

Behavioral Health in Massachusetts

This dashboard includes key indicators of behavioral health access, finance, utilization, quality, and equity.

Behavioral health care includes services and treatment for both mental health (MH) and substance use disorders (SUD).



ACCESS

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON ACCESS TO
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
CARE SERVICES**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

From 2022 to 2023, the proportion of emergency department visits that resulted in a length of stay exceeding 24 hours declined by 2.8 percentage points.

In 2023, 8.8% of behavioral health needs went unmet because of cost for families, and 5.1% went unmet for individuals.



FINANCE

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON SPENDING FOR
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
CARE SERVICES**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

In 2023, commercial behavioral health spending as a percentage of total commercial spending increased slightly to 7.8%.

Member cost-sharing for behavioral health services declined from 2022 to 2023 for both commercially insured and Medicare Advantage members.



UTILIZATION

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON THE USE OF
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
CARE SERVICES**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

From 2021 to 2023, the rate of behavioral health emergency department visits at acute care hospitals declined by 16.8%, from 2,244 to 1,866 per 100,000 residents.

In 2021 and 2022, more than one-quarter of commercially insured members ages 12-64 had at least 1 mental health prescription.



QUALITY

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON THE QUALITY OF
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
CARE SERVICES**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

Between 2022 and 2023, post-discharge follow-up with patients who had a hospitalization for mental illness improved slightly (1.4 percentage points), but declined for patients who had an emergency department visit for mental illness (-4.3 percentage points).

From 2021 to 2023, private commercial members reported increased rates of being screened for depression and anxiety during primary care visits, while the rate of MassHealth members being screened remained steady.



EQUITY

**METRICS FOCUSED
ON ASSESSING
INEQUITIES IN
BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH CARE**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

In 2023, Hispanic residents reported the highest rate of families who did not receive the behavioral health care they needed in the past 12 months due to cost.

In 2023, 17.2% of non-Hispanic White Massachusetts residents reported that they paid the entire cost of their most recent mental health visit out of pocket, the highest compared with other racial and ethnic groups.

CONTEXT

**AT-A-GLANCE HEALTH OUTCOME MEASURES
AND NOTES ON THE MASSACHUSETTS
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE MARKET**

[EXPLORE ►](#)

Metrics included in this dashboard have been collected from various data sources. The Behavioral Health Dashboard databook includes multi-year trends where data is available. For additional information, see the accompanying [interactive workbook](#), [databook](#), and [technical appendix](#).



ACCESS



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UTILIZATION



QUALITY



EQUITY

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTEXT AND PREVALENCE

At-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts and market notes

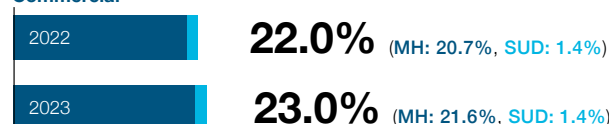
Behavioral health care encompasses an array of services that can meaningfully shape patient outcomes and form the foundation for a well-performing health care system. In the years following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for and usage of behavioral health care (including mental health and substance use disorder services) increased and remains high; this dashboard is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of indicators related to behavioral health care access, finance, utilization, quality, and equity in Massachusetts.

Metrics in this dashboard are sourced from various publicly available datasets and reflect the most recent data available.

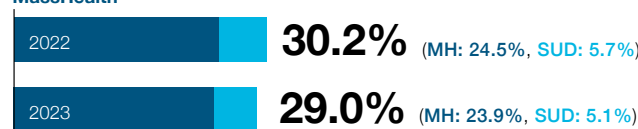
Behavioral Health Member Months

Percentage of members with a behavioral health (mental health and/or substance use disorder) diagnosis.

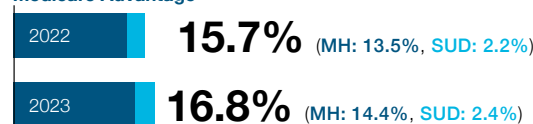
Commercial



MassHealth



Medicare Advantage



Behavioral Health Visits

Percentage of Massachusetts residents who had a visit for mental health or substance use disorder care in the past 12 months.

MH
17.5%
2021

21.4%
2023

SUD
1.5%
2021

1.1%
2023

Behavioral Health ED Visits

Percentage of Massachusetts residents who reported that their most recent emergency department visit was related to mental health or substance use disorders.

MH
6.0%
2021

4.5%
2023

SUD
2.1%
2021

0.7%
2023



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QUALITY



EQUITY

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTEXT AND PREVALENCE

At-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts and market notes

Suicide Deaths

Number of suicide deaths per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.

Per 100,000
(age-adjusted)

8.0

2021

8.3

2022

8.6

2023

Drug Overdose Deaths

Number of drug overdose deaths per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.

