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The State of Mental Health in the Mountain West

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THE STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Health Fact Sheet No. 13 | February 2022

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PURPOSE:

This fact sheet explores mental health rankings of Mountain West states from Mental Health America’s (MHA) 2022 report, *The State of Mental Health in America*.¹ This study offers a snapshot of U.S. mental health based on data across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. MHA is the nation’s leading community-based mental health non-profit, founded in 1909, and “dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health of all.”² This report is a companion to MHA’s interactive data available through its website.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The data focus on how many adults and youth have mental health issues, substance use issues, access to adequate insurance, and access to mental health care. “Youth”³ are largely characterized as individuals 12 to 17 years old, whereas “adults” are individuals 18 years or older. Additionally, the report notes which states have the highest barriers to mental health care. The following national surveys contribute to the original report: SAMHSA’s National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and the Department of Education’s (DoE) National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Nevada ranks 51st and last among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in overall mental health rankings.
2. The Mountain West states of Arizona (49th), Colorado (37th), Nevada (51st), New Mexico (35th), and Utah (43rd) have some of the lowest overall mental health rankings in the nation, indicating a higher prevalence of mental illness and lower rates of access to care.⁴
3. Among Mountain West states, Arizona has the lowest mental health workforce availability, with one mental health professional for every 710 residents. Nevada ranks second lowest in the Mountain West at 460:1.
4. Colorado ranks last in the nation (51st) for the Overall Adult Mental Health Ranking; among Mountain West states, New Mexico ranks highest (15th) for the same category.
5. All Mountain West states perform below the national average for “Adults with Any Mental Illness” and “Adults with Serious Thoughts of Suicide.”
6. Nevada ranks last in the nation (51st) for the Overall Youth Mental Health Ranking; among Mountain West states, Colorado ranks highest (13th) for the same category.
7. All Mountain West States identify students with emotional disturbance for individualized education programs at a lower rate than the national average.

¹ Mental Health America (MHA), “The State of Mental Health in America 2022,” 2022. The full report can be requested via <https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>.

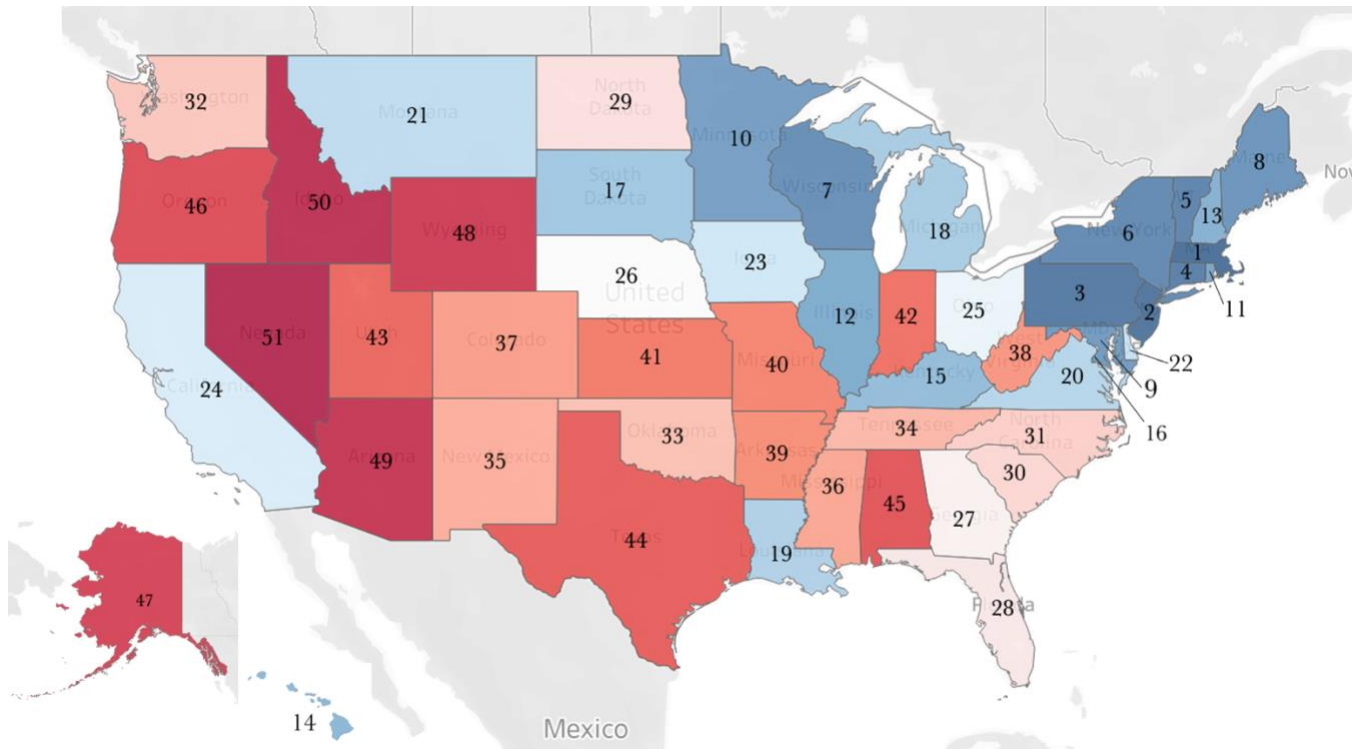
² Ibid.

