

# Mental Health & Substance Use: Realities and Challenges during Uncertain Times

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Behavioral Health

Dennis O. Romero, MA  
Regional Administrator, DHHS Region II  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



# Behavioral Health: A National Priority

## **SAMHSA's Mission:**

*Reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness  
on America's communities*

## **Roles:**

Leadership and Voice

Data and Surveillance

Public Education

Regulation and Standard

Setting Practice improvement

Funding

**Behavioral Health is Essential to Health**

**Prevention works**

**Treatment is effective**

**People recover**

*SAMHSA leads public health efforts  
to advance the behavioral health of the Nation*

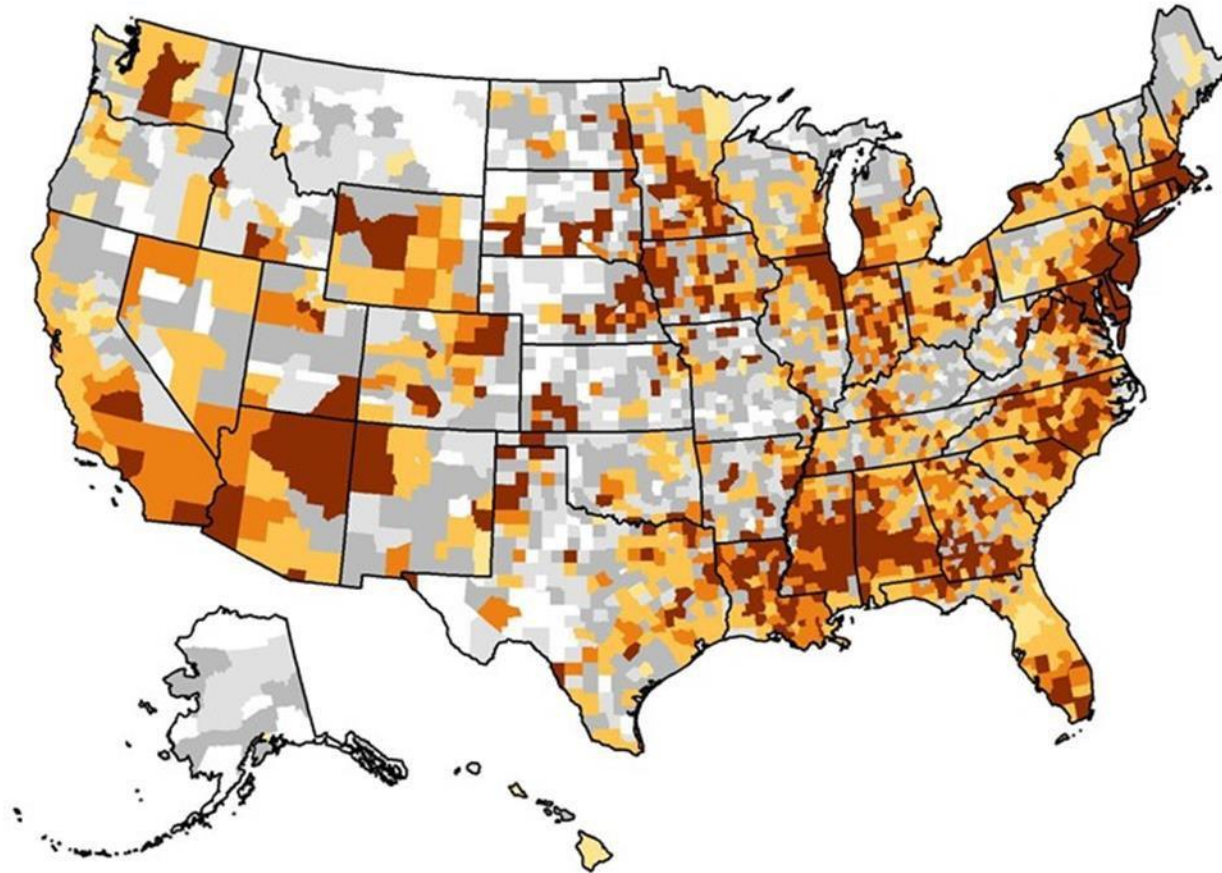
# COVID-19 By The Numbers

	Number of Cases	Number of Deaths
Global	5,593,631 / <b>6,194,533</b>	353,334 / <b>376,320</b>
United States	1,737,950 / <b>1,816,956</b>	102,785 / <b>105,846</b>
New Jersey	160,445 / <b>162,068</b>	11,698 / <b>11,880</b>
New York	370,770 / <b>374,085</b>	23,905 / <b>30,019</b>
New York City	199,968 / <b>204,872</b>	
Puerto Rico	3,873 / <b>4,508</b>	136 / <b>140</b>
US Virgin Islands	70	6

