



Illinois Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pediatric Mental Health Care: Needs Assessment for Illinois

Preparing for the Illinois Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Expansion Project

The Children's Mental Health Crisis in Illinois

Health systems, health care providers, and families in Illinois are struggling to effectively address children's mental health due to:



limited resources



lack of access to mental health care



a high volume of patients in crisis



limited support available for providers



Our state's pediatric healthcare providers now find themselves on the frontlines, conducting key screenings and interventions to support children and families, but have limited capacity and resources to effectively address growing need.

Conducting a Mental Health Needs Analysis in Illinois

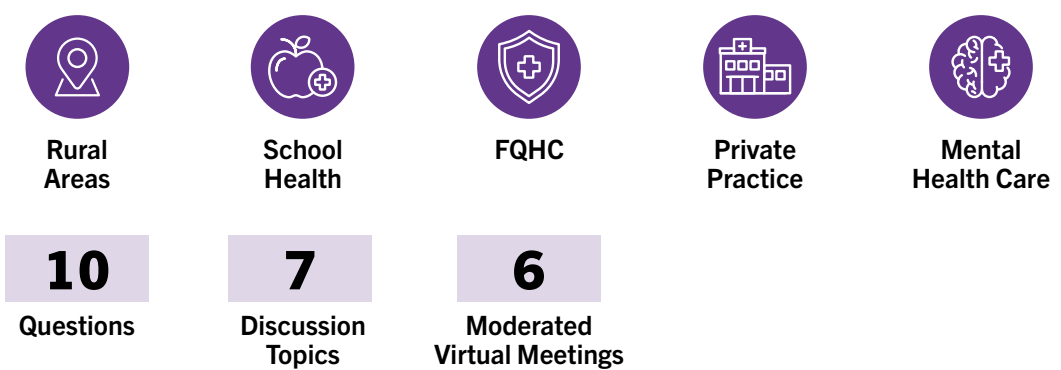
Between April 2023 and July 2023, the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment survey with coordinating key focus groups to better determine a successful plan of action in addressing pediatric mental health care in Illinois.



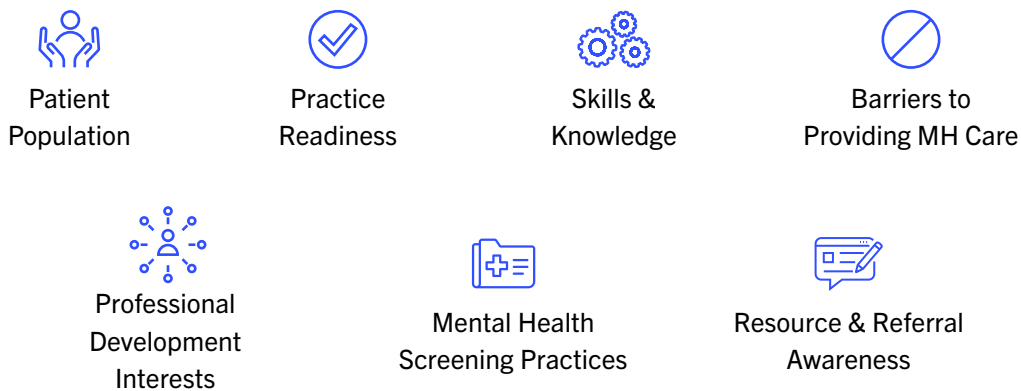
Online Survey:



Targeted Focus Group Participants:



Question/Discussion Topics:



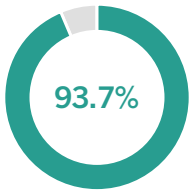


Key Findings

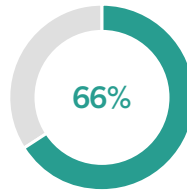
Children & Families in Illinois are Facing Unprecedented Mental Health Challenges

Pediatric health care providers reported that many of their patients are struggling with mental health concerns, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal Ideation
- Self Harm
- Substance Use
- Aggressive Behavior
- Gender Identity
- Sexuality
- Eating Disorders
- Trauma



Almost all (**93.7%**) of respondents reported that more than a quarter of their patients struggled with mood, behavior, or other symptoms related to mental health.



A majority of providers (**66%**) reported that at least half of their patients with mental health concerns also struggle with adverse social determinants of health.

- ⊗ **Network for Referral: 81.25%** of respondents find challenges in establishing a network for referrals to other specialized care providers.
- ⊗ **Amount of Time: 80.7%** highlight time constraints as a significant barrier to providing comprehensive care.
- ⊗ **Office Support Structures: 52.3%** identify issues with inadequate support structures within the office environment that hinder effective care delivery.
- ⊗ **Resource Materials: 43.8%** face difficulties due to the lack of sufficient resource materials for treatment and education.
- ⊗ **Payment: 42.6%** note that financial concerns and payment issues impact their ability to offer care.

- ⊗ **Skills and Knowledge: 41.5%** acknowledge the need for ongoing professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge in addressing complex mental health concerns.
- ⊗ **Comfort Level/Stress Tolerance: 40.3%** acknowledge the challenges of managing their personal level of distress while providing care.
- ⊗ **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Delivery: 27.7%** of respondents indicated that they are unsure about their clinic's promotion of trauma-informed care, while 33% of respondents would like further assistance on trauma-informed care practices.



13.1% of pediatric health care providers report that they encounter all of the mentioned barriers in their clinic's care provision.

Proposed Plan of Action

Pediatricians and other pediatric health care providers have key insights into patient well-being because of their opportunity and ability to develop relationships and build trust with parents and caregivers to support children.

ICAAP seeks to help build capacity and confidence in mental health screening, diagnosis, care, and outreach for pediatric health care providers throughout Illinois by leveraging our network and resources to complete the following tasks as a part of our work on the Illinois PMHC:



1 Develop Training & Education Materials

Develop **training and education modules and materials** for primary health care providers on common mental health issues and conditions in children and adolescents that incorporate social determinants of health and health equity and trauma-informed care practices.

Offer **Continuing Medical Education (CME)/Continuing Education Unit (CEU)** for the aforementioned training modules.

2 Develop Clinical Support & Outreach Materials

Create **clinical support materials** to aide pediatric health care providers in integrating mental health care services and trauma informed care practices into clinical workflows.

Create and distribute **outreach materials for families** that help to educate them on relevant mental health issues and the support opportunities available to them.



3 Optimize & Amplify Illinois DocAssist

Increase knowledge and understanding of **the role of Illinois DocAssist (IDA)** in supporting health care providers in providing mental health treatment and support to youth in Illinois through outreach and awareness building.

Develop a messaging plan for pediatric health care professionals including primary care, emergency physicians/staff, pediatric nurse practitioners, and school-based personnel that highlight the **benefits of Illinois DocAssist** and the new training materials as delivered by this initiative.



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