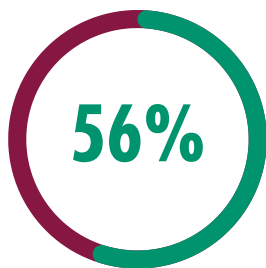


Keeping Schools Safe

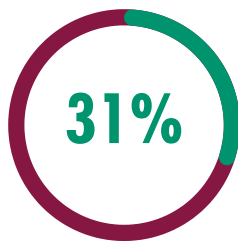
Addressing the Youth Mental Health Challenge

There is a national emergency in children's mental health. Children and youth are experiencing soaring rates of anxiety, depression, trauma, loneliness, and suicide. Students' unmet mental health needs can be a significant obstacle to academic, career, and social-emotional development, as well as compromise school safety.



of Missourians ages 12-17¹ who have depression did not receive any care in the last year

of children ages 3-17 years² (approximately 1.9 million) have been diagnosed with depression



In 2020, the proportion of³ mental health-related emergency visits for youth ages 12-17 increased by 31%



1 in 6 U.S. Youth ages 6-17⁴ experience a mental health disorder

68,000

Missourians ages 12-17 have depression⁵

1 out of 4867

Missouri has one school psychologist⁶ for every 4,867 students; the recommended ratio is 1:500



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The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Children's Hospital Association have declared a national emergency for children and adolescents' mental health. By implementing intervention policies, Missouri's youth will produce better academic and health outcomes, both individually and communally. Therefore, providing school mental health services is crucial in addressing this crisis and ensuring a healthy future for our youth by meeting students where they are – in schools.

As big as these challenges seem, they are not insurmountable. Alive & Well Communities' Youth Advisory Board recommends the following action steps to create healthier and safer schools:

Policy Recommendations

1

Students across Missouri are given the ability to take 3% of days within an academic year for excused Mental Health Days (5 days in Missouri) without producing medical documentation. Students receive follow-up communication from a school counselor/therapist upon return.

2

Require 5 hours of annual professional development for educators and other school staff to detect and respond to mental health issues and connect students and families who experience behavioral health issues with appropriate services.

3

All Missouri public schools to include mental health instruction in K through 12 health curricula.

4

Each school develop a Mental Health Assistance Plan that includes but is not limited to trainings, updated curriculum, and community partnership.

5

Inclusive curriculum that aims to cultivate learning environments that are equitable and nurturing for every student.



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Sources

1. 56% of Missourians ages 12–17 who have depression did not receive any care in the last year
[\(Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health, CIMOR System, Jefferson City, MO\)](#)
2. 3.2% of children ages 3–17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have been diagnosed with depression
[\(SAMHSA: National Survey on Drug Use and Health\)](#)
3. In 2020, the proportion of mental health-related emergency visits for youth ages 12–17 increased by 31%
[\(SAMHSA: National Survey on Drug Use and Health\)](#)
4. 1 in 6 U.S. Youth ages 6–17 experience a mental health disorder
[\(SAMHSA: National Survey on Drug Use and Health\)](#)
5. 68,000 Missourians ages 12–17 have depression
[\(Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health, CIMOR System, Jefferson City, MO\)](#)
6. Missouri has one school psychologist for every 4,867 students; the recommended ratio is 1:500
[\(i. The state of Mental Health in America. Mental Health. \(n.d.\). Retrieved November 9, 2021, from https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america.\)](#)



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