**Source:** FEMA Region II Watch Center SPOT Report COVID-19 UPDATE #95: 04 June, 2020

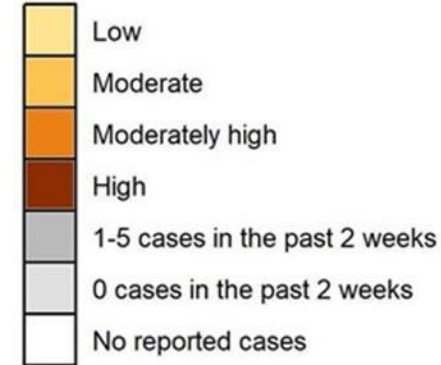
# Number of New Cases In the Past 2 Weeks

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
Number of New Cases per 100,000 in the past 2 weeks,  
by U.S. County, 10 May 2020 - 24 May 2020



NYC  
PR  
VI  
GU  
AS  
RMI  
MP  
PW  
FSM

## Incidence



## Purpose of this map

Describes recent incidence of COVID-19 infection to capture the potential burden of currently ill people who may be infectious and/or accessing healthcare

## Main Findings

- COVID-19 infection remains prevalent throughout the country.
- Elevated incidence of disease during the past 2 weeks remains widespread, including in the Northeast (and the New York City area), the Southwest, the Southeast, areas around Chicago, and parts of Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

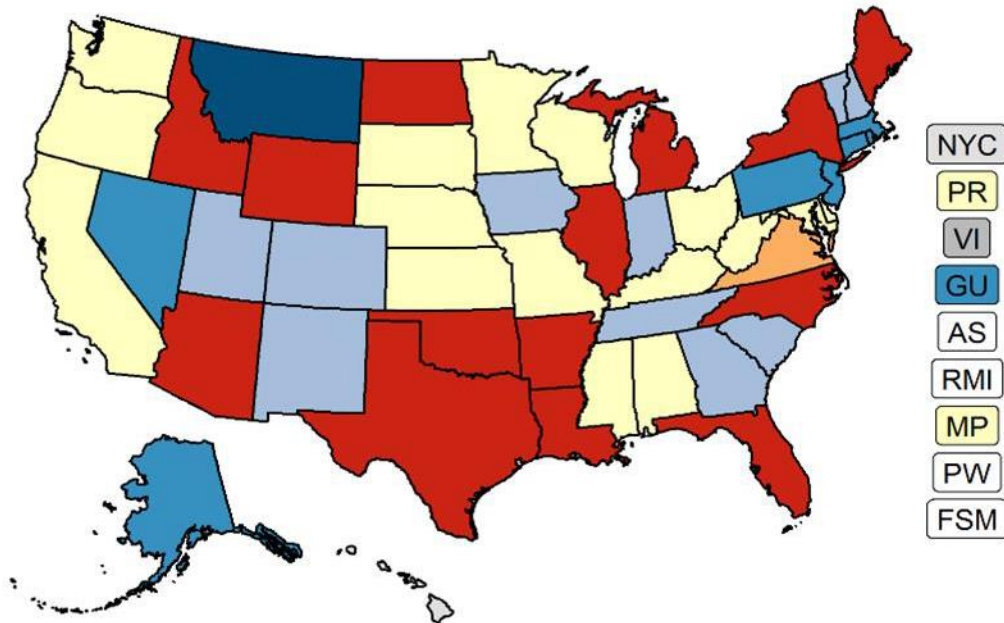
Notes: Defined using the number of new cases per 100,000 in the past 2 weeks. Low is >0 to 10, moderate is >10 to 50, moderately high is >50 to 100, and high is >100. Jurisdictions denoted as 0 cases in the past 2 weeks have had at least 1 case previously.

