

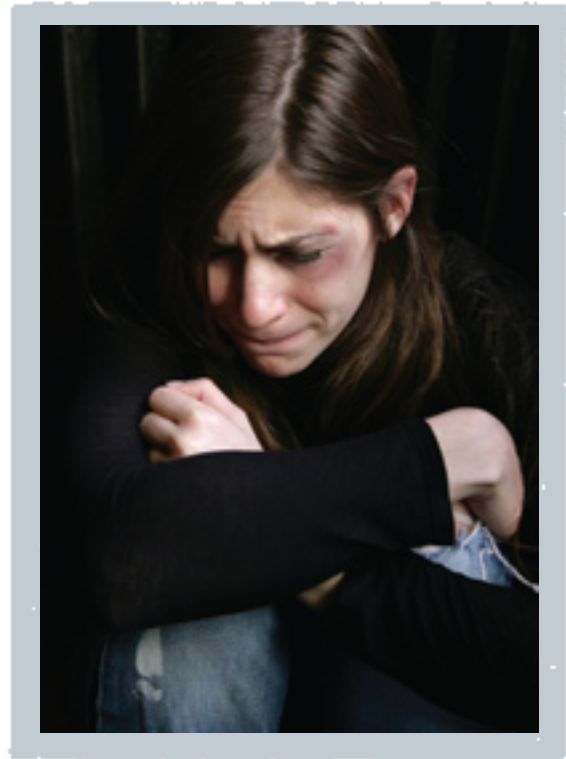
OVERVIEW

Health Indicator: Mental Health

Mental health can be thought of as simply the absence of a mental illness; however, it is much broader. It is that which every individual should expect: a state of successful mental functioning, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. Mental health is indispensable to personal well-being, family and interpersonal relationships, and one's contribution to society.⁷² Mental illnesses affect the functioning and thinking processes of the individual, greatly diminishing their social role and productivity in the community. Mental illness is frequently associated with substance abuse. Additionally, mental illnesses and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS and cancer, compound one another. Untreated, mental illness leads to unhealthy behavior, non-compliance with prescribed medical regimens, diminished immune functioning and poor prognosis.⁷³

An estimated 26.2% of Americans aged 18 and older, or about one in four adults, suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. When applied to the 2004 adult population, this figure translated to 57.7 million people.⁷⁴ However, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller proportion — 6% — who suffer from a serious mental illness. Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15 - 44.⁷⁵

Approximately 5.5 million adults who perceived a need for mental health treatment did not receive any treatment.



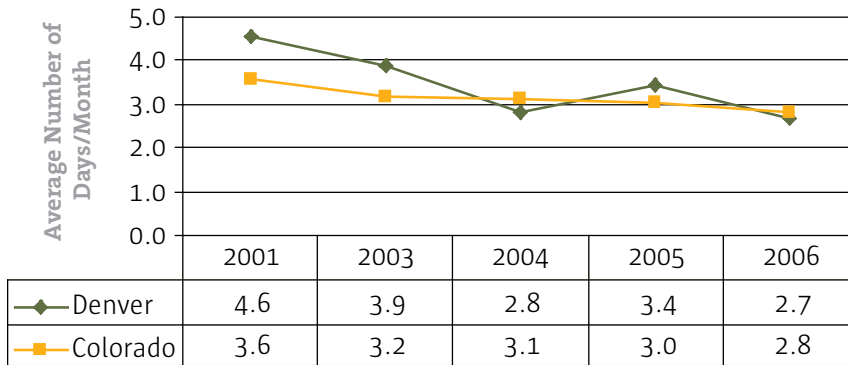
Among these, the five most commonly reported reasons for not receiving treatment included cost or insurance issues (45.1%), not feeling a need for treatment (at the time) or thinking the problem could be handled without treatment (40.6%), not knowing where to go for services (22.9%), perceived stigma associated with receiving treatment (22.8%), and lack of time (18.1%).⁷⁶



Mental disorders impose an emotional and financial burden on those who are ill as well as their families. Costs include medical care, treatment and rehabilitation (direct costs) as well as costs in reduced productivity at the workplace, school and home due to premature death and disability (indirect costs). The national direct costs for treatment of mental health and substance abuse disorders were \$104 billion in 2001, up from \$60 billion in 1991.⁷⁷ The latest published data on the estimated indirect costs of mental illness estimated that \$78.6 billion was lost in indirect costs of mental illness. More than 80% of these costs stemmed from disability, rather than death, because mortality from mental disorders is relatively low.⁷⁸

