

# Quantifying Arizona's Mental Health Workforce Shortage Using Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Data

Arizona needs between **142 and 223 psychiatrist physician full-time equivalent (FTE)** to eliminate the current mental health care shortage.<sup>1</sup> Mental health and substance use disorders contribute to the disease burden in the US and are among the leading causes of death.<sup>2,3</sup> In Arizona, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an estimated 21.8% of people older than 18 years old experienced any mental illness in the prior year.<sup>4</sup> Prevention, early identification, screening, and access to high-quality treatment are public health priorities to promote recovery and overall health and reduce the impact behavioral health illness can have on individuals, families, and the community.

This brief summarizes the full-time equivalent (FTE) shortage for psychiatrist physicians by county and tribal area in Arizona. While multiple physician specialties, health care professionals like nurse practitioners and physician assistants, and behavioral health professionals like counselors can provide different types of mental health services, the mental health, Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in Arizona are based on a ratio of psychiatrist physicians to population. The target ratio for psychiatrists to population is 1 to 30,000 or 1 to 20,000 in high need areas.

## ►► Arizona has mental health workforce shortages in all counties.

- Arizona meets just **8.54% of its mental health need.**<sup>5</sup>
- The ratio of psychiatrist physicians to population in the U.S. is 1: 8,544, in Arizona the ratio is 1: 10,720.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Of the fifty states and the District of Columbia, Arizona ranks 35th in psychiatrist physicians per population.<sup>8</sup>
- Arizona is **one of the fastest growing states in population**, growing 1.13% between 2010 and 2020, compared to median growth of 0.55%.<sup>9</sup>

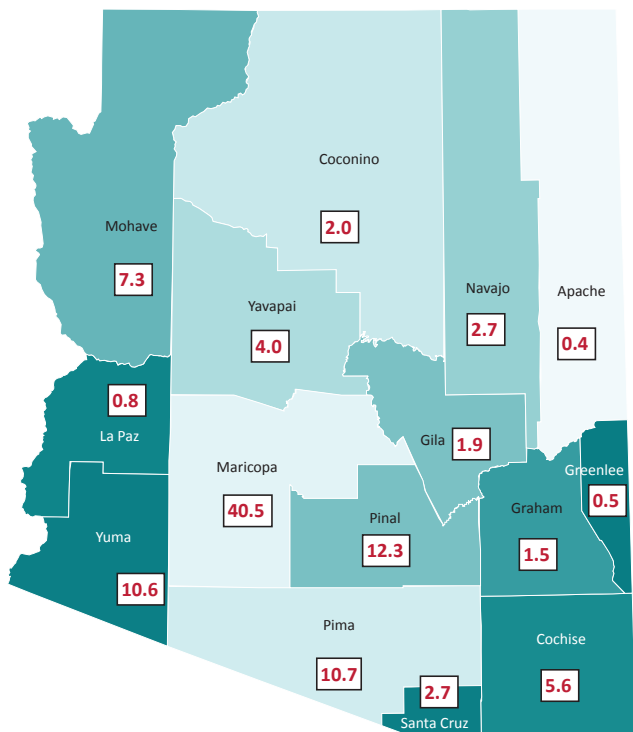
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Designated Indian Health Service, Tribal Health, and Urban Indian Health **Facility** Mental Health HPSAs

TRIBAL NATION	HIGHEST HPSA SCORE	MH FTE SHORT
Colorado River Indian	16	0.32
Fort McDowell Yavapai	12	0.07
Gila River	17	0.49
Hopi	17	0.37
Hualapai	15	0.10
Navajo Nation & Hopi	16	3.74
Pascua Yaqui	13	0.19
Salt River Pima-Maricopa	19	0.51
San Carlos Apache	20	0.71
Tohono O'odham	18	0.64
White Mountain Apache	20	0.72

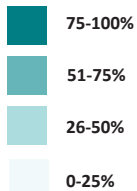
HPSAs are “geographic areas, populations, or facilities that have a shortage of primary, dental or mental health care providers.”<sup>10</sup> These are Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) designations used to describe workforce needs, identify eligible locations for National Health Service Corps, Nurse Corps, IHS Loan Repayment, and other federal programs.