Sources: USAFacts, US Census

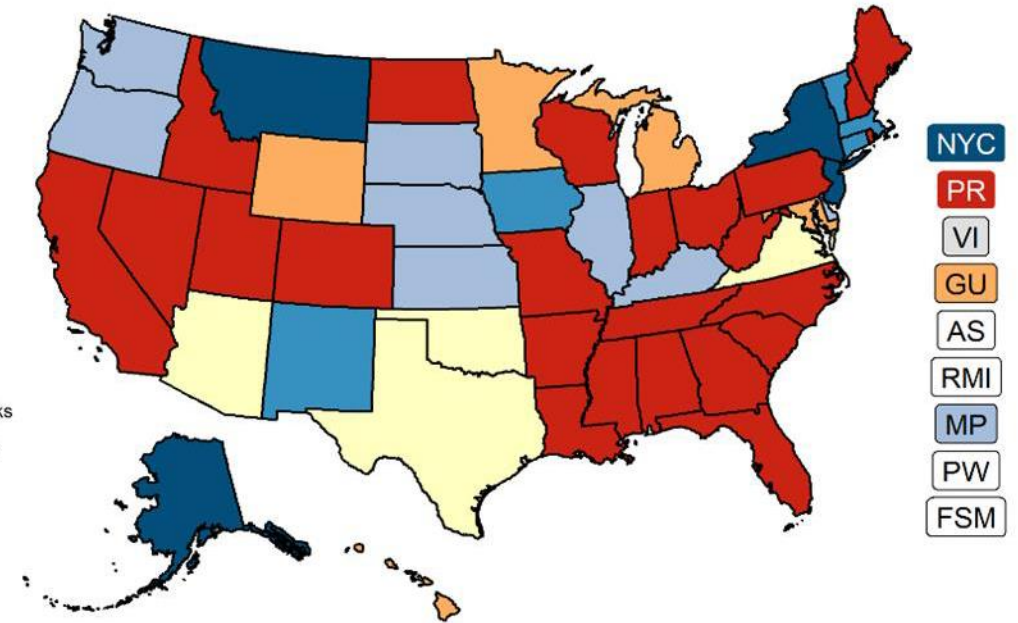
# Comparing Downward Trajectories

## Current status of downward trajectories in case reports by state, May 23, 2020

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
Current consecutive days of downward trajectory in case reports,  
by U.S. state, 16 May 2020



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
Current consecutive days of downward trajectory in case reports,  
by U.S. state, 23 May 2020



# COVID-19 and Behavioral Health Implications

- Situational Directives:
  - Stay At Home Orders
  - Social Distancing
  - Lack/Loss of Employment
  - School Closures
  - Teleworking
  - Virtual Learning
  - Disruption of Normal Routines
  - Disruption to services
  - Fear at what cannot be seen
  - Fear of the unknown
- We are seeing dramatic increases in calls to our Disaster Distress and other Helplines ~900% increase
- Areas we need to pay close attention to:
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Domestic Violence
  - Substance Abuse
  - Suicide / OD
  - Grief/Loss
  - Staff Fatigue
  - Moral Injury
  - PTSD
  - Isolation / Loneliness



# SAMHSA National Action Plan

## Provide Public Info

- General info + fact sheets
- Work with FEMA: CCP
- Disaster Distress Helpline/Suicide Prevention Lifeline/National Helpline
- Messaging: Importance of staying connected

## Support People with BH Conditions

- Treatment Locators
- Telehealth: CMS approved billable + allowance of telephone services
- Privacy rules relaxed during this emergency
- MAT allowances
- Recovery resources
- Additional Resources \$

## Help Our Workforce

- National Network of Addiction, Mental Health, and Prevention Technology Transfer Centers
- Opioid Response Network
- Provider Clinical Support System
- SMI-Advisor
- NO COST Trainings and Resources

# COVID19 Supplemental Funds

**\$425 Million  
Authorized  
Supplemental  
Behavioral  
Health Funding**

**Data  
Driven Public  
Health Decisions**





Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

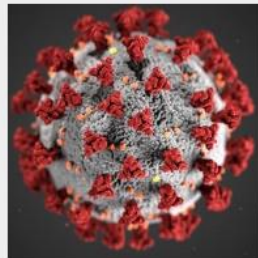
Home | Site Map | Contact Us

Search SAMHSA.gov

Search

Find Treatment | Practitioner Training | Public Messages | Grants | Data | Programs | Newsroom | About Us | Publications

## Current Topics



COVID-19  
Guidance and  
Resources

Disaster Planning  
Handbook for  
Behavioral Health  
Treatment Programs

Technical Assistance Publication Series  
TAP 34



TAP 34: Disaster  
Planning  
Handbook for  
Behavioral Health  
Treatment  
Programs



Millions of  
Americans have a  
substance use  
disorder. Help is  
available.



Letter to Mental  
Health  
Commissioners



Dear Colleague  
Letter from Dr.  
McCance-Katz on  
Oral Fluids HIV  
Testing



Recovery  
Housing: Best  
Practices and  
Suggested  
Guidelines

**Newsroom**

**Coronavirus**

[COVID-19 Information for SAMHSA Discretionary Grant Recipients](#)

[Media Guidelines for Bullying Prevention](#)

[Press Announcements](#)

[SAMHSA in the News](#)

[Speeches and Presentations](#)

[Infographics](#)

[Logo Use Guidelines](#)

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

SAMHSA recognizes the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 situation and is providing the following guidance and resources to assist individuals, providers, communities, and states across the country. SAMHSA stands ready to assist in any manner possible.

