



## Region IV Mental Health Workforce

In Region IV, the mental health workforce shortage is an ongoing concern. This brief report begins with an overview of mental health workforce challenges in the region. It then offers strategies for workforce recruitment and retention, as well as shares Region IV resources for mental health professionals.

### Mental Health Workforce Shortages

The *Health Resources and Services Administration* (HRSA) projected the supply and demand of behavioral health occupations in 2030, by state and nationally. These projections are based on 2016 data from states. HRSA uses the term “adequacy of supply” to indicate expected shortages or surpluses in the workforce. The data in Table 1 is from more conservative HRSA projections that assume the demand for mental health providers in 2030 will be equal to the supply of those providers in 2016.

**In Region IV, the 2030 projected mental health workforce shortages are of psychologists, psychiatrists, and mental health counselors**, as indicated in bold red text in Table 1. The numbers in Table 1 are the adequacy of supply in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs). For instance, in 2030, Alabama will be short 530 FTEs of psychiatrists and have a surplus of 150 FTEs of psychiatric nurse practitioners.

**Table 1: Projected Mental Health Workforce Shortages in 2030**

Occupation	AL	FL	GA	KY	MS	NC	SC	TN	US*
Psychiatrists	<b>-530</b>	<b>-1250</b>	<b>-530</b>	<b>-680</b>	<b>-340</b>	<b>-400</b>	<b>-280</b>	<b>-700</b>	<b>-268</b>
Psychiatric NPs	150	350	160	190	100	150	110	410	95
Psychiatric PAs	10	120	50	0	0	50	30	10	20
Psychologists	<b>-610</b>	<b>-150</b>	<b>-620</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-260</b>	410	<b>-840</b>	<b>-450</b>	108
Mental Health Counselors	<b>-910</b>	<b>-3400</b>	<b>-1440</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-430</b>	<b>-400</b>	<b>-780</b>	<b>-540</b>	<b>-135</b>
Social Workers	660	7370	2500	3840	1410	8040	2300	2170	4974
Marriage & Family Therapists	60	170	60	40	0	510	180	120	270

Data source: HRSA, Projected Supply and Demand 2030 (Projected Demand is assuming equilibrium to 2016 Supply.)

\*US average calculated by dividing total adequacy of supply by 51 (50 states and D.C.)

