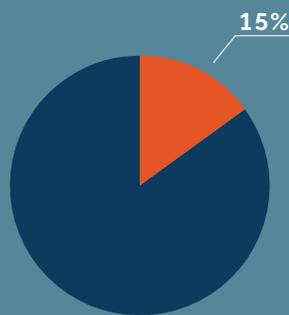


# IMPROVING YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED STRATEGIES

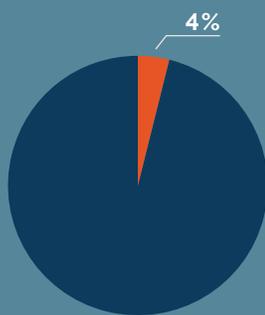


The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the mental and emotional health and well-being of youth. In 2021, 15% of youth in the United States had a major depressive episode and 4% had a substance use disorder with the highest rate among youth of color, according to a [Mental Health America report](#). Mental Health America also found that over half of LGBTQ+ youth screened for suicide risk experienced thoughts of suicide or self-harm.

Despite increased need for youth behavioral health prevention and treatment, states are reporting decreased access and availability of services. [Kaiser Family Foundation reported](#) that outpatient mental health services declined by 58% for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program beneficiaries from January–May 2020. After employer-sponsored insurance, Medicaid is the second largest insurer of U.S. children ages 0–18, providing health insurance coverage for [37.5% of children](#) in 2019. Medicaid plays an important role in ensuring students have access to high-quality, affordable healthcare.



Youth in the United States that had a major depressive episode in 2021



Youth in the United States that had a substance use disorder in 2021

The education sector engages with [95% of U.S. children](#), providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for learning, social interaction, and health promotion. Because of this regular engagement, the education sector can serve a unique and important role in assessing student health and implementing interventions to address student needs and promote overall wellbeing.

ASTHO, in partnership with CDC Healthy Schools Branch, convened a School Behavioral Health Advisory Committee\* comprised of national, federal, academic, and state experts to identify policy gaps and strategies for delivering behavioral health services in schools.

## THE FOLLOWING ARE TEN, HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIES DISCUSSED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND OUTLINED IN THE ASTHO "IMPROVING YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED STRATEGIES" REPORT TO ADVANCE WORK IN SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:



Collaborate with the Department of Education on a comprehensive mental health framework to guide student well-being, such as the Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework.

### TIER 1: UNIVERSAL SERVICES

- Social-emotional learning
- Safe and supportive environments
- School-wide curriculum lessons or grade-level classroom presentations for all students

### TIER 2: TARGETED SERVICES

- Counseling
- Behavior intervention plans
- Early intervention services and support, such as small-group interventions, individualized interventions, mentoring, and low-intensity classroom-based supports
- Needs assessments, screenings, and referrals

### TIER 3: INTENSIVE SERVICES

- School-based health centers
- Trauma-informed care
- Treatment services and supports, such as individual, group, or family therapy



Utilize shared and inclusive language when communicating work around school behavioral health.



Use a strength-based approach when collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data highlighting the role of student connectedness and resiliency.



Harmonize data sources between cross-sector agencies to understand a complete picture of youth behavioral health.



Assemble a cross-sector team with representation across all relevant sectors and levels of implementation.

#### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- State education agency
- State Medicaid agency
- State health agency
- State behavioral health agency
- State Title V maternal and child health agency
- State Title X family planning agency
- Associations for school health providers
- Behavioral health providers
- Safety net providers
- State Nursing Associations
- Health insurance providers
- Youth advocacy organizations
- Family advocacy organizations
- Teachers' unions
- Faith-based organizations



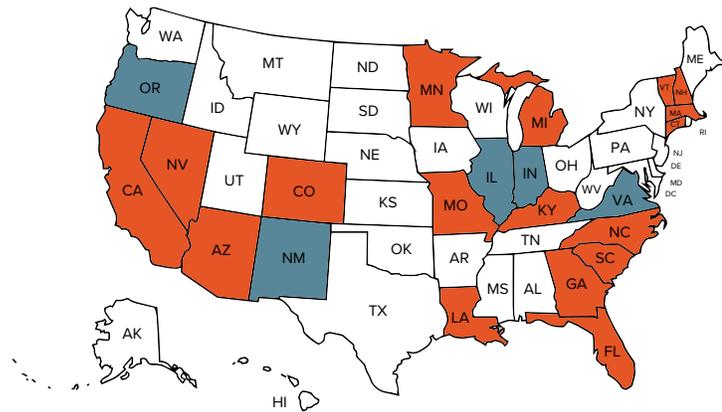
Improve the capacity of the traditional and non-traditional school workforce to address behavioral health.



Expand Medicaid reimbursement in school settings, by removing state restrictions on school health services, to align with national Free Care Reversal Guidance

#### STATE ACTIVITY

■ Expanded Progress   ■ In Progress   □ No Expansion



Expand school telehealth service provision.



Leverage recent federal school health funding to support school behavioral health services.



Braid/layer funding to support a shared risk and protective factors approach to youth behavioral health.

\*The School Behavioral Health Advisory Committee defined school behavioral health as "the continuum of health services delivered by schools to address the behavioral health needs of students." The definition is based on the National Association of School Psychologists multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework.

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