### SAMHSA Resources and Information

**NEW:** [Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse Considerations During COVID-19 \(PDF | 328 KB\)](#)

[Emergency Grants to Address Mental and Substance Use Disorders During COVID-19](#) **CLOSED**

[COVID-19 Information for SAMHSA Discretionary Grant Recipients](#)

[COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Response and 42 CFR Part 2 Guidance \(PDF | 168 KB\)](#)

[TAP 34: Disaster Planning Handbook for Behavioral Health Treatment Programs](#)

## Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak

### What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sports events and religious services may be cancelled.

### What Is Quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

### What Is Isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

### Introduction

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, local officials may require the public to take measures to limit and control the spread of the disease. This tip sheet provides information about **social distancing**, **quarantine**, and **isolation**. The government has the right to enforce federal and state laws related to public health if people within the country get sick with highly contagious diseases that have the potential to develop into outbreaks or pandemics.

This tip sheet describes feelings and thoughts you may have during and after social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. It also suggests ways to care

for your behavioral health during these experiences and provides resources for more help.

### What To Expect: Typical Reactions

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. People may feel:

- **Anxiety, worry, or fear related to:**
  - Your own health status
  - The health status of others whom you may have exposed to the disease
  - The resentment that your friends and family may feel if they need to go into quarantine as a result of contact with you
  - The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease
  - Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security
  - The challenges of securing things you need, such as groceries and personal care items
- **Concern** about being able to effectively care for children or others in your care
- **Uncertainty or frustration** about how long you will need to remain in this situation, and uncertainty about the future
- **Loneliness** associated with feeling cut off from the world and from loved ones
- **Anger** if you think you were exposed to the disease because of others' negligence
- **Boredom and frustration** because you may not be able to work or engage in regular day-to-day activities
- **Uncertainty or ambivalence** about the situation
- **A desire** to use alcohol or drugs to cope
- **Symptoms of depression**, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleeping

# Sample Resources



## Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse Considerations During COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Americans are required to stay home to protect themselves and their communities. However, the home may not be safe for many families who experience domestic violence, which may include both intimate partners and children. COVID-19 has caused major economic devastation, disconnected many from community resources and support systems, and created widespread uncertainty and panic. Such conditions may stimulate violence in families where it didn't exist before and worsen situations in homes where mistreatment and violence has been a problem. Violence in the home has an overall cost to society, leading to potentially adverse physical and mental health outcomes, including a higher risk of chronic disease, substance use, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and risky sexual behaviors.<sup>1</sup> Further, victims of domestic violence including intimate partner abuse and child abuse are at great risk for injuries including death.

### Intimate Partner Violence

According to [CDC](#), approximately 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Moreover, more than 43 million women and 38 million men experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Approximately

# Virtual Recovery Support

Examples of [Virtual Recovery Resources](#):

- [In The Rooms Online Recovery Meetings](#): Provides online support through live meetings and discussion groups
- Online 12 Step Meetings: [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) and [Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- The Phoenix, a sober active community has introduced [daily live-streamed, virtual programming](#) for CrossFit, Yoga, and Meditation along with other online social events
- [Sober Recovery](#): Provides an online forum for those in recovery and their friends and family
- *National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI)* [Coronavirus Information and Resources Guide](#)
- Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation contains online support meetings, blogs, mobile apps, social media groups, and movie suggestions, including the online support community, [The Daily Pledge](#) and [“Tips for Staying Connected and Safeguarding Your Addiction Recovery”](#)
- Shatterproof: [“How I’m Coping with COVID-19 and Social Isolation as a Person in Long-Term Recovery”](#) provides helpful suggestions
- The Chopra Center: [“Anxious About the Coronavirus? Here Are Eight Practical Tips on How to Stay Calm and Support Your Immune System.”](#)

**SAMHSA’s National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

# Workforce Support

## SAMHSA's National TA Compilations of resources

- COVID-19 Specific Federal Resources
- Addiction Technology Transfer Center resources
- Resources for Leaders
- Resources for Everyone
- Resources for Clinicians
- Resources for Families
- Resources for Tribal Communities
- Resources for First Responders

<https://attcnetwork.org/centers/global-attc/pandemic-response-resources>

# Workforce Support *Continued*

- Addiction Resources
  - Learning Series
  - Past and Future Webinars on topics such as: Telehealth
- Prevention Resources
- Serious Mental Illness Advisor Resources
- Center of Excellence on Protected Health Information Resources
- Provider Clinical Support Resources
- Opioid Response Network Resources
- Mental Health Resources (Recorded & Upcoming Webinars)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/training-and-technical-assistance-covid19.pdf>

