

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

The pandemic exacerbated crucial mental health and substance use services across the nation. The mental health crisis in Florida is on the rise, highlighting the urgent need for trained behavioral health professionals to deliver these services. Moreover, Florida ranks 43rd in the nation with a patient-to-provider ratio of 550:1, in comparison to Massachusetts, the top-ranked state, with a ratio of 140:1.

As the demand for mental health and substance use services continues to grow, so does the need for a skilled workforce to deliver these vital services. Unfortunately, the shortage of skilled behavioral health professionals' limits access to necessary treatment for children and adults. Strategies to retain and recruit are imperative to restore the capacity required to meet the demand.

36	Missouri	470:1
37	Kansas	480:1
38	North Dakota	500:1
39	Virginia	520:1
40	South Dakota	520:1
41	South Carolina	540:1
42	Mississippi	550:1
43	Florida	560:1
44	Alabama	570:1
45	Iowa	590:1
46	Tennessee	640:1
47	Georgia	660:1
48	Arizona	670:1
49	West Virginia	760:1

Legislation in the Right Direction

Legislation was filed last session that would establish a mental health professional loan forgiveness program. This legislation would encourage qualified professionals to work in areas of the state that lack mental health providers. By removing financial barriers, it will incentivize careers in behavioral health.

Florida Hospital Association (FHA) supports policies that prioritize the behavioral health workforce by expanding opportunities for loan forgiveness programs to behavioral health professionals.



Support Legislation to Recruit and Retain Behavioral Health Professionals

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