community-Based Organizations

The five opportunities outlined for the future include the development and implementation of the following:

1. School Mental Health Services
2. Crisis Stabilization Units
3. Reentry and Discharge Planning within the South Carolina Department of Corrections
4. Integration and Collaborative Care
5. Developing an Adequate Behavioral Health Workforce

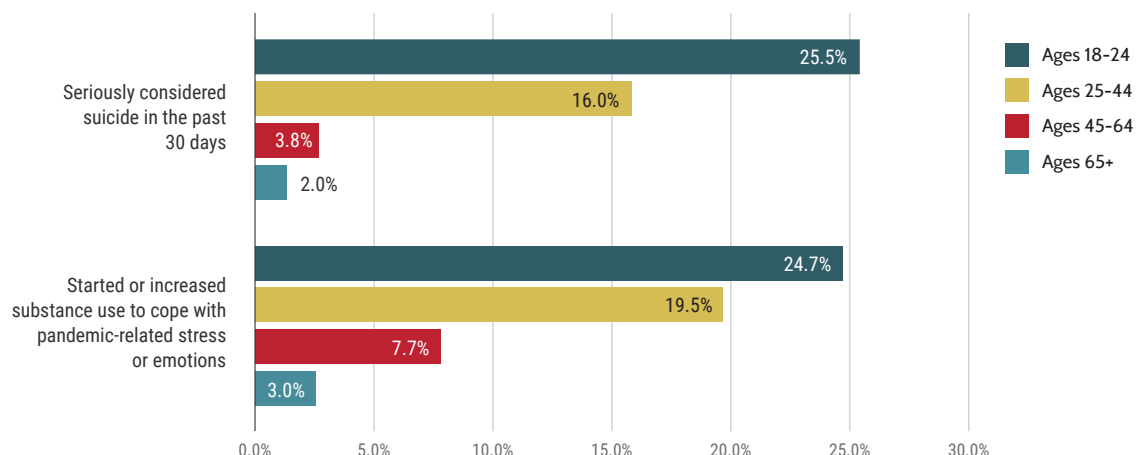
Also highlighted are local community coalitions and taskforces that are dedicated to achieving positive change in behavioral health through collaborative action. The traditional model of providing behavioral health care is evolving, and new methods must be adopted to continually provide effective treatment and services to individuals in need. In 2018, nearly one fifth of South Carolinians reported living with a diagnosed mental, behavioral or emotional disorder.^{1,2,3,4}

There are a growing number of adults living with behavioral health disorders across the state, and the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the need for a comprehensive behavioral health care system. Throughout the course of the pandemic, the number of individuals suffering from mental illnesses and substance use disorders across the country increased in response to isolation, uncertainty, stress and financial insecurity.⁵ A national survey, administered between June 24 and June 30 of 2020, revealed that 40.9% of adult participants reported an adverse mental or behavioral health outcome related to the pandemic.⁶ Graph 1 illustrates the responses of the study by age.

GRAPH 1

Adult Mental and Behavioral Health Outcomes during COVID-19 by Age, United States June 24-30, 2020⁷

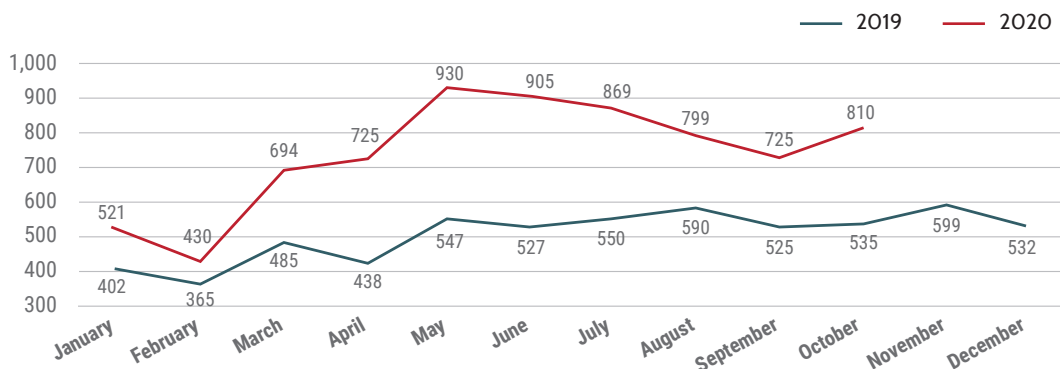
Source: Czeisler MÉ, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2020



Similarly, data from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control indicate a rise in morbidity and mortality rates as related to opioid overdoses in South Carolina during the pandemic.⁸ Graph 2 reflects the increase in the number of monthly suspected opioid overdoses and first responder naloxone administration between January 2019 and October 2020.⁹ The number of suspected opioid overdoses and first responder naloxone administration in May 2020 was 70% higher than the previous year.¹⁰

GRAPH 2

South Carolina Suspected Opioid Overdose and First Responder Naloxone Administration, 2019 and 2020¹¹



Source: Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, January 2019 – October 2020

It has become clear that suicide prevention and drug overdose prevention are essential components of a comprehensive pandemic response.^{12,13} For more information, please visit IMPH.org or email info@imph.org.

The South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care in South Carolina. In conducting its work, IMPH takes a comprehensive approach to advancing health issues through data analysis and translation and collaborative engagement.

The South Carolina Behavioral Health Coalition (SCBHC) is an unprecedented statewide alliance between public and private organizations dedicated to improving access to a strong behavioral health care system.

^a This data set includes all suspected opioid overdoses including those which did not result in death.

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