

# Evaluation of the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access and Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders Programs



## Background

Through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act, the American Rescue Plan Act of the Public Health Service Act, and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) aims to increase the identification and treatment of behavioral health conditions via two programs: the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program (PMHCA) and the Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders Program (MDRBD).

## Programs

### Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA)

The purpose of the PMHCA Program is to promote behavioral health integration in pediatric care by supporting the development of new or expansion of existing statewide, regional, tribal, or territory-wide pediatric mental health care access programs via telehealth. Networks of pediatric mental health care teams offer tele-consultation, training, technical assistance, and care coordination for pediatric primary care providers/health professionals to diagnose, treat, and refer children with behavioral health conditions.



There are currently 50 PMHCA award recipients, including 43 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Chickasaw Nation, and Red Lake Band of the Chippewa Indians. There is also a PMHCA funding opportunity available for up to 36 awards (including competing continuation awards and new awards for programs with and without previous HRSA PMHCA implementation experience) to continue the expansion of the program.

## Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders (MDRBD)

The purpose of the MDRBD Program is to create, improve, or maintain programs that expand health care provider/health professional capacity to screen, assess, treat, and refer pregnant and postpartum women for maternal depression and related behavioral health disorders, including in rural and medically underserved areas. There are currently seven MDRBD funding awards to seven states. There is also a funding opportunity available for up to 14 awards to continue the expansion of the program.

### Evaluation

JBS International, Inc. is conducting a national outcome and process evaluation of the PMHCA and MDRBD programs (Evaluation Project) and an impact study of the PMHCA program (Impact Study).



The Evaluation Project outcome evaluation assesses access to behavioral health care and health care providers/health professionals' capacity to address patients' behavioral health. The evaluation is grounded in the theoretical framework of access (i.e., accessibility, availability, acceptability, affordability, adequacy [accommodation], and awareness) and the conceptual framework of collaborative care (patient-centered team care, population-based care, measurement-based treatment to target, evidence-based care, and accountable care).



The Evaluation Project process evaluation describes and characterizes awardee program implementation models including program components (e.g., consultation line, care coordination, training) and settings (e.g., school-based health centers, emergency departments), barriers and facilitators to implementation, sustainability plans, and efforts to address health equity, among other factors.



The Impact Study examines the impact of the PMHCA program on changes in children's/adolescents' and caregivers'/families' access to behavioral health care; their subsequent receipt and use of behavioral health care services including culturally and linguistically competent care; and related behavioral health impacts; as well as program cost benefits (e.g., monetary and societal).

The **Evaluation Project** will answer seven key questions:

1. What activities did the PMHCA and MDRBD programs implement to support providers/health professionals' capacity to address behavioral health?
2. How did health care providers/health professionals' capacity to address patients' behavioral health change among PMHCA and MDRBD programs over time?
3. How did health care practices' capacity to address patients' behavioral health change among PMHCA and MDRBD programs over time?

4. How were PMHCA and MDRBD program activities associated with changes over time in access to behavioral health services?
5. How do PMHCA and MDRBD program activities address health equity needs in behavioral health?
6. What program implementation models did PMHCA and MDRBD programs establish to address behavioral health?
7. How do awardees plan to sustain their programs once funding for PMHCA and MDRBD programs end?



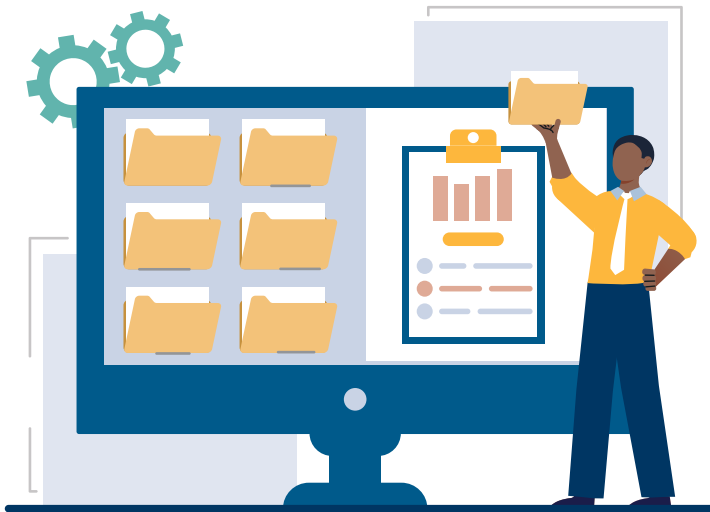
The **Impact Study** will answer its own set of key questions, which are under review with HRSA as of August 2023. The questions were developed to identify the impact of the PMHCA program on six impact areas of interest:

1. Children and adolescents' access to behavioral health care, including among groups that are historically underserved
2. Children and adolescents' initial receipt of behavioral health services
3. Children and adolescents' subsequent behavioral health care utilization
4. Receipt of culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health care
5. Children and adolescents' behavioral health impacts
6. PMHCA program cost-benefit

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## Evaluation Features

The Evaluation Project will use primary data collected from award recipients (e.g., program directors, principal investigators), program champions, enrolled/participating health care providers/health professionals and practice-level office managers/leadership, community resource partner representatives, and program-level care coordinators. It will also examine secondary data sources, such as Medicaid data, National Survey of Children's Health, National Health Care Surveys, American Community Survey, and HRSA's database, [MUA Find](#).