Health Indicator: Mental Health

Average Number of Days per Month at Poor Mental Health Status, 2005-2006

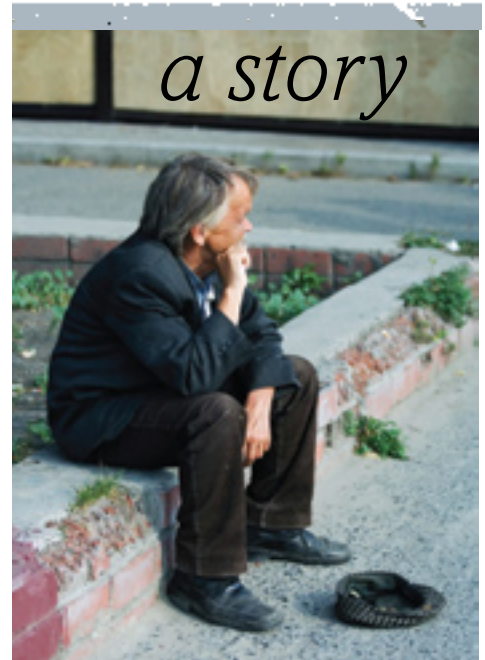


Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

DID YOU KNOW?



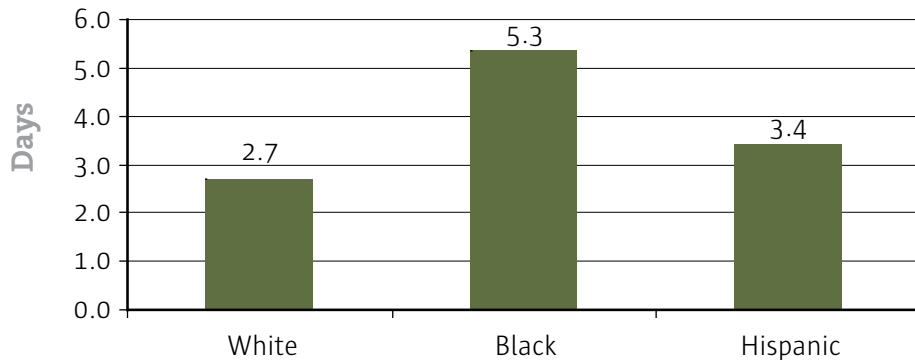
- An estimated 28% to 30% of the adult U.S. population will suffer from a mental or substance use disorder during the course of a year.⁸⁰
- Nearly half (45%) of those with any mental disorder meet criteria for two or more disorders, with severity strongly related to co-morbidity.⁸¹



Robert was homeless for almost 10 years. As a child, his father beat him severely and locked him in a closet, often for days at a time. He didn't attend school because he had too many bruises. At age 14 he ran away, drifted from job to job and started drinking because it took away the pain. Robert says his drinking got worse until his whole life revolved around alcohol and he ended up homeless and mentally ill. "If it wasn't for [treatment through] the Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD), I wouldn't have my medication or my apartment. I'd be sleeping on the street somewhere." Robert is living independently now. He is completing his GED and walks his dog, Dakota, everyday. "I just want everyone to know that there are a lot of people out there who'd be in a lot of trouble if it wasn't for [treatment at places such as] MHCD."

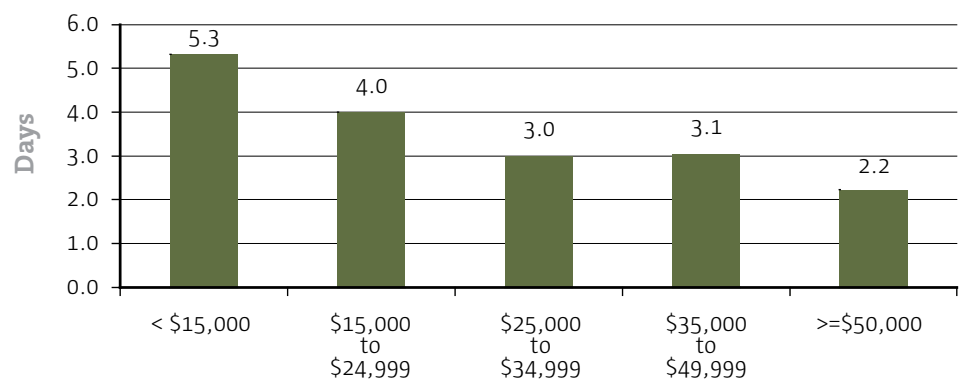
Health Indicator: Mental Health

Average Number of Days per Month at Poor Mental Health Status, by Race/Ethnicity, Denver, 2005-2006



Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Average Number of Days per Month at Poor Mental Health Status, by Income, Denver, 2005-2006



Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

CALL TO ACTION

- Address mental health at the same level as all other aspects of health and wellness when establishing health policy, including prevention, early identification and access to treatment.
- Ensure the availability of sufficient mental health screening and treatment services for insured and uninsured populations.
- Eliminate barriers to accessing mental health services. Expedite enrollment processes to get people into treatment immediately. This has a positive impact on long-term health outcomes.