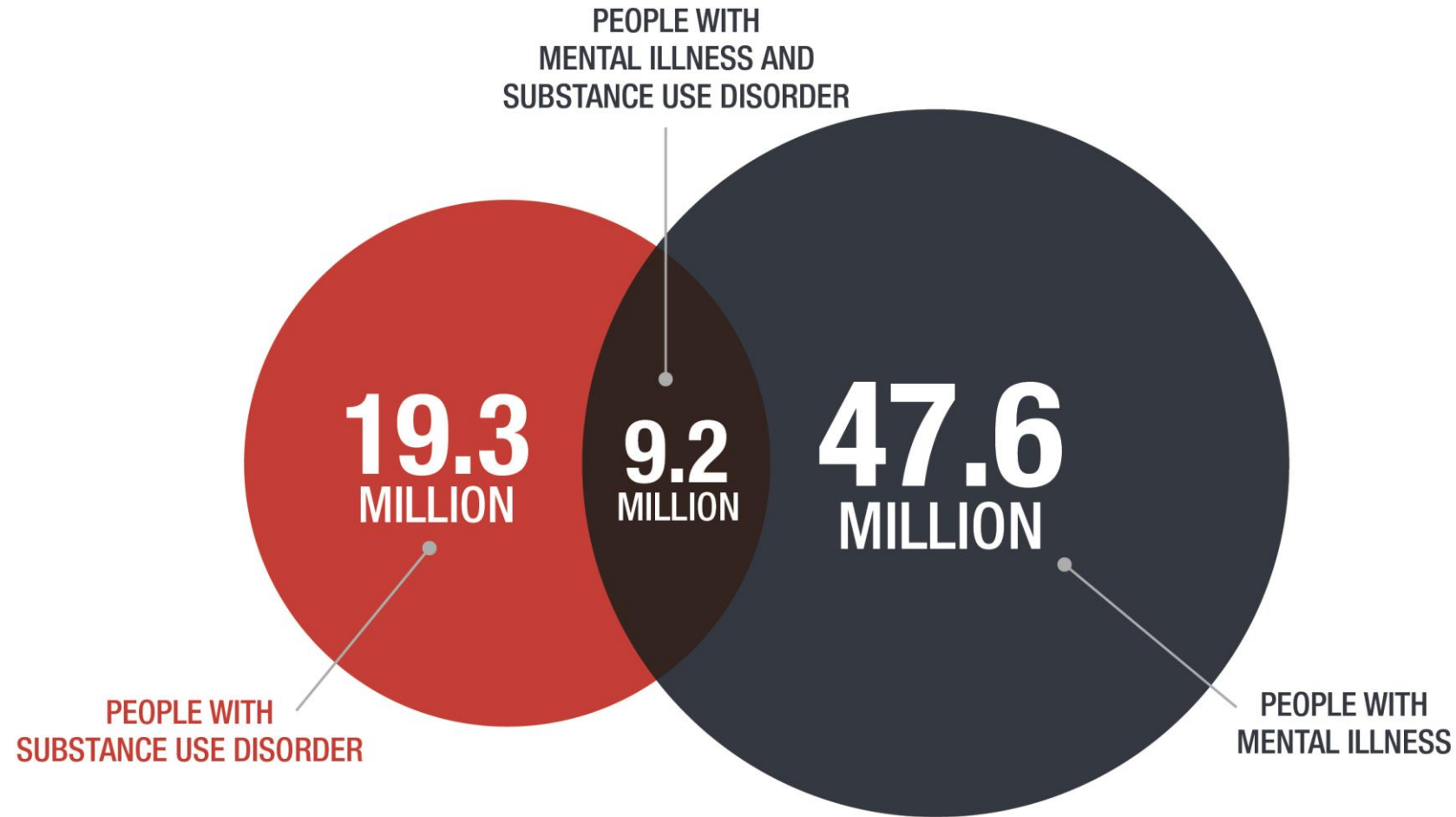
# Telehealth Resources

## Telehealth Learning and Consultation (TLC) Tuesdays - Mountain Plains MHTTC, Mid-America MHTTC, and Mid-America ATTC Collaboration

- ✓ April 7, 11-12pm ET: Telehealth Billing
- ✓ April 14, 11-12pm ET: Telehealth Tools
- ✓ April 21, 11-12pm ET: Telehealth with Children and Adolescents
- ✓ April 28, 11-12pm ET: Telehealth Troubleshooting

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mid-america-mhttc/telehealth-learning-and-consultation-tlc-tuesdays>

# Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders in America



Source: SAMHSA. (2019). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rockville, MD: CBHSQ, SAMHSA.