Per 100,000
(age-adjusted)

36.8

2021

37.4

2022

Alcohol-Related Deaths

Number of alcohol-related deaths per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.

Per 100,000
(age-adjusted)

12.5

2021

11.8

2022

10.7

2023

Tobacco and Alcohol Use

Percentage of Massachusetts adults who reported regular tobacco use and/or heavy drinking.

Tobacco Use

10.6%

2021

10.4%

2022

9.8%

2023

Heavy Drinking

6.3%

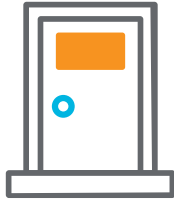
2021

6.7%

2022

6.4%

2023

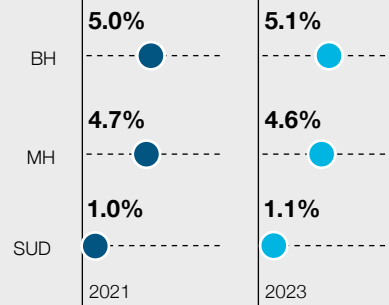


ACCESS

Metrics focused on access to behavioral health care services

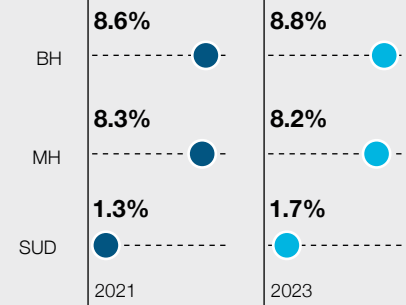
Individual Unmet Behavioral Health Needs Due to Cost

Percentage of Massachusetts residents who reported that they did not receive needed behavioral health care in the past 12 months due to cost.



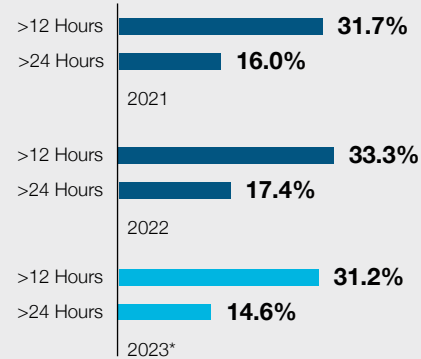
Family Unmet Behavioral Health Needs Due to Cost

Percentage of Massachusetts families who reported that they did not receive needed behavioral health care in the past 12 months due to cost.



Behavioral Health-Related ED Visits Resulting in Excess Length of Stay

Percentage of behavioral health-related emergency department visits in Massachusetts that resulted in a length of stay exceeding 12 and 24 hours.



For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).

*Excess length of stay 2023 data is preliminary and subject to change pending release and analysis of final data. All other data presented is considered final.



FINANCE

Metrics focused on spending for behavioral health care services



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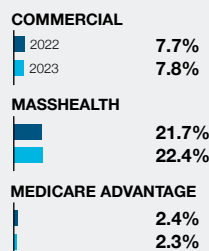
QUALITY



EQUITY

Behavioral Health Spending

Spending attributed to behavioral health services as a percentage of total health care spending by insurance category.



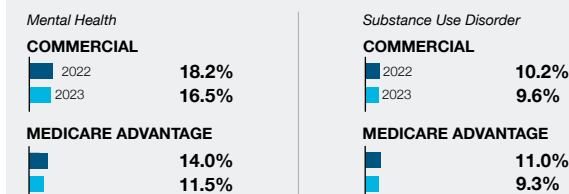
Mental Health Care Out-of-Pocket Costs

Percentage of Massachusetts individuals who paid the entire cost of their most recent mental health visit without reimbursement.

15.0%
2023

Behavioral Health Member Cost-Sharing

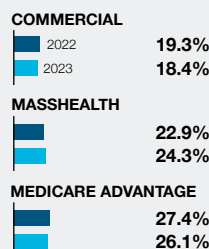
Percentage of total behavioral health care costs paid by Massachusetts residents through copays, coinsurance, and deductibles.



Note: MassHealth reported no cost-sharing for these services.

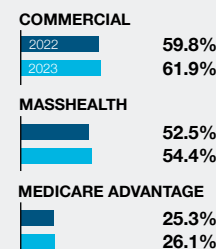
Behavioral Health Inpatient Spending

Percentage of total behavioral health spending attributed to behavioral health services provided after being admitted to a hospital/facility.



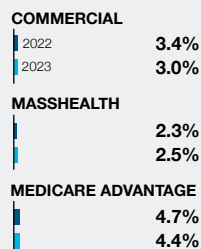
Behavioral Health Outpatient Spending

Percentage of behavioral health spending attributed to behavioral health services provided without an overnight stay.



