

ISSUE

Children and their families do not have adequate access to high-quality, localized specialty child and adolescent behavioral health care.

BACKGROUND

- AACAP, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Children's Hospital Association jointly declared a national emergency in children's mental health October 2021.
- Over 80% of states and 90% of counties in the U.S. have a severe shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists.
- On average, in the US, there are only 14 child and adolescent psychiatrists for every 100,000 children. A sufficient supply would be more than 47 child and adolescent psychiatrists for every 100,000 children.
- Child and adolescent psychiatrists are physicians uniquely trained to treat complex mental, behavioral, developmental, or emotional disorders and often serve as their patients' primary care physician.
- Child and adolescent psychiatrists expand access to behavioral healthcare in settings like pediatrician offices and schools through telemedicine consultation and collaborative care arrangements.

SOLUTIONS

- Public and private insurance programs should support children's access to high quality and timely mental health care by covering the full range of evidence-based behavioral and developmental health care services, including care delivered via telemedicine, and by adequately reimbursing medical providers to provide that care.

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST

Support integration of pediatric behavioral health care in all child-facing systems of care and reimbursement parity for the full continuum of pediatric mental health.

HOUSE: *Support H.R. 7236, "Strengthen Kids' Mental Health Now Act," Introduced by Reps. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE), and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). This legislation would:*

- *Support payment parity in Medicaid for pediatric mental health services, including for child and adolescent psychiatry services;*
- *Integrate pediatric behavioral health care across a wide range of child-facing systems/settings of care; and*
- *Recruit and retain a diverse, evidence-informed pediatric mental health workforce.*

SENATE: *HELP Committee Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) are working on legislation to support improved access to pediatric mental health care by addressing Medicaid payment parity and expanding the child mental health workforce and its integration. AACAP supports legislation that mirrors bipartisan, comprehensive mental health legislation currently in the House – H.R. 7236.*