

East Metro Mental Health Roundtable: Youth Community Metrics

Background and key findings

During the January 2020 meeting, the East Metro Mental Health Roundtable requested an exploration of youth data to accompany the adult-focused Metrics reporting that is completed on a semi-annual basis. For this summary, Wilder Research gathered data from sources who specialize in youth services, sources who provide data for the overall Metrics report with an age breakdown, and existing reports that pertain to the youth mental health system.

This exploration is intended to demonstrate the discrepancy between youth needs and the services available and how the youth and adult systems influence each other at a single point in time. While Minnesota has a continuum of care that aims to provide mental health services to youth according to their level of need, there are gaps in this continuum. Previous studies and reports from partners demonstrate that youth have unmet mental health needs and/or receive services that do not match their level of need. In addition, there is a general lack of data regarding service gaps and the unmet mental health needs of youth.

It is important to note that this report focuses on 2019 data. The 2020 outbreak of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may have affected many parts of the children's mental health system and the indicators presented in this report.

The following key findings emerged from the data presented in this report.

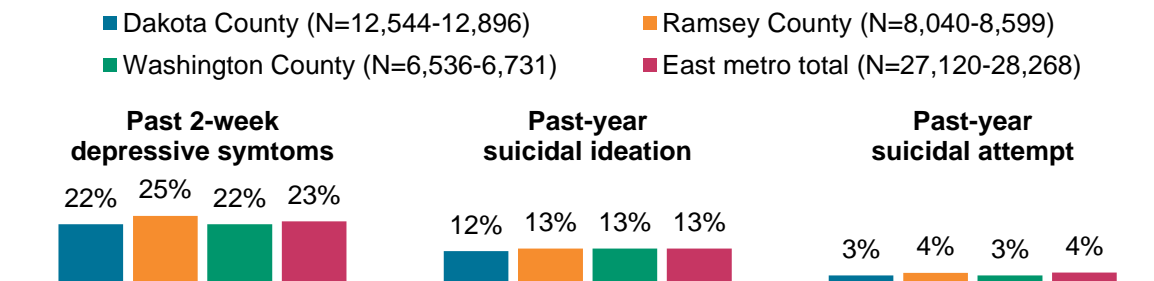
- **While there are community-based mental health services available to youth in the east metro, the extent to which these services meet the need is unclear.** School-linked mental health services are available in nearly 200 schools, and there are more than 80 Children's Therapeutic Support Services providers in the east metro. However, there is no data available assessing the extent to which these services meet the mental health needs of east metro youth.
- **There is a significant lack of children's mental health residential facilities and hospital beds in the east metro.** There is only one children's mental health residential facility in the east metro. This facility has 16 licensed beds and provides specialty care for youth with eating disorder concerns. In addition, there are only 15 licensed children's mental health hospital beds in the east metro, all housed in one facility.
- **The average length of stay is much longer for youth behavioral health patients compared to adults served in the United Hospital emergency department.** Youth have an average length of stay of 29 hours compared to 11 hours for adults.

Youth mental health system

Youth mental health symptoms

According to the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, just under one-quarter of students in the east metro (23%) reported depressive symptoms in the past two weeks (Figure 2). In addition, 13% of east metro students reported thinking about suicide in the past year, while 4% attempted suicide in the past year. The proportions of students reporting mental health symptoms were consistent between east metro counties, though Ramsey County students were slightly more likely to report recent depressive symptoms.

2. Youth mental health symptoms reported in 2019 Minnesota Student Survey

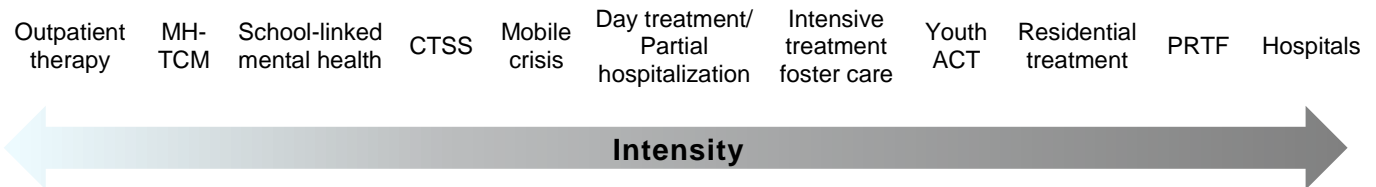


Source. Minnesota Student Survey

Continuum of youth mental health services

The following continuum summarizes the mental health services available for youth in Minnesota (Figure 3). It ranges from the least intensive, outpatient therapy, to the most intensive, hospitals. The goal is to ensure that youth are accessing care at the lowest intensity available that adequately meets their needs.

3. Minnesota’s continuum of children’s mental health services



Notes. Adopted from the Department of Human Services, 2018.

Child psychiatry and respite services are also part of the state’s array of services and may be appropriate for youth at multiple points across the continuum. Because this study focuses largely on intensive mental health services, the early childhood mental health services available in the state are not included in this figure.

MH-TCM: Mental Health Targeted Case Management | CTSS: Children’s Therapeutic Support Services

Youth ACT: Assertive Community Treatment | PRTF: Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility

The following is a description of the most recent service data available in five of the specific service categories: school-linked mental health, Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS), mobile crisis, residential treatment, and hospitals. It should be noted that the data available are specifically about capacity in most settings; there are no data currently available about the accessibility or wait times associated with securing a space in these different settings.

School-linked mental health services and Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports

School-linked mental health services connect or locate clinicians from mental health agencies in schools. As of school year 2018-19, school-linked mental health services grantees funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services were in 22 east metro school districts (92% of all school districts) and 190 school buildings (Figure 4). These services are available to all students in participating school districts, regardless of insurance or county social service involvement.

