

Meet children's behavioral health needs

The Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics supports timely treatment for children's behavioral health needs.



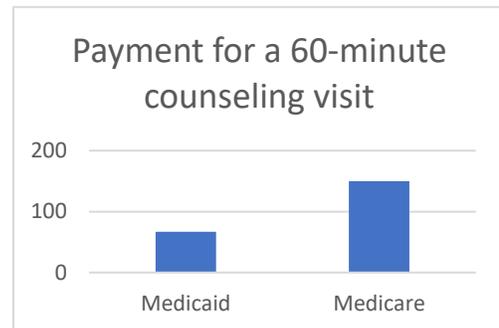
Issue

Behavioral health disorders affect up to one in five children in a given year, yet 80% of these kids do not receive care. In national rankings of youth prevalence of mental illness and youth access to care, Washington ranks 43rd in the nation.

It's hard for kids who need outpatient mental health care to get help in our state. Families struggle to find services for kids on Apple Health managed care plans, since many providers are not currently accepting Apple Health for Kids or have long waits for care. Access to care is even more of a challenge in communities of color, which face additional barriers and stigmas.

In a 2017 WCAAP study of mental health access, we found waits of up to a month in rural counties, and over half of King County mental health providers contacted did not have access for Apple Health for Kids.

- Mental health problems that begin in childhood can persist or worsen over time: Nearly 50% of adults with mental health disorders experience onset by age 14, 75% by age 24.
- In the United States, the rate of death by suicide in children aged 10 to 19 increased by 86% from 2007 to 2017; one out of every 13 high school students attempt suicide.
- Timely access to prevention and early intervention services is cost effective in children and adolescents, reducing the use of expensive services like emergency departments and hospitalizations.
- Medicaid currently pays less than half of what Medicare pays for counseling (Medicaid = \$67/hour, Medicare = \$150/hour).



Legislative Asks

Early diagnosis and evidence-based treatment help ensure healthy development and school success.

1. Bring Medicaid counseling rates to parity with Medicare to increase behavioral health integration for children in primary care. *\$15m/GFS*
2. Extend funding for [Washington's Mental Health Referral Service for Children and Teens](#) from January 2021 to June 2021 to align with the state's fiscal year and avoid a lapse in this critical service for families. *\$493k/GFS*