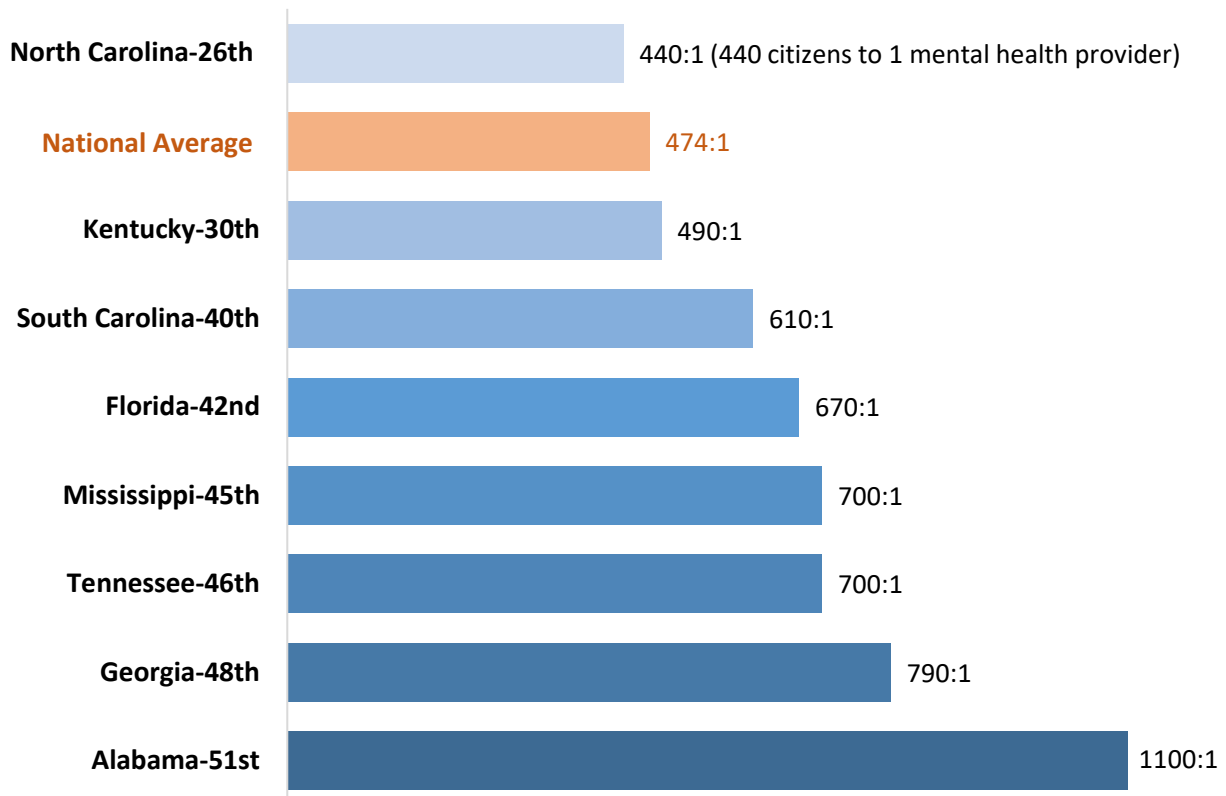


## Mental Health Workforce Availability

Every year, *Mental Health America* (MHA) ranks each state based on the access to mental health care that exists there. Mental health workforce availability, or the number of citizens to one mental health provider, is a measure that is included in MHA’s access ranking. In its ranking, MHA includes the availability of psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapists, and advanced practice nurses specializing in mental health care.

**Region IV states generally have low mental health workforce availability, with only one state—North Carolina—having mental health workforce availability that is better than the national average.** Graph 1 shows the national mental health workforce availability ranking of each Region IV state.

**Graph 1: Mental Health Workforce Availability (2020 National Ranking)**



Data source: Mental Health America, Mental Health in America-Access to Care Data 2020



## Strategies for Recruitment & Retention

In the Fall of 2019, Dr. Michael Hoge of *The Annapolis Coalition* presented a two-part webinar series entitled "Recruitment & Retention of the Mental Health Workforce" for the Southeast (Region IV) MHTTC. This section summarizes practical recruitment and retention strategies for mental health organizations. For additional information, see Dr. Hoge's full-length webinars, which are available for free on the Southeast MHTTC website ([Link to Part One](#), [Link to Part Two](#)).

### Recruitment & Selection



- Clarify job titles and descriptions
- Increase social media outreach and build a recruitment pool/database
- Diversify pool of applicants (e.g., race, military, people with disabilities)
- Increase student internships
- Offer adequate wages and benefits
- Check references thoroughly
- Ensure that the candidate is a match for your organization

For more information: [SAMHSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions](#), [SAMHSA Recruitment & Retention Toolkit](#), [LinkedIn Talent Solutions](#), [U.S. Dept of Labor Job Description Writer](#), [HRSA Bureau of Health Workforce](#), [Historically Black Colleges & Universities](#), [Hispanic Assoc. of Colleges & Universities](#)

### Orientation & Onboarding

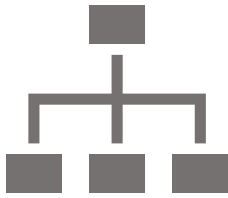


- Shift from "orientation" (one-time event) to "onboarding" (ongoing process)
- Prioritize employee engagement
- Personalize the onboarding process
- Consider a "buddy system" or in-house mentor
- Convey knowledge about the organization's mission, vision, and history
- Clarify job role, performance expectations, and benefits

For more information: [The Annapolis Coalition](#), [SAMHSA Recruitment & Retention Toolkit](#), [Society for Human Resource Management](#), [ERE Media](#), [The Balance Careers](#), [Integrated Care Conference](#)



## Supervision



- Set supervision standards and maintain realistic supervisor-to-staff ratios
- Motivate supervisors to model evidence-based practices for employees
- Ensure that supervisors address quality of care in your organization, employee support, and personal professional development
- Encourage assertive supervision over “surveillance”

For more information: [Yale Program on Supervision](#), [SAMHSA Recruitment & Retention Toolkit](#), [Zur Institute](#), [SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions](#), [National Council for Behavioral Health](#)

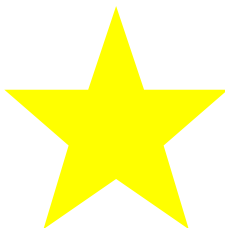
## Training & Career Development



- Shift from "training" to "skill development" and "performance"
- Focus on skill development using evidence-based teaching approaches
- Turn to the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network for additional training opportunities
- Support employees in setting and reaching longer-term goals
- Cultivate opportunities for advancement and consider succession planning

For more information: [College of Direct Support](#), [SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions](#), [SAMHSA Recruitment & Retention Toolkit](#), [Southeast MHTTC](#), [Zur Institute](#), [APA Continuing Education](#)