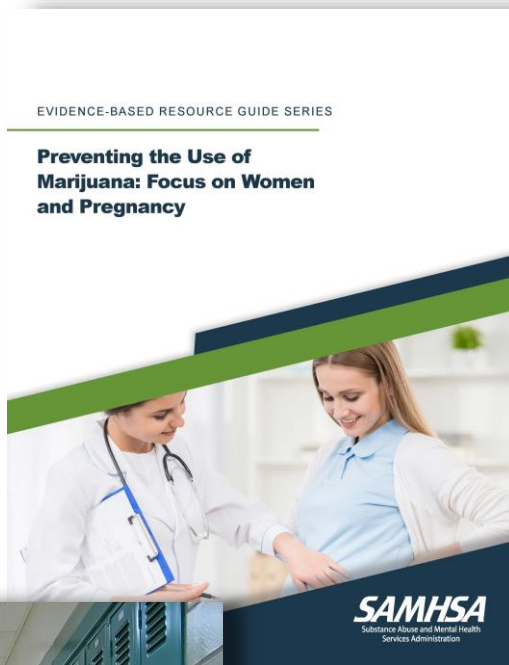
# Pandora's Box

- Flexibilities with Regulatory Guidelines
  - Medicare 1135 waiver for any physical or mental health service, and does not enforce the “established-relationship” requirement.
- New CMS Procedure Codes for telehealth rules, services, and rates
  - CMS added 85 more physician procedure codes to the list of Medicare fee-for-service (FFS)Tele-psychiatry / Tele-behavioral health
- Service Delivery
- However this is not a panacea for consumers or for provider organizations.
  - common issues include a lack of access to broadband internet or low digital literacy
    - consumers with paranoia, resistance to change, and anxiety disorders.
  - For provider organizations, there are also challenges.
    - The anecdotal reports are that telehealth visits are shorter, leading to less revenue, and reports are starting to come in that some provider organizations are billing only to see the bills either turned down or only partially reimbursed.

# Key Takeaways . . . COVID-19 and MH/SUD

1. We are Strong; We are Resilient; We will Persevere.
2. Together, individuals, families, and communities are facing a public health threat: COVID19/Coronavirus.
3. We can Take Control. We can Take Action. (We are not helpless)
  - A. Be Optimistic and Hopeful. This public health threat will pass.
  - B. Know the Facts: Listen to the public health-medical experts regarding COVID19.
  - C. Practice healthy behaviors: Reduce exposure to and spread of COVID19
    - A. Follow CDC guidelines ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus))
    - B. Practice physical distancing (rather than “social distancing”)
    - C. Stay socially connected (You don’t have to be isolated or alone if you are worried)
4. Optimal health is defined by 8 dimensions: Emotional, Spiritual, Intellectual, Physical, Environmental, Financial, Occupational, and Social.
5. Mental Illness and Addiction are **chronic diseases** with the potential for both recurrence and long-term recovery.
6. SAMHSA has current COVID19-related information and resources to assist individuals, families, communities, providers, states, territories and Tribes: <https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus>

# SAMHSA Resources



**TIPS for TEENS**

**E-CIGARETTES**

THE TRUTH ABOUT E-CIGARETTES

**SLANG: E-CIGS/E-HOOKAHS/VAPE PENS/VAPES/TANK SYSTEMS/MODS**

**GET THE FACTS**

**Q&A**

**Q. CAN'T E-CIGARETTES SAFER THAN SMOKING REGULAR CIGARETTES?**  
**A.** Regular cigarettes are extraordinarily dangerous, killing half of all people who smoke long-term. However, youth use of tobacco products in any form is unsafe, including e-cigarettes. More research is needed to fully understand their impact on health.

**Q. CAN'T E-CIGARETTES HELP ME QUIT SMOKING REGULAR CIGARETTES?**  
**A.** E-cigarettes may help non-pregnant adult smokers if used as a complete substitute for all cigarettes. However, there is no conclusive evidence that using e-cigarettes helps someone quit smoking for good. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved seven "quit aids" for getting smoking, but e-cigarettes are not currently one of them.

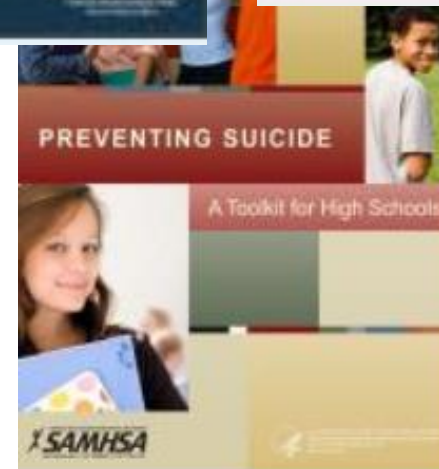
**Q. CAN'T E-CIGARETTES USED MORE OFTEN BY ADULTS, NOT YOUTH?**  
**A.** Youth use is more likely than adults to use e-cigarettes. In 2018, more than 50 million U.S. middle and high school students used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days, including 43 percent of middle school students and 23.8 percent of high school students.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:**  
 E-cigarettes are unsafe for young people. Whether a young person uses nicotine or marijuana in an e-cigarette, there can be long-term health consequences.

