BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT
MONROE COUNTY
OVERVIEW

This Behavioral Health Needs Assessment provides a broad overview of Monroe County's behavioral health landscape. It identifies both the growing needs and key opportunities. This assessment goes beyond the traditional medical model that focuses on clinical diagnoses and treatment. It also considers overall emotional well-being and the role of social and community factors in prevention and healing.

Growing Needs & Large Disparities

Behavioral health needs in Monroe County have grown in recent years. The percentage of individuals diagnosed with a behavioral health condition has risen from 29% in 2016 to 34% in 2023.[1] Emergency department visits driven by behavioral health issues have surged by 72% from 2005 to 2023.[2] This suggests many more people may not be getting the support necessary to prevent the need for crisis care.

Not all communities experience these challenges equally. Significant disparities persist based on income, race, ethnicity, and insurance coverage. These disparities disproportionately affect marginalized and underserved populations. They also highlight the need for a more inclusive and accessible system of care.

This brief is part of a Behavioral Health Needs Assessment completed in July 2025. This is one of six issue briefs summarizing findings.

All issue briefs, along with the full assessment, are available online at **commongroundhealth.org /bhna25***.*

Scan the QR code below with your phone camera to access these resources.

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Community-Informed Focus Areas

We grounded this assessment in quantitative data and qualitative insights gathered from more than 40 local experts representing a wide variety of roles and perspectives related to behavioral health. Based on their input, we identified five key focus areas for deeper analysis:

- **Crisis Services and Post-Crisis Care**
- **Mental Health of Children and Youth**
- **System Gaps and Coordination Issues**
- **Retention and Diversity of the Workforce**
- **Community Connectors and Mental Health Supports**

Key Opportunities

While each of the focus areas has its own set of findings, we also identified four overarching strategic opportunities:

1. **Focus on Early Detection and Prevention:** Current resources focus heavily on treatment over prevention. There is a critical opportunity to invest in early support that prevents the onset or worsening of behavioral health issues. Prevention efforts include raising public awareness and offering help in everyday settings like schools, workplaces, and primary care.

2. **Breaking Down Silos:** Existing resources are often hard to access, and many individuals struggle to navigate the system. Improving coordination within and across organizations – through enhanced care management and navigator roles – can help people move more easily through the system.

3. **Investing in the Workforce:** Address workforce shortages and burnout by ensuring fair reimbursement, enhancing training and support, and promoting diversity to better match the needs of the community.

4. **Expanding Peer and Community Supports:** Leverage trusted community members to provide support that complements clinical care. This is especially important for populations whose needs are not met by standard medical services.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Additionally, improving the behavioral health of the community depends on addressing underlying factors that can either accelerate or hinder improvement.

- **Regulatory Environment:** Current regulations often limit flexibility in staffing, program coordination, and facility expansion. Reform is needed to enable more responsive and integrated care.

- **Social Drivers of Health (SDOH):** Factors such as housing, transportation, employment, and family dynamics significantly influence behavioral health outcomes. Addressing these drivers is essential to improving access and effectiveness of care.

- **Data Collection and Monitoring:** Robust data systems are needed to identify service gaps, track outcomes, and guide continuous improvement.

Additional details in the full assessment provide Monroe County decision-makers with actionable insights to guide collective efforts toward behavioral health solutions that are proactive, inclusive, and rooted in community needs.

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[1] Common Ground Health Multipayor Claims Database
[2] NYSDOH Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS). Analysis by Common Ground Health.

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