



Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

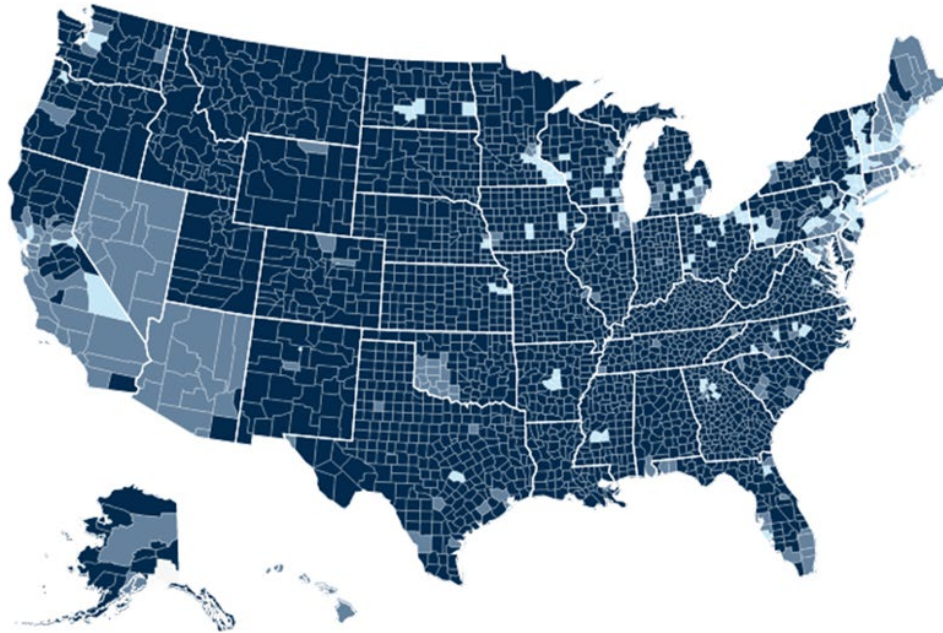
# Behavioral Health Workforce

Dennis Mohatt

Vice President, Behavioral Health

# Workforce Shortages are THE Challenge

Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, by County, 2022



None of county is  
shortage area

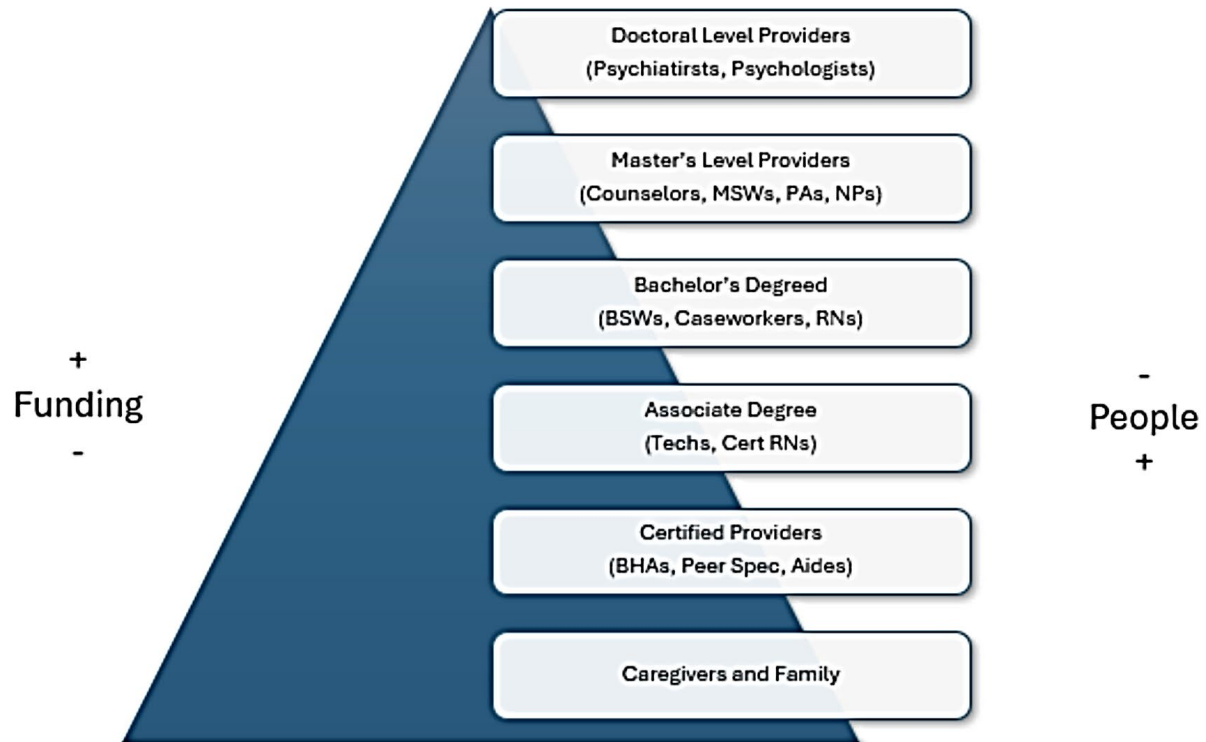
Part of county is  
shortage area

Whole county is  
shortage area

Source: [data.HRSA.gov](https://data.hrsa.gov), July 2022.

- ▶ Dark Blue = HPSA-MH
- ▶ Most of U.S. has long standing shortages
- ▶ Over 1,000 Counties have no MH or SUD Professional

# The Workforce Pyramid



# For Consideration

- ▶ Where we need workers rarely coincides with where we educate and train learners
- ▶ Typical recruitment strategies for professionals focus at the end of the pipeline, or post-graduation, and seek to entice relocation.
- ▶ Too often higher education views rural/remote learners as “place bound” and not as “place committed”
- ▶ We need to seek ways to engage place committed learners, extend education and training opportunities to them, and develop local workforce where we need them
- ▶ Neary two-thirds (58.2%) of the U.S. workforce has some college, but no degree or certificate...do you know your workforce percent?
  - **Now some examples...**

# Creating Education Partnerships

## Northern Marianas College + University of Alaska-Fairbanks

- ▶ Partnership between a community college and a university to offer a 2 + 2 Bachelor of Social Work Degree
- ▶ First 2 years delivered via in-person learning at NMC, upper-division to BSW delivered via technology enabled learning from UAF