³ “Percent of Students Identified With Emotional Disturbance for an Individualized Education Program” was calculated as the percent of children identified as having an emotional disturbance among all enrolled students grades 1-12 and “ungraded.”

⁴ The original report indicates that “An overall ranking 1-13 indicates lower prevalence of mental illness and higher rates of access to care. An overall ranking 39-51 indicates higher prevalence of mental illness and lower rates of access to care.”

Figure 1 displays overall mental health rankings across the United States.³ This heat map represents a scale, where states shaded in the darkest blue represent higher overall mental health rankings (closer to a rank of 1) and states shaded in the darkest red represent lower overall mental health rankings (closer to a rank of 51). The Mountain West states of Arizona (49th), Colorado (37th), Nevada (51st), New Mexico (35th), and Utah (43rd) have some of the lowest overall rankings in the nation, indicating a higher prevalence of mental illness and lower rates of access to care.

Figure 1: Overall Mental Health Rankings, United States



*Adapted from “The State of Mental Health in America 2022” by Mental Health America.

Table 1 displays the overall mental health rankings for each of the Mountain West states. Within the Mountain West, New Mexico has the highest overall ranking (35th) and Nevada has the lowest overall ranking (51st). Arizona has the highest ranking for “Prevalence of Mental Illness” (32nd), indicating a lower prevalence of mental health and substance use issues compared to the other Mountain West states. New Mexico (20th) and Colorado (21st) have the highest “Access to Care” rankings, whereas Arizona has the lowest ranking (46th) in this category. Arizona has the lowest mental health workforce availability, with one mental health professional for every 710 residents.

³ Each of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. are included in these nationwide rankings.

Table 1: Overall Mental Health Metrics, Mountain West States

Category	Arizona	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah
Overall Ranking	49	37	51	35	43
Prevalence of Mental Illness Ranking	32	45	46	43	47
Access to Care Ranking	46	21	39	20	26
Mental Health Workforce Availability	710:1	270:1	460:1	250:1	290:1

*Adapted from “The State of Mental Health in America 2022” by Mental Health America.

Table 2 presents adult mental health rankings among the Mountain West states, along with the national average for each indicator. Among Mountain West states, New Mexico (15th) has the highest adult ranking while Colorado is last in the nation (51st). All Mountain West states are above the national average for the percent of “Adults With Any Mental Illness” and “Adults With Serious Thoughts of Suicide.” Utah has the highest percentage among Mountain West states in three of the eight categories: “Adults With Mental Illness,” (ranked 51st nationwide) “Adults With Serious Thoughts of Suicide,” (ranked 51st nationwide) and “Adults With Cognitive Disability Who Could Not See a Doctor Due to Costs.” Colorado has the highest percent of “Adults With Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year” category (11.75%), ranking 50th nationally in this category.

Table 2: Adult Mental Health Metrics, Mountain West States

Category	National Average	Arizona	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah
Adult Rankings	-	35	51	40	15	43
% Adults With Any Mental Illness	19.86	20.06	23.20	21.97	21.39	26.86
% Adults With Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year	7.74	7.11	11.75	9.32	7.70	6.56
% Adults With Serious Thoughts of Suicide	4.58	5.01	5.54	4.94	4.81	6.19
% Adults With AMI Who Did Not Receive Treatment	55.90	57.00	53.60	58.00	54.20	49.70
% Adults With AMI Reporting Unmet Need	24.70	28.40	31.80	29.30	22.70	27.90
% Adults With AMI Who Are Uninsured	11.10	11.60	10.80	11.50	8.10	11.30
% Adults With Cognitive Disability Who Could Not See a Doctor Due to Costs	29.67	31.35	28.69	24.31	26.15	33.31

*Adapted from “The State of Mental Health in America 2022” by Mental Health America.

Table 3 displays mental health rankings and data for youth, children, and students in Mountain West states along with the national average for each indicator. Among the Mountain West states, Colorado (13th) has the highest ranking for youth mental health, while Nevada is the last in the nation (51st). All Mountain West states except for Colorado have a higher percentage of “Youth With at Least One Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year” than the national average, with New Mexico having the highest percentage at 18.60% (ranked 50th nationwide). Nevada has the highest percentage of “Youth With Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year” at 5.59% (ranked 49th nationwide). Colorado (43.10%) is well above the national average (27.20%) for “Youth With Severe MDE Who Received Some Consistent Treatment,” whereas Arizona (16.10%) and Nevada (18.70%) are far below. All Mountain West states identify students with emotional disturbance for individualized education programs at a lower percentage rate than the national average.

Table 3: Youth Mental Health Metrics, Mountain West States

Category	National Average	Arizona	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah
Youth Rankings	-	49	13	51	47	32
% Youth With At Least One Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year	15.08	17.41	15.02	17.93	18.60	17.77
% Youth With Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year	4.08	4.83	5.44	5.59	5.43	3.77
% Youth With Severe Major Depressive Episode	10.60	11.90	9.00	13.20	13.80	14.50
% Youth With MDE Who Did Not Receive Mental Health Services	60.30	70.10	39.30	65.20	55.90	45.40
% Youth With Severe MDE Who Received Some Consistent Treatment	27.20	16.10	43.10	18.70	22.50	27.30
% Children With Private Insurance That Did Not Cover Mental or Emotional Problems	8.10	10.20	9.60	7.10	7.80	4.70
% Students Identified with Emotional Disturbance for an Individual Education Program	7.59	7.39	6.98	4.64	6.15	3.12

*Adapted from “The State of Mental Health in America 2022” by Mental Health America.