Minimum Data Set Survey (MDSS) for Behavioral Health Professionals

A minimum data set survey is a tool used to collect data (e.g., location, insurance accepted, certifications/specialties, retirement plans) to monitor the availability of health care professionals in a state. Georgia currently collects and monitors such data for physicians (e.g., Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics & Gynecology, General Surgery, Psychiatry, Emergency Medicine) but not for behavioral health professionals (e.g., Licensed Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists).

WHY IS A MDSS NEEDED FOR GEORGIA’S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS?

Georgia has a major behavioral health professional shortage. Collecting data on available behavioral health professionals across the state will allow us to better understand workforce shortages and tackle them with informed policy solutions.

There is no current monitoring of the behavioral health workforce in Georgia.

- 96% of Georgia’s counties are designated as a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area.
- 78 counties do not have a licensed psychologist.
- 53 counties do not have a licensed social worker.
- 41% of children ages 3-17 struggle to or are unable to access needed mental health treatment and counseling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Georgia should require a MDSS for licensed behavioral health providers (psychologists, social workers, counselors, and marriage and family therapists) upon license renewal, comparable to the survey completed by physicians.
- Possible data collection, analysis, and reporting entities could include:
  - Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce;
  - Secretary of State’s Office (Currently houses the Georgia Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists); or
  - A University.
- Appropriate funding for annual implementation. (Based on available information, implementation will cost approximately $300,000 per year.)

Sources available here: https://tinyurl.com/MDSSinGA

www.georgiavoices.org

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Sources for Minimum Data Set Survey (MDSS) for Behavioral Health Professionals

3 Ibid.