Maternal Mental Health in Texas

Findings from Texas survey –

Opportunities to improve screenings, referrals, and treatment for maternal mental health challenges

May 2020
WHO ARE THE 200 RESPONDENTS?

90% of respondents (180 individuals) are health professionals that work on women’s health and/or mental health topics.

48% of respondents (95 individuals) have lived experienced with a maternal mental health challenge.
A wide variety of health professionals participated in the survey. Some respondents serve in multiple roles. Broadly speaking, 39% are Medical professionals, 35% are Mental Health providers, and 26% are Community Health professionals. *LCSWs can fill many professional roles. For purposes of this calculation, we categorized them as mental health providers.*
WHERE ARE THEY?

41% Austin Area

19% Unique Locations in Texas
  ie. Victoria, El Paso, Odessa, Harlingen, Laredo, Galveston, etc.

16% Houston Area

9% Dallas-Fort Worth Area

8% San Antonio Area

6% New Braunfels / San Marcos

2% Wichita Falls
Respondents agree that three critical professions need additional training:

1. OB/GYNs
2. Pediatricians
3. Mental Health Providers.

89% of health professionals want to increase their ability to screen for maternal mental health challenges.
GREATEST SCREENING CHALLENGES?

Among those who Regularly Screen

- Lack of confidence in referral options: 31%
- Don't know how or where to refer: 20%

Among those who do NOT Regularly Screen

- Don't know how to screen: 36%
## HOW CAN WE INCREASE SCREENING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extend Medicaid coverage for eligible moms from 60 days to 12 months postpartum</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train professionals how to find a reliable referral network</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train a range of professionals on the signs and symptoms of maternal mental health challenges</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train professionals how to discuss maternal mental health challenges with clients</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A standard referral network for maternal mental health</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase professionals’ comfort with screening and referring for maternal mental health challenges</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimburse pediatricians for screenings more than one time per year</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimburse NICU providers for providing maternal mental health screenings</td>
<td>26%</td>
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</tbody>
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Survey respondents most commonly recommend:

- **Coverage Increases**
- **Train for Health Professionals**
HOW DO PROFESSIONALS REFER & RESPOND?

89% of professionals respond to maternal mental health challenges.

Most Common Actions

- Refer to Therapist: 52%
- Inform about Educational Materials: 48%
- Refer to psychiatrist: 45%
- Refer to Social Worker: 33%
- Inform about PSI Info: 26%
- Inform about Discuss Meds: 26%
- Refer to LMHA: 24%

Of those that refer & respond, 80% take more than one type of action.
Health professional respondents report a follow-up text or call to the mom is the most important factor in ensuring she receives care.
HOW CAN WE IMPROVE REFERRALS?

#1 On-site mental health providers at health clinics
Recommended by 69% of respondents

#2 An easy-to-use, statewide directory of providers & support groups for women of all backgrounds
Recommended by 66% of respondents

#3 On-site CHWs or patient navigators at health clinics to help find providers
Recommended by 57% of respondents
Respondents widely agree that the two greatest barriers to treatment are lack of affordability (73%) and childcare issues (61%).
HOW CAN WE IMPROVE TREATMENT?

Respondents largely agree that expanding healthcare coverage for moms would significantly increase the number of women receiving treatment.

Respondents would also like moms to have more home visiting options and greater access to trained professionals with expertise in maternal mental health.
95 survey respondents have personally experienced a maternal mental health challenge.

Among the 95 women, 80 (84%) currently work as health or mental health professionals.

Respondents with lived experience offer unique perspectives regarding the challenges of receiving treatment.
Of the 95 women who experienced a maternal mental health challenge

only 55% were screened

The most common screening occurred once, after pregnancy (as opposed to during pregnancy), and was provided by staff at the woman’s doctor’s office.
Of the 95 women who experienced a maternal mental health challenge, only 24% were referred for treatment or other support services.

The most common treatments were mental health provider services (74%) and prescription of medications (65%).
WAS IT DIFFICULT TO GET TREATMENT?

Among the women referred for treatment, 61% report that it was difficult to find a provider in their area. 

14.5 miles
Avg. Distance Traveled
Women wanting more information about support services or treatment options most commonly turned to their doctor or the Postpartum Support International (PSI) website.