Stark County System of Care Expansion Planning:

Statistics on Minority Populations and the Current Mental Health System

NAMI- Website


Minority Populations Are Underserved in the Current Mental Health System

Racial and ethnic minority Americans comprise a substantial and vibrant segment of the U.S. population, enriching our society with many unique strengths, cultural traditions, and important contributions. As a segment of the overall population, these groups are growing rapidly; current projections show that by 2025, they will account for more than 40% of all Americans.  

Unfortunately, the mental health system has not kept pace with the diverse needs of racial and ethnic minorities, often underserving or inappropriately serving them. Specifically, the system has neglected to incorporate respect or understanding of the histories, traditions, beliefs, languages, and value systems of culturally diverse groups. Misunderstanding and misinterpreting behaviors have led to tragic consequences, including inappropriately placing minorities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

While bold efforts to improve services for culturally diverse populations currently are underway, significant barriers still remain in access, quality, and outcomes of care for minorities. As a result, American Indians, Alaska Natives, African Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic Americans bear a disproportionately high burden of disability from mental disorders. This higher burden does not arise from a greater prevalence or severity of illnesses in these populations. Rather it stems from receiving less care and poorer quality of care.

American Psychological Association – Website

http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/health-care/disparities.aspx

The percentage of racial and ethnic minorities (i.e., Hispanic, Black, Asian, and American Indian) in the mental/behavioral workforce according to SAMHSA’s Mental Health USA 2004 was estimated to be as follows: 6.2% for psychology, 8.7% for social work, 24.2% for psychiatry, 17.5% for psychiatric nursing, 15.4% for counseling, 5.5% for marriage and family therapists, and 5.3% for school psychology.
As of September, 2008, there were 3,059 Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas with 77 million people living in them according to HRSA Office of Shortage Designation. It would take 5,145 practitioners to meet the need for a population to practitioner ratio of 10,000:1. These startling statistics are derived from communities that self-reported their shortages; the need is likely much greater. Within these shortage areas there is a high population of racial and ethnic minorities.

**Ohio MHAS (Mental Health & Addiction Services)**

Diversity and Cultural Competency Handout.
References