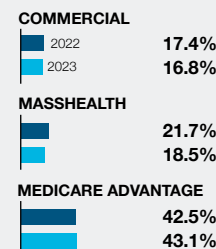
Behavioral Health ED/Observation Spending

Percentage of total behavioral health spending attributed to emergency department visits or observation stays provided without formal admission.



Behavioral Health Prescription Drug Spending

Percentage of total behavioral health spending attributed to behavioral health prescription drugs.



Notes: Analysis represents nearly 100% of Massachusetts residents with private commercial insurance, 93.4% of MassHealth members, and 30.3% of Medicare members. Spending for MassHealth members with FFS coverage and Medicare beneficiaries with Original Medicare are not included in these results. For commercial partial-claim data where payers reported behavioral health and pharmacy carve-outs, CHIA estimated spending by service type. All metrics displayed except for Member Cost-Sharing represent commercial full-claims and commercial partial-claims. Member Cost-Sharing is based on reported commercial full-claims only. Commercial full-claim members represent approximately 64 percent of the commercial market. MassHealth included facility claims in primary care definition for CY 2022 and CY 2023.

Due to payer exclusions from prior years, data may not tie to previously published data points. Data does not reflect aggregate statewide spending, and findings should not be extrapolated for that purpose. MH and SUD diagnoses are not mutually exclusive. Totals may not sum due to rounding. See [technical appendix](#) for more information.

For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).



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Metrics focused on the use of behavioral health care services

Behavioral Health-Related Inpatient Discharges

Number of inpatient discharges at acute care hospitals in Massachusetts that were related to behavioral health conditions.

283,537

2021

269,616

2022

277,777

2023

Behavioral Health-Related Length of Stay

Average length of stay in acute care hospitals in Massachusetts for discharges associated with any behavioral health condition.

6.62 days

2021

7.15 days

2022

7.05 days

2023

Behavioral Health-Related ED Visits

Number of emergency department visits at acute care hospitals that are related to behavioral health conditions per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.*

PER 100,000

2,244

2021

2,072

2022

1,866

2023

Opioid-Related ED Visits

Number of emergency department visits at acute care hospitals that are related to opioid use per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.*

PER 100,000

209

2021

178

2022

156

2023

Opioid-Related Inpatient Discharges

Number of inpatient discharges at acute care hospitals that are related to opioid use per 100,000 Massachusetts residents.*

PER 100,000

487

2021

436

2022

434

2023

Psychotherapy Visits per 1,000 Insured Members

Number of psychotherapy visits per 1,000 commercially insured members in Massachusetts ages 0-64.

PER 1,000

1,941

2021

1,940

2022

Insured Members With Mental Health Prescriptions

Percentage of commercially insured members in Massachusetts ages 12-64 with at least 1 mental health prescription.

28.0%

2021

28.6%

2022

*Numbers vary from those in the 2024 Behavioral Health Dashboard due to changes in methodology.

Note: 2023 data presented on this page is preliminary and subject to change pending release and analysis of final data. All other data presented is considered final.

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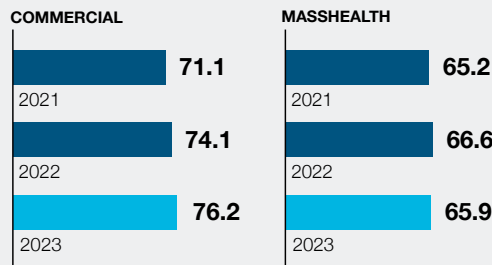


QUALITY

Metrics focused on the quality of behavioral health care services

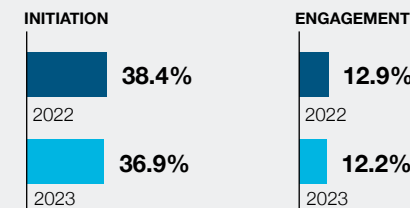
Behavioral Health Screening in Primary Care

Massachusetts adult patients who reported being screened for depression and anxiety during a primary care visit based on aggregate survey responses on a 0-100 scale.



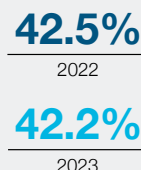
Initiation and Engagement of SUD Treatment

Percentage of Massachusetts patients with a new episode of substance use disorder (SUD) who initiated and engaged in ongoing treatment.*



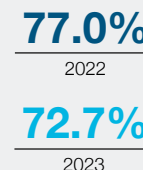
Metabolic Monitoring for Youth on Antipsychotics

Percentage of children and adolescents in Massachusetts on antipsychotic medications who received metabolic testing.



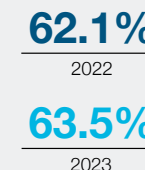
7-Day Follow-Up After ED Visit for Mental Illness

Percentage of Massachusetts patients who had a follow-up visit within 7 days of an emergency department visit for mental illness.



7-Day Follow-Up After Mental Health Hospitalization

Percentage of Massachusetts patients who had a follow-up visit within 7 days of being discharged from hospitalization for mental illness.