The Impact Study will primarily use existing data sources including HRSA MCHB-required reporting, HRSA MCHB Evaluation Project data, publicly available national survey data, and Medicaid claims data. Additionally, there is an opportunity to collect new primary quantitative and qualitative data, and JBS will coordinate with HRSA and an External Partner Group to determine gaps and areas where more data could enhance the understanding of the key impact areas.

## Evaluation Design

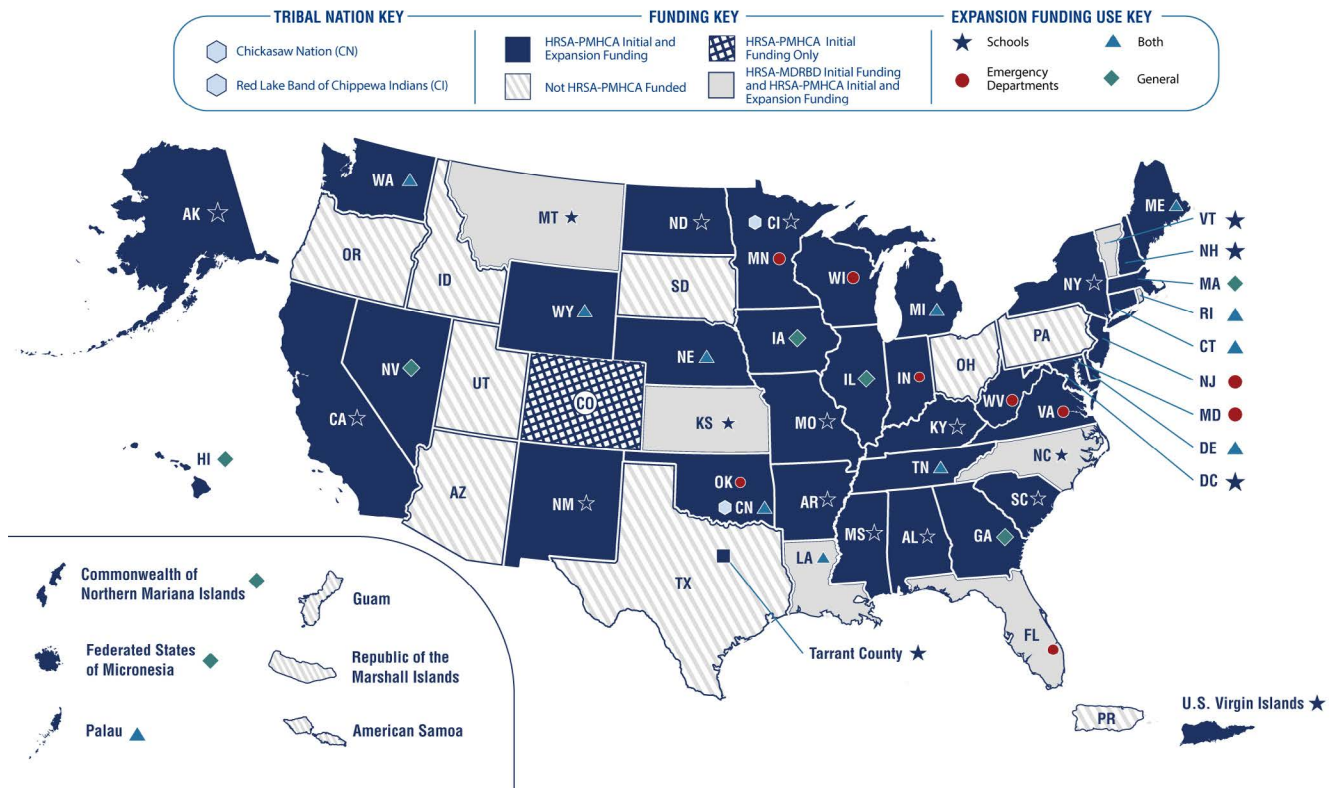
- The Evaluation Project outcome evaluation is designed to give evidence of the efforts of awardee programs on key awardee outcomes (e.g., increases in access to behavioral health services, health care providers/health professionals trained, and available resources) and to measure whether and to what extent awardee programs are associated with changes in these outcomes. The process evaluation is designed to describe the parts of and barriers and facilitators to program implementation. The Evaluation Project will use a mixed-methods design, with primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data collection activities across all HRSA MCHB PMHCA and MDRBD awardees.
- The Impact Study is designed to identify the impact of the PMHCA program on the impact areas of interest (see above). Areas in which a HRSA-funded PMHCA program is present will be classified as the treatment group. Once identified, impacts of the treatment and control groups before and after the implementation of PMHCA will be compared, while controlling for other covariates available in the data sources. Analyses of a single PMHCA program or a group of PMHCA programs before and after implementation of the PMHCA initiative may also be conducted. The Impact Study will use a difference-in-differences, between-groups quasi-experimental analytic approach as well as a within-groups design, such as interrupted time series or one-way repeated measures ANOVA analyses.

## Timeline

Data collection for the Evaluation Project began in 2020 and will continue through 2025. The Evaluation Project's final report will be completed by September 2026. It will include data collected from FY 2020 through FY 2024.

For the Impact Study, the timeline for primary data collection is dependent on Office of Management and Budget approval. The Impact Study's final report will be completed by October 2026.

# Map



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