4. Number of schools and districts with school-based mental health services

County	Schools with school-linked mental health	
	Number of schools	Number of districts
Dakota	93	11
Ramsey	70	6
Washington	27	7
Total	190	22

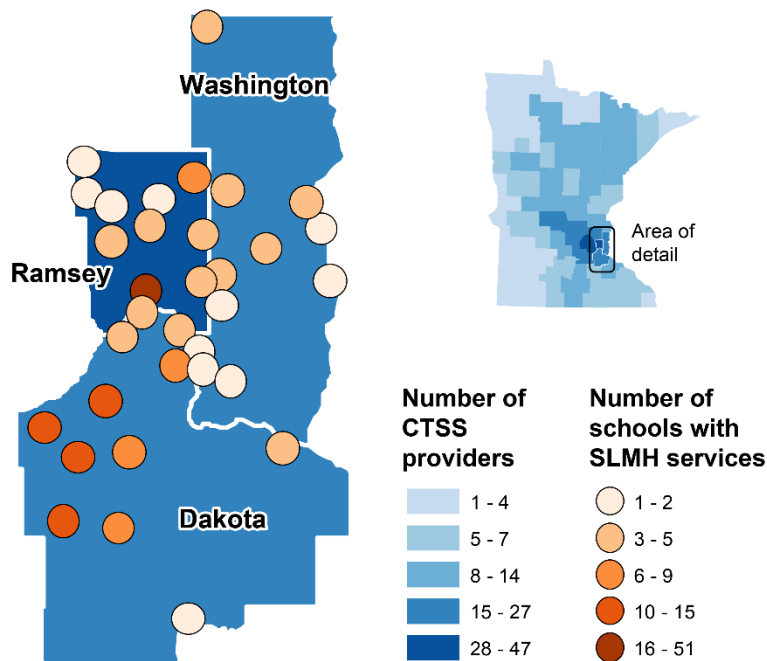
Source. Department of Human Services

Note. Two school districts serve both Washington and Ramsey counties.

Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) are a flexible package of mental health services designed to serve children of varying levels of need covered by Minnesota Health Care programs (e.g., medical assistance, MinnesotaCare, etc.). They are time-limited interventions and may use a variety of treatment modalities, but services are required to align with the youth’s treatment plan. Only agencies and schools that have been certified by DHS may provide CTSS. Services may be provided at school, in homes, or other community settings.

In 2018, there were also at least 20 providers offering Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) in each of the east metro counties, with Ramsey County having the most providers serving their youth (43 providers). In many cases, the same provider serves multiple east metro counties.

5. Location of Children’s Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) and school-linked mental health services, 2018



Source. Ferris, M. (2019). Children’s intensive mental health services study: Final report to the Minnesota Legislature. Wilder Research.

Mobile crisis

Crisis teams in the east metro received 7,130 calls about children’s mental health crises in 2019 (Figure 6). Of these calls, 1,540 resulted in a mobile crisis response (21%), a face-to-face assessment and intervention in the community. Nearly 50% of mobile crisis calls about youth were from Dakota County. This may be due to a number of reasons, including: Dakota County receives more calls for issues outside of mental health, such as parent/child conflict; Ramsey County is just beginning to promote mobile crisis services for youth; and Washington County is transitioning mobile crisis to an in-house provider. Despite this disproportionate number of calls for Dakota County, Ramsey County had the most mobile visits (42% of mobile visits). Unfortunately, further breakdowns of youth data were unavailable to include in this report.

6. Youth mobile crisis calls and visits, 2019

	Total Calls	Mobile Visits
Dakota	3,200	411
Ramsey	2,893	647
Washington	1,037	482
Total	7,130	1,540

Source. MetrCCS

Residential services

The residential services currently available in the state include inpatient hospitalization, psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs), and children’s residential facilities.

Children’s residential facilities

In April 2020, there were licenses from the Department of Human Services for approximately 600 residential mental health beds in Minnesota. Of these, only about 30% are in the seven-county metro area, and only 16 beds are located in one east metro facility. This facility has a very specific focus on eating disorders, so it does not encompass broader mental health conditions.

Hospitals

According to information provided by the Minnesota Hospital Association, most (79%) mental health hospital beds available in Minnesota are located in the Twin Cities metro. Of these, only 15 are located specifically in the east metro, within United Hospital (Figure 7). In contrast, east metro hospitals had the capacity to serve approximately 225 adult behavioral health patients per day on average in July 2019. It is important to note that these totals may be different from the number of beds each facility is able to serve due to fluctuations in staffing.

7. Inpatient bed capacity for children and adolescents in metro area

Facility	Number of inpatient beds for children and adolescents
Abbott Northwestern (Minneapolis)	24
M Health Fairview Riverside (Minneapolis)	66
Prairie Care (Brooklyn Park)	71
United (Saint Paul)	15
Total	176

Source. MetrCCS

United Hospital provided data about youth receiving behavioral health care in 2019. Overall, only 2% of behavioral health patients in the United emergency department were under age 18. However, youth tend to have a much longer average length of stay (29 hours) compared to adults (11 hours). Unfortunately, the length of stay range and median were unavailable to include in this report. Anecdotally, this difference may be due to a small number of youth with particularly high levels of need staying much longer than the others do, skewing the average. More information about factors contributing to delays in discharging youth and adults from inpatient and emergency care was collected in the 2019 Minnesota Hospital Association discharge delay study, but results have not yet been released, so they are unable to be included in this report.

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