- ▶ Enables place-committed students to remain in their home communities to earn BSW, in a curriculum specifically focused on rural/remote and indigenous social work.

# Building Capacity with a Place Committed Workforce

**Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program – Behavioral Health Aide certification is a multi-level provider model which includes BHA Trainee (non-certified), BHA levels I, II, and III, and BH Practitioner (BHP). To become a certified BHA or BHP, individuals must:**

- ▶ Complete specified training, practicum and work experience
- ▶ Meet the requirements of the Knowledge and Skills Checklist to demonstrate sufficient training and experience to provide service within a specified scope of practice
- ▶ Provide a broad range of services under the supervision of a Masters level clinician
- ▶ Maintain their certification by completing continuing education credits
  - <https://www.anthc.org/behavioral-health-aide-program/>

# Growing Our Own – Another Example...

## Colorado has developed non-degree programs

- ▶ Certified Addiction Technician (DORA)
- ▶ Crisis Professional Certification (LMS developed by BHA)
- ▶ Qualified BH Assistant (micro-credential via Comm. Colleges)
- ▶ Peer and Family Specialist (via CO Providers Association)
- ▶ Patient Navigator (via CO Comm College System)



# Thank you!

**For Additional Information:**

**Dennis F. Mohatt**

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[www.wiche.edu/behavioral-health/](http://www.wiche.edu/behavioral-health/)