## Employee Support & Recognition



- Offer an employee assistance program (EAP) to address job stress, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout
- Provide supportive supervision that encourages wellness among staff
- Consider job redesign and increased autonomy for staff
- Assess for employee issues at least annually to prevent negative outcomes
- Incorporate recognition on an institutional level and personal level

For more information: [SAMHSA Recruitment & Retention Toolkit](#), [SAMHSA Support Topics for Staff Retention](#), [American Counseling Association](#), [Zur Institute](#), [Loyola University](#), [HealthcareSource](#)



## Region IV Resources

This section includes information about organizations in Region IV states that aid in mental health workforce development, as well as recruitment and retention of mental health professionals.

### Alabama

- The **Alabama Department of Mental Health** offers free/low-cost [online development courses](#) for behavioral health professionals. An annual \$299 subscription allows access to 1,500 courses.
- At the **University of Alabama at Birmingham**, the [Alabama Area Health Education Centers \(AHEC\)](#) provide continuing education and support for targeted health care providers.
- The **Alabama Counseling Association (ALCA)** provides leadership training and continuing education credits for those involved in the counseling profession.

### Florida

- In 2019, the **Florida Department of Children and Families** commissioned a [behavioral health workforce survey report](#) with recommendations for providers.
- The **Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida (FMHI)** provides [training and technical assistance](#) on a variety of topics related to mental illness.

### Georgia

- The [Georgia Health Policy Center](#) at **Georgia State University** provides training for behavioral health providers on high fidelity wrap-around, recovery-oriented cognitive therapy, trauma-informed systems, emerging adult populations, and cultural and linguistic competence.
- The **Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University** houses both the Region IV Public Health Training Center ([R-IV PHTC](#)) and the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center ([Southeast MHTTC](#)). The R-IV PHTC offers competency-based trainings for public health professionals. Most trainings are free and may offer continuing professional education credits. The Southeast MHTTC aims to promote the adoption of evidence-based mental health services by providing training and technical assistance in Region IV.



## Kentucky

- The **University of Kentucky** HealthCare [CECentral](#) delivers continuing professional development opportunities for physicians, pharmacists, and other health care professionals. Content areas include addiction medicine, psychiatry & mental health, and many others.
- Kentucky's **Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities** (DBHDID) provides a personal care home [direct care staff training](#) on its website.
- The **Kentucky Psychological Association** ([KPA](#)) provides a wide variety of educational offerings for psychologists and other mental health professionals, including a three-day Annual Convention.

## Mississippi

- Established by the **Mississippi Public Health Institute** and the **Department of Mental Health**, the [Mississippi Behavioral Health Learning Network](#) offers continuing education credits for behavioral health providers through in-person and online training modules.
- The **Mississippi Licensed Professional Counselor Association** ([MLPCA](#)) is an organization for licensed professional counselors and mental health counselors that offers professional development through education, training, and networking opportunities.

## North Carolina

- The **University of North Carolina (UNC)** houses the state's Area Health Education Centers Program Office. [NC AHEC](#) provides education, training, and technical assistance to increase the linkages between academic and practice settings, improve the practice environment for mental health professionals, and enhance workforce development of the public mental health system.
- The [Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health](#), including its [Institute for Best Practices](#), is also at **UNC**. The Center provides training and technical assistance for the state's Division of Mental Health, medical directors, and mental healthcare professionals.
- The **North Carolina Institute of Medicine** aims to address [health professional workforce needs](#), meet the needs of special populations, and increase provider education on evidence-based treatment for health conditions, including mental health disorders.



## South Carolina

- The [AHEC](#) at the **Medical University of South Carolina** provides tools, resources, and education as well as recruitment and retention programs for the state's physical and mental health workforce to provide quality healthcare, particularly for rural and underserved communities.
- The **South Carolina Counseling Association (SCCA)** provides leadership, advocacy, and education that promotes the growth and development of all professional counselors in the state. SCCA also holds an [annual conference](#) which provides continuing education credits.

## Tennessee

- The [Tennessee Center for Health Workforce Development](#), a division of the **Tennessee Hospital Association**, assists with recruiting physicians and psychiatric nurse practitioners, offers \$30,000 grants to hospitals and health centers to attract qualified caregivers, and provides incentives for medical residents in exchange for a commitment to service, especially in rural communities.
- The [Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations \(TAMHO\)](#) holds an annual conference for stakeholders in the state and partners with the **Tennessee Department of Mental Health** to offer trainings on topics such as co-occurring disorders, behavioral health and disaster preparedness, and supported employment.

### References

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