4-1-2015

Addressing Hispanic Adolescent Mental Health in the Texas Border Region: A Policy Analysis

Brian Zepka
School of Population Health, Thomas Jefferson University, brian.zepka@jefferson.edu

Let us know how access to this document benefits you
Follow this and additional works at: http://jdc.jefferson.edu/mphcapstone_presentation
Part of the Public Health Commons

Recommended Citation
http://jdc.jefferson.edu/mphcapstone_presentation/151

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Jefferson Digital Commons. The Jefferson Digital Commons is a service of Thomas Jefferson University's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The Commons is a showcase for Jefferson books and journals, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, unique historical collections from the University archives, and teaching tools. The Jefferson Digital Commons allows researchers and interested readers anywhere in the world to learn about and keep up to date with Jefferson scholarship. This article has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Public Health Thesis and Capstone Presentations by an authorized administrator of the Jefferson Digital Commons. For more information, please contact: JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu.
Addressing Hispanic Adolescent Mental Health in the Texas Border Region: A Policy Analysis

Brian Zepka
MPH Capstone Project
Thomas Jefferson University
Spring 2015
Presentation Outline

- Background
  - Mental Health
  - Texas Border Region
- Research Aims
- Methods
- Results
- Policy Options
- Recommendation
- Limitations
- Next Steps
Background

- **Mental Health**
  - Positive mental health associated with improved health outcomes
  - 80% of adolescents in need of mental health services do not receive them
    - Major disparities in service utilization
Background

- United States – Mexico Border

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013b)
Background

- United States – Mexico Border
  - Low socioeconomic status
  - If the border region was the 51st state it would rank:
    - Last in access to health care
    - Last in per capita income
    - First in the number of children living in poverty
Background

- **Texas Border Region**
  - Constitutes majority of the total border area (1,254 miles)
  - Most populated border state (≈ 3 million)
  - Almost 90% Hispanic
  - Significantly younger population
  - Highest unemployment and lowest educational attainment compared to other border states
  - 1,800 Colonias
Background

- Mental Health Risk Factors
  - Poor socioeconomic conditions
  - Acculturation
  - Discrimination
  - Exposure to drugs and violence
  - Little access to mental health services
Background

- Psychiatrists per 100,000 population in Texas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Border</th>
<th>Rural Border</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,365</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,488</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,687</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, 2012)
Background

• Psychologists per 100,000 population in Texas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Border</th>
<th>Rural Border</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5,044</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5,567</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6,547</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, 2012)
Research Aims

• Determine the primary barriers Hispanic adolescents face when attempting to utilize mental health services

• Understand the positions and concerns of key stakeholders in the Texas border region regarding Hispanic adolescent mental health

• Propose a sound policy recommendation that has the potential to improve mental health care access for this particular population
Methods

- Qualitative Policy Analysis
- Political Model
  - Problem Statement
  - Background
  - Landscape
  - Options
  - Recommendation
Methods

- Systematic literature review
- Stakeholder interviews
  - Identified through online research and personal referrals
  - Semi-structured interview guide
    - Current mental health services, access barriers, political and economic challenges, and future recommendations
    - ‘Stakeholder Analysis Table’ in Microsoft Excel
- Analysis
  - Thematic approach
Results

- Seven interviews were conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binational Operations Coordinator</td>
<td>United States – Mexico Border Health Commission</td>
<td>El Paso, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Children’s Mental Health</td>
<td>Border Region Behavioral Health Center</td>
<td>Laredo, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of Pediatrics</td>
<td>Brownsville Community Health Center</td>
<td>Brownsville, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Director</td>
<td>Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN)</td>
<td>Laredo, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN)</td>
<td>Laredo, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division</td>
<td>Texas Department of State Health Services</td>
<td>Austin, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor Dept. of Social Work</td>
<td>University of Texas-Pan American</td>
<td>Edinburg, TX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

• Mental Health Care System Issues
  ▫ Lack of mental health providers/services
  ▫ Language issues
  ▫ Poor utilization of school-based mental health services

• Political Issues
  ▫ Lack of government funding/support

• Social Issues
  ▫ Socioeconomic challenges
  ▫ Stigma and cultural norms
  ▫ Lack of mental health education/awareness
  ▫ Fear over legal status
Option 1: Creation of a Mental Health Provider Education Loan Repayment Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increases mental health care workforce for vulnerable populations</td>
<td>• May not directly impact border communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Several loan repayment programs already in existence in Texas</td>
<td>• Administrative burden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High level of support</td>
<td>• Costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▫ Unpopular tax</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Option 2: Reauthorizing the Federal School-based Health Center Capitol Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Will allow for the continued funding of school-based health centers in medically underserved areas and permit appropriations for operational grants</td>
<td>• May not directly impact border communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School-based health centers overcome many barriers to care</td>
<td>• Political opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No cost to state government</td>
<td>• Timely process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option 3: Passage of Texas House Bill No. 313 (Certified School Counselors)

**Pros**
- Mandates certified school counselors in all secondary schools in the state
- Lowers the student-to-school counselor ratio

**Cons**
- Sustainable funding
- Lack of cultural competence
Option 4: Passage of Texas House Bill No. 357 (Responsibilities of School Counselors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Requires a school counselor to spend no more than 20 percent of their total work time on duties that are not components of a counseling or guidance program</td>
<td>• Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More time will be allocated to counseling adolescents and educating the parents and community on mental health topics</td>
<td>• Redistribution of administrative responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May not impact targeted population without a counseling mandate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option 5: Passage of Texas Senate Bill No. 518 (Inclusion of Mental Health Concerns in School Health Efforts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increases mental health education for elementary school, middle school, and junior high school students</td>
<td>• Does not directly increase access to mental health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No daunting policy changes or drastic increases in funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy Recommendation

- Passage of House Bill No. 313 (Certified School Counselors)
  - Bring more certified counselors to the region
  - Improve mental health programs in schools
  - Nationwide support
    - 29 states and D.C. mandate the provision of school counselors
Limitations

- Understanding the complex mental and behavioral health systems in Texas
- Sample Size
  - 7 total interviews
- Limited scope
  - Adolescent perspective was not assessed, only provider
Implications for Public Health

• Mental health is necessary to lead a successful life
  ▫ Should be a high priority among policymakers
• Re-emphasizes the need for mental health policy interventions for hard-to-reach, high-need populations
• Little is known about the mental health status of border youth
  ▫ Interventions require a unique, culturally competent approach
Next Steps

- Investigate the mental health infrastructure in California, Arizona, and New Mexico border regions
- Assess the Hispanic adolescent perspective
- Improve mental health surveillance in the border region
Thank You!

• Capstone Chair
  ▫ Lucille B. Pilling, EdD, MPH, BSN, RN
• Capstone Preceptor
  ▫ Martha C. Romney, RN, MS, JD, MPH
Questions?
References

References

References


