



# Utah Behavioral Health Assessment & Master Plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 2023

This draft is for public review and feedback. A final report is expected to be released in September 2023.

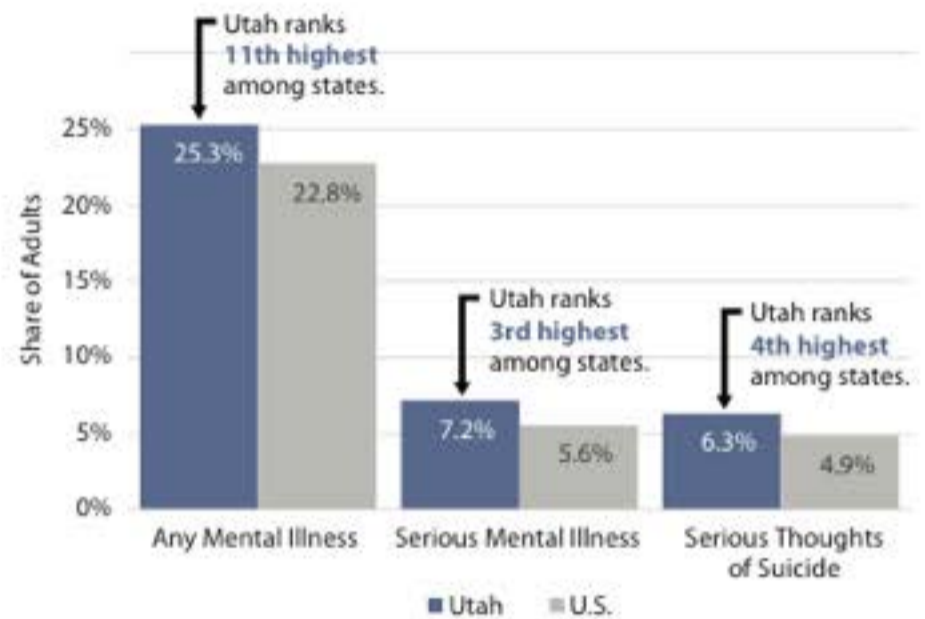
### The Problem

Utah, like the rest of the country, is facing a behavioral health crisis. Numerous gaps in care exist across Utah's continuum of behavioral health services and supports, in Utah's rural and culturally diverse communities, as well as across Utah's population lifespan (from infant and early childhood to older adults). Utah ranks 11<sup>th</sup> highest among states in terms of the share of adults with any mental illness, 3<sup>rd</sup> highest for adults with serious mental illness, and 4<sup>th</sup> highest for adults with serious thoughts of suicide.

The share of young adults in Utah with poor mental health more than doubled over the last 10 years, which is reflected in escalating demand in Utah's higher education institutions. More than 60% of children ages 6-11, and 50% of children ages 12-17 with a mental or behavioral health condition do not receive treatment. And among the children who need treatment, close to half of parents report that services are difficult, or sometimes impossible to obtain. Methamphetamine is a main driver of Utah's drug-related fatalities.

Utah ranks highest among states in terms of the share of children ages 0-3 whose mothers reports fair or poor mental health, which impacts the emotional and behavioral needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. As Utah's population ages, the demand for behavioral health services is shifting to older adults, but there is a severely limited number of geriatric psychiatrists in the state.

Figure 2: Adult Mental Health Indicators in Utah and U.S., 2021

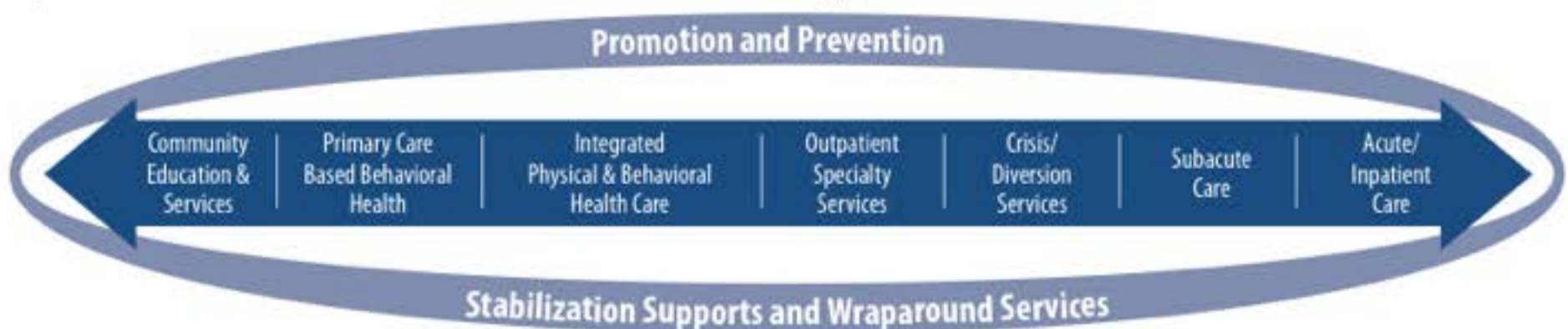


Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2021.

### The Benefit of Addressing Behavioral Health

Depression is a leading cause of disability and national cost estimates of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among youth amount to \$247 billion per year in mental health and health services, lost productivity, and crime. Investing in high-quality behavioral health services can help reduce costs across public and private health systems and sectors such as education, corrections, criminal justice, and housing. More importantly, it saves lives.

Figure 1: Utah's Continuum of Behavioral Health Services and Supports



Note: This continuum was developed as a part of the 2020 Roadmap for Improving Utah's Behavioral Health System. Source: Utah Hospital Association

The full version of the report, including citations, is available at <https://gardner.utah.edu/economics-and-public-policy/health-care/utah-behavioral-health-coalition-master-plan/>.