Youth Mental Health: Exploring the Continuum of Care for Children and Adolescents Resources

CAMH
Child and Adolescent Mental Health

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Coalition (CAMH) is a group of over 30 organizations with a diverse array of perspectives that is dedicated to promoting the mental health and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

Our organizations reflect a diversity of viewpoints and expertise, ranging from clinical providers to child advocates to public health entities to academia, led by a Core Leadership Team. As a coalition, we seek to advance a robust mental health care system, inclusive of programs, supportive payment models, and infrastructure, that provide the full continuum of mental health care, in a manner that facilitates easy and prompt access to services.

CAMH was formed in 2013 and is dedicated to ensuring all children have access to the mental and behavioral health care they need and that they receive that care in the appropriate setting.

More of CAMH's work is available on our website, camhcoalition.org. Questions can be directed to Carrie Swope at **cswope@aap.org.**

FOCUSING ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

While mental and behavioral health conditions can and do occur at any age, symptoms begin, and conditions often emerge in childhood. By investing in mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services, as well as a full range of treatments, children will grow up healthier and develop the skills they need forsuccessful and fulfilling lives.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

America is experiencing acrisis inthe mental health of children and adolescents. There is a growing demandfor mental and behavioral health services to support children and teens, but too often families face barriers in accessing needed care. Children's hospitals continue to see the impact on youth every day, including a high number of emergency department and inpatient visits for suicidal thoughts or self-harm. To stem the crisis, children need access to a wide array of mental health services, that are developmentally appropriate, provided in the best setting for their needs, andaffordable for their families.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Children's hospitals andotherpediatric providers see firsthand the effect mental and behavioral conditions have on children and families, especially without treatment and sufficient support. Workforce shortages in pediatric mental and behavioral health professions cause significant delays in children beginning mental health care. For children's hospitals, this means seeing a growing number of children who urgently need mental health services, while contending with a lack of appropriate, local care options for youth with serious mental health needs. Too often, children wind up boarding – waiting to begin care – in hospitals.

40%

of high school students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row that they stopped doing their usual activities.1

29%

of high school students reported experiencing poor mental health in the past 30 days.1

56%

of youth with major depression did not receive any mental health treatment.2

20%

of high school students reported seriously contemplating suicide and 9%, nearly 1 in 10, attempted suicide one or more times during the past year.1

Between 2016 and 2021, mental health ED cases (ages 3-18) increased 58.6% at children's hospitals* and have maintained that higher level for the past four years.

*Note:n= 38children'shospitalsincluded inthisanalysis.Data Source:Pediatric Health Information System(PHIS),2016 - 2024. ParticipatinghospitalsinPHISare the largest and most advanced children's hospitals in America, and constitute the most demanding standards of pediatric care in America.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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KIDS CAN'T WAIT

Theimportance of investing in services, support, and workforce to promoteaccess to necessary pediatric mental health care cannot be overstated. To address the crisis in children's mental health, Congress should prioritize policies that would:

- Protect and strengthen Medicaid and CHIP.
- Support and develop the pediatric mental health workforce.
- Invest in community-based systems of care.
- Bolster services for children with higher acuity mental health conditions.
- Expand youth-focused mental health crisis services and suicide prevention.
- Improve implementation of the mental health parity law.

THIS INCLUDES:

EnactingH.R.1735 / S. 779, the **Early Action and Responsiveness Lifts Youth Minds or EARLY Minds Act**, bipartisan legislation which will enable states to use a portion of their funds from the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant for prevention and early intervention services with children and adults.

1 in 5

children ages 3 to 17 had ever been diagnosed with a mental, emotional, or behavioral health condition.3

56%

of children across the country face difficulties obtaining needed mental health care.4

37.3 million

children rely on Medicaid and CHIP for coverage of mental health care.5

>1 million

youth with private insurance do not have coverage for mental health services.2

1. "Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013-2023," U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2024.
2. "The State of Mental Health in America 2024," Mental Health America, July 2024.
3. Leeb, Rebecca, T., et al., "Trends in Mental, Behavioral, and Developmental Disorders Among Children and Adolescents in the US, 2016-2021," Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy: Vol. 21, 2024.
4. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. "Interactive Data Query: National Survey of Children's Health (2022-2023)", Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB).
5. "April 2025: Medicaid and CHIP Eligibility Operations and Enrollment Snapshot," U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, July 2025.

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American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Resources:

Click the links below:

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists

Continuum of Mental Health Care