



Executive Summary

Report 1: An Overview of Opportunities

This report, the first of four, highlights the need for more comprehensive behavioral health data describing the experiences of marginalized racial and ethnic groups. These groups, generally, have worse outcomes in terms of behavioral health than the White population. However, the existing data are not detailed enough to fully address the disparities. This report provides an overview including:

- Data that are needed and currently not available to better understand issues related to behavioral health in marginalized communities.
- Recommendations to inform initiatives directed at improving systems, policy, and practice that work toward equity in behavioral health in Ohio.

Four partner organizations coalesced in 2022 to conduct this research, including Central State University, the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition, Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence, Inc., and Ohio University.

Findings

This first report provides an overview and a key, central finding; we simply do not have enough information to fully characterize disparities related to race and/or ethnicity in behavioral health. However, the data that are available indicate significant issues, for instance, higher suicide and overdose death rates for Ohio's marginalized racial groups. Additionally, national research shows marginalized people face barriers including:

- Access to culturally competent care and provider racial bias.
- Stigma when seeking help for mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

These barriers lead to a lack of care in the short-term and worse behavioral health outcomes long-term. As noted, additional Ohio-specific data is needed to understand the best ways to address these multi-layered problems.

Recommendations

- Improve data collection and use to establish a baseline for future intervention measurement.
- Ensure prevention, treatments, and supports are culturally appropriate.
- Work with the Disparities and Cultural Competence (DACC) Advisory Committee to assess where improvements can be made in service equity.
- Implement COVID-19 Ohio Minority Health Strike Force recommendations.
- Establish a task force for stakeholder accountability, improvements, and change.

Summary

This series of reports calls needed attention to disparities for Ohio's marginalized racial and ethnic groups. This first report provides an overview and subsequent reports will present original, Ohio-specific data about the racial and ethnic makeup of the behavioral health workforce, treatment provision, and a funding analysis for behavioral health programs and interventions. Ultimately, the partners are engaged in this research because data should be the main driver in managing change in the behavioral health system but a holistic picture currently isn't available.



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