*The initiation phase measures the percentage of members who initiated treatment through an inpatient alcohol or drug (AOD) admission, outpatient visit, intensive outpatient encounter or partial hospitalization, telehealth, or medication treatment within 14 days of the diagnosis. The engagement phase measures the percentage of members who initiated treatment and who were engaged in ongoing AOD treatment within 34 days of the initiation visit. A higher score indicates better performance.

Note: Quality metrics presented in this analysis are statewide results.

For more insight from CHIA's reporting on clinical quality measures for behavioral health and other services, see [Select Clinical Quality and Patient Experience Measures](#).

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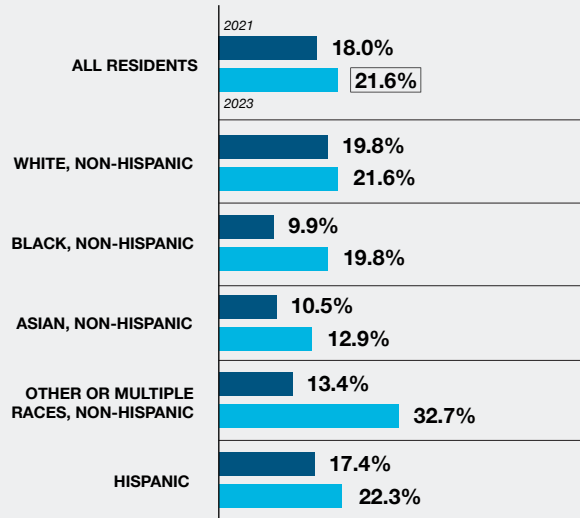


EQUITY

Metrics focused on assessing inequities in behavioral health care

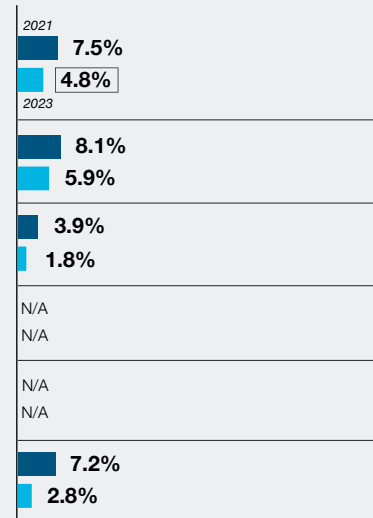
Behavioral Health Visits

Percentage of Massachusetts residents who had a visit for mental health or substance use disorder care in the past 12 months.



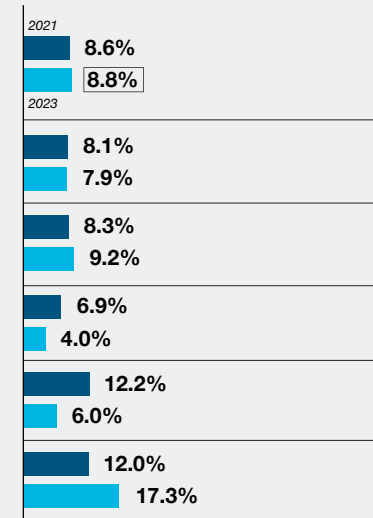
Behavioral Health ED Visits

Percentage of Massachusetts residents who reported that their most recent emergency department visit was related to mental health or substance use disorders.



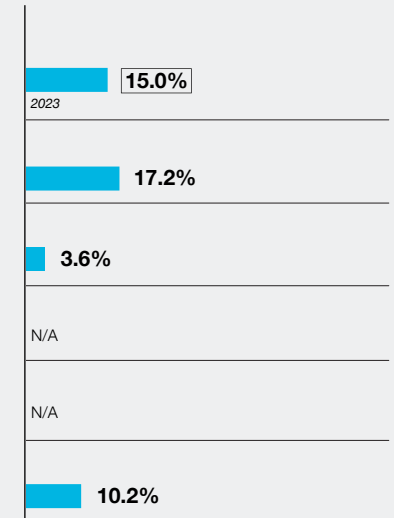
Family Unmet Behavioral Health Needs Due to Cost

Percentage of Massachusetts families who reported that they did not receive needed behavioral health care during the past 12 months due to cost.



Mental Health Care Out-of-Pocket Costs

Percentage of Massachusetts individuals who paid the entire cost of their most recent mental health visit without reimbursement.



N/A = Estimates for which the sample size is fewer than 50 respondents.

Note: Percentages for all residents (gray boxes) identified for each metric in 2023. Mental Health Care Out-of-Pocket Costs newly available in 2023. Further stratifications and regional analyses included in [interactive workbook](#).

For at-a-glance health outcome measures in Massachusetts, see the [context page](#). For additional information on the metrics displayed above, including data sources, see the [technical appendix](#) and [databook](#).