**LEARN MORE:**  
 Get the most information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [www.drugabuse.gov](https://www.drugabuse.gov).

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT E-CIGARETTES, CONTACT:**  
**SAMHSA**  
 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4772)  
 (English and Español)  
 TTY: 1-800-485-8889  
[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration





### **Suicide Prevention Lifeline [1-800-273-TALK \(8255\)](tel:1-800-273-TALK)**

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Your call is routed to the nearest crisis center in the national network of more than 150 crisis centers.

### **SAMHSA's National Helpline [1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:1-800-662-HELP)**

[www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)

Also known as, the Treatment Referral Routing Service, the Helpline provides 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish.

### **Disaster Distress Helpline [1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990)**

[www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)

Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after any natural or human-caused disaster. Call this toll-free number to be connected to the nearest crisis center for information, support, & counseling.

### **Veteran's Crisis Line [1-800-273-TALK \(8255\)](tel:1-800-273-TALK)**

[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

Connects veterans (families and friends) in crisis with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential, toll-free hotline, online chat, or text.

### **Drug-Free Workplace [1-800-WORKPLACE \(967-5752\)](tel:1-800-WORKPLACE)**

[www.samhsa.gov/workplace/resources/drug-free-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/resources/drug-free-helpline)

Assists employers and union representatives with policy development, drug testing, employee assistance, employee education, supervisor training, and program implementation.

### **Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator**

Find alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment facilities and programs around the country at [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov).

### **Buprenorphine Practitioner & Treatment Program Locator**

Find information on locating practitioners and treatment programs authorized to treat opioids at [www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-program-data/treatment-practitioner-locator](http://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-program-data/treatment-practitioner-locator).

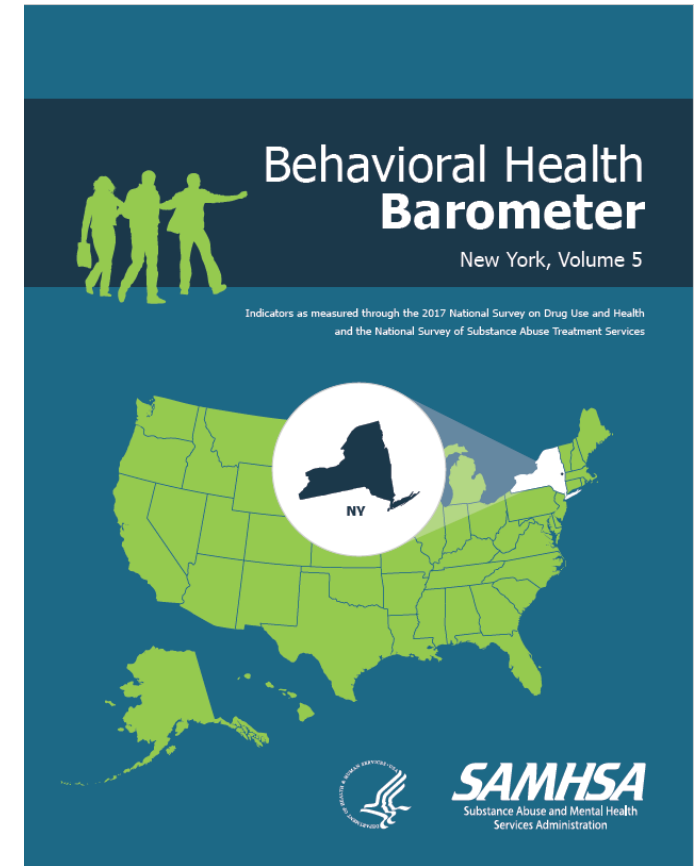
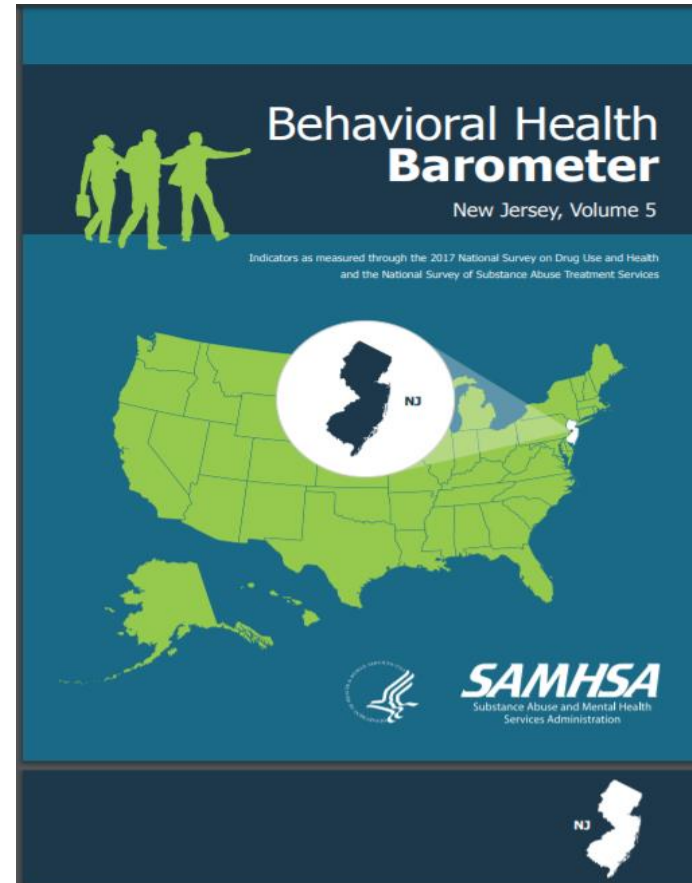
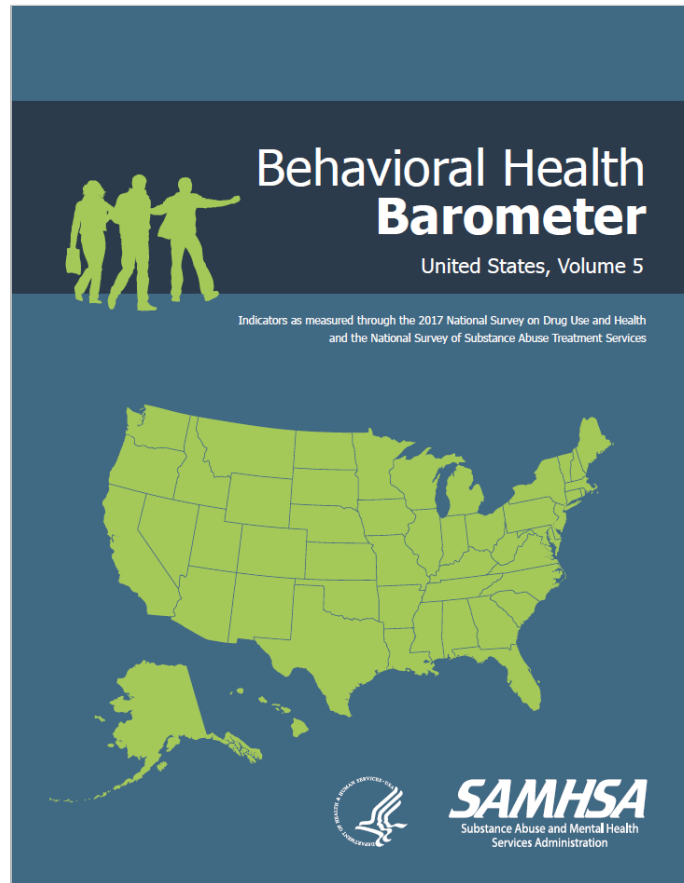
### **Early Serious Mental Illness Treatment Locator**

