

Dept. of Health Services: Office of Children's Mental Health Focuses on Addressing Shortages in the Mental Health Workforce

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Office of Children's Mental Health Director Linda Hall today announces the publication of a new fact sheet [Addressing Shortages in the Mental Health Workforce](#) and what our communities, schools and providers can do to make a difference.

Mental health workforce shortages have far-reaching implications for children and providers alike. Shortages inhibit access to culturally competent and geographically diverse practitioners, and create large disparities for both children of color and those living in rural areas.

When the supply of providers cannot accommodate the demand for services, it can lead to an increase of:

- Distress caused by worsening mental health symptoms
- Family conflict, child abuse, and neglect
- Risk of suicide, homelessness, and substance use
- Out-of-home placement and juvenile detention
- Emergency room visits and in-hospital stays
- Individual, community, and state-level costs associated with mental health treatment

What We Can Do

- Policymakers can increase compensation for mental health providers to improve rates of recruitment and retention of mental health professionals. They can also support improvements in the state mental health licensing system to streamline the licensure process.
- Providers can increase the cultural responsiveness of their mental health services by providing family-centered care and sharing treatment decision making with families.
- Communities can strengthen connections between behavioral health organizations, schools, and local community organizations to increase access.
- Parents can leverage their lived experience with the mental health system and join the workforce as peer specialists.

See the [complete fact sheet](#)