

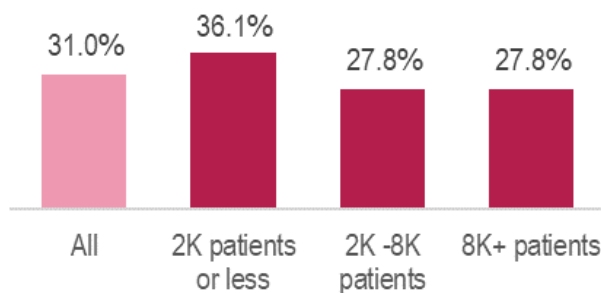
The COVID-19 Mental Health and Addiction Crisis

COVID-19 has increased anxiety, fear, isolation, and grief, leading to declining mental health and an increase in substance use in our communities that will only continue to get worse. The behavioral **health system is collapsing**. In a [poll](#) by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 45% of adults say their mental health has been affected by the pandemic and 19% say it has had a major impact. And for others, the fear, anxiety and instability brought on by the COVID-19 emergency is making existing mental health and substance use conditions worse and triggering relapse.

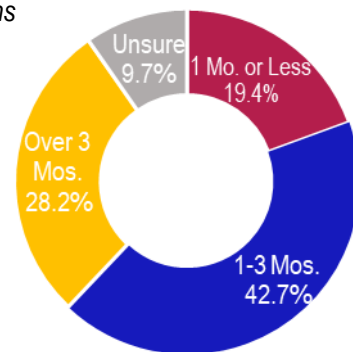
Before the pandemic broke out, there was bipartisan consensus that addressing mental health, substance use, and suicide were urgent national priorities. Congress took preliminary steps to increase funding for mental health and addiction services, but these investments may soon be lost because of the financial strain COVID-19 has taken on our mental health and addiction system.

Behavioral health organizations don't have the funds they need to ride out this crisis. According to a survey of 880 behavioral health organizations across the country, 62% believe they can only survive financially for three months or less under current conditions. Organizations have cancelled, rescheduled, or turned away 31% of patients and 92% have reduced their operations.¹ While telehealth is increasing, it simply isn't replacing all the in-person revenue clinics received.

Average % of patients that behavioral health organizations had to cancel, reschedule, or turn away (by size or organization)



Number of months behavioral health organizations believe they could survive financially under current conditions



Don't leave mental health and addictions behind. The CARES Act provider fund relied on making payments directly to providers, and HHS has prioritized paying hospitals through Medicare. However, behavioral health organizations rely primarily on Medicaid, not Medicare, and have been left out of critical emergency funding. **We urge Congress to dedicate significant resources specifically to supporting community behavioral health programs during the crisis.**

In the next coronavirus relief package, Congress should:

- **Direct HHS to set aside \$38.5 billion of any provider fund for essential behavioral health providers** and enable state Medicaid programs to make payments to financially-fragile behavioral health programs
- **Provide an additional 5.8 percentage point FMAP increase** (adding to the previous 6.2 percentage point increase)

¹ COVID-19 Economic Impact on Behavioral Health Organizations, (April 15, 2020). Survey conducted jointly by ndp | analytics and the National Council for Behavioral Health from April 6 to April 12, 2020. Results obtained pre-publication from the National Council for Behavioral Health.

We also urge a plus-up of \$1 billion each to the SAMHSA Community Mental Health Services block grant and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grant programs to support important non-Medicaid mental health and addiction services and supports.

Our nation's behavioral health system is crumbling because of COVID-19 at a point when we should be strengthening it to help those in need when the pandemic ends and our nation begins healing from the fear, anxiety, isolation and grief that has affected us all.

Sincerely,

American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
National Alliance on Mental Illness
One Mind
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute
Mental Health America
National Council for Behavioral Health
Peg's Foundation
The Kennedy Forum
Treatment Advocacy Center
Well Being Trust