## Percent Living in Primary Care Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Number of Mental Health Providers Needed to Eliminate Shortage (2023)



Number of providers needed to eliminate the Mental Health shortage

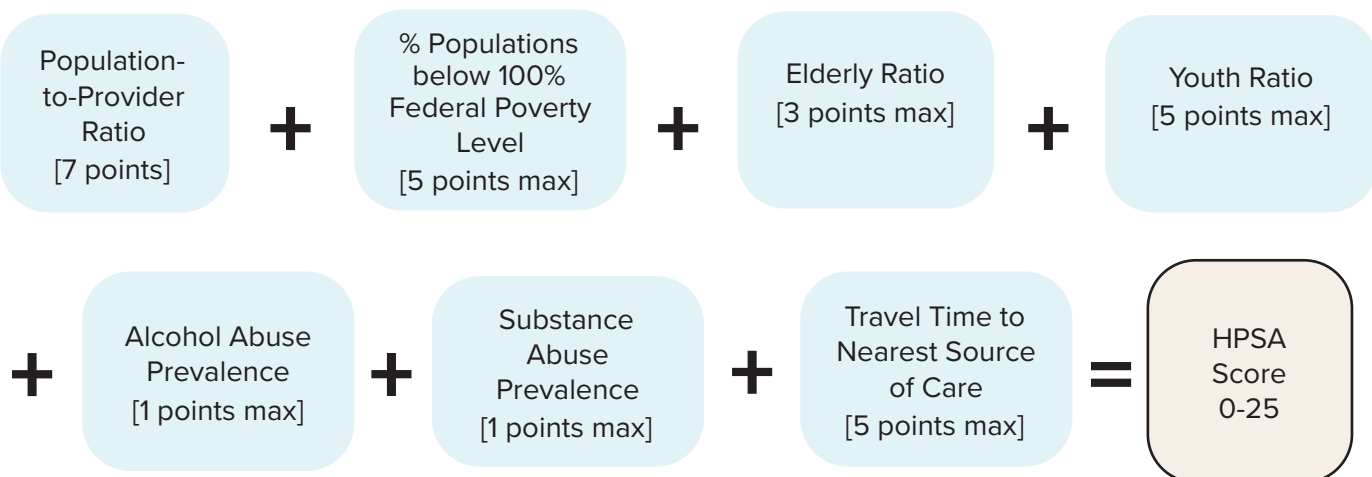
Percent population living in a HPSA



### ►► Definitions

HPSAs are a geographic area, population, or facility with a shortage of primary care, dental, or mental health providers and services. HPSAs are based on factors illustrated below. In the mental health HPSA calculation for Arizona only psychiatrist physicians are included.<sup>10,11</sup>

### ►► Mental Health HPSA Score Formula



### Number of Designated Correctional, Federal Qualified Health Center, FQCH Look A Like, or Rural Health Clinic Facility Primary Care HPSAs

County	FQHCs & FQCH Look A Likes	Rural Health Clinic	Correctional Facility	Correctional Facility MH FTE Short*
Apache	0	1	0	0.0
Cochise	1	6	1	0.73
Coconino	3	0	0	0.0
Gila	0	6	0	0.0
Graham	0	1	2	1.17
Greenlee	0	0	0	0.0
La Paz	0	4	0	0.0
Maricopa	9	1	4	9.63
Mohave	1	0	0	0.0
Navajo	0	0	1	0.56
Pima	4	0	2	4.49
Pinal	2	2	6	12.81
Santa Cruz	1	0	0	0.0
Yavapai	2	0	0	0.0
Yuma	1	2	1	1.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30.8</b>

## ►► Brief Methods

This brief uses HPSA data from the HRSA. The HPSA data files can be found here <https://data.hrsa.gov/data/download> and an interactive report can be found here <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find> on the HPSA Find site. HRSA includes data on designated, proposed for withdrawal, and withdrawn HPSAs. HRSA includes data on designated and proposed for withdrawal HPSAs to estimate the total FTEs needed to eliminate the shortage designation. This brief includes a more conservative estimate of the shortage (142) by subtracting the FTEs in mental health HPSAs proposed for withdrawal (81). Only designated HPSAs are counted by county and tribal area. The percentage of the population living in a HPSA area was calculated by adding the population reported in each HPSA type (geographic, geographic high needs, and population) and then dividing by the total population in the county (from the U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2020). Some HPSAs span county boundaries, we assigned HPSAs to a single “majority” county based on land area that composed the majority of the land area in the HPSA.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for Rural Health