Find treatment programs in your state that treat recent onset of serious mental illnesses at [www.samhsa.gov/esmi-treatment-locator](http://www.samhsa.gov/esmi-treatment-locator).

### **Opioid Treatment Program Directory**

Find treatment programs in your state that treat addiction and dependence on opioids at [dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/](http://dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/).

# Behavioral Health Barometer, Volume 5

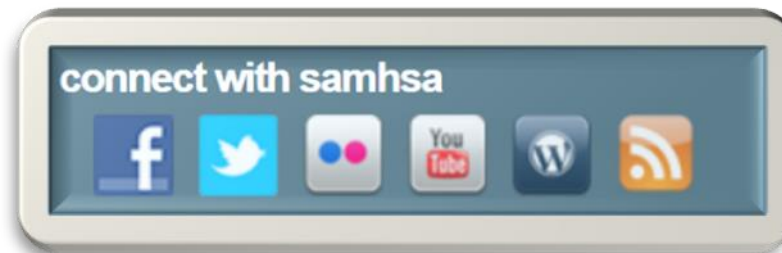


[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)

# Additional SAMHSA Resources – Find Help



- [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- [www.samhsa.gov/treatment](http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment)
- [www.disasterdistress.gov](http://www.disasterdistress.gov)
- [www.mentalhealth.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov)
- <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov>
- [SAMHSAResources@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:SAMHSAResources@samhsa.hhs.gov) or  
877.726.4767



# Questions



# Thank You

Dennis O. Romero, M.A.  
Regional Administrator  
DHHS Region II  
(NJ, NY, PR, US Virgin Islands and  
the Federally Recognized Tribes in the Northeast)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Email: [dennis.romero@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:dennis.romero@samhsa.hhs.gov)

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)