

The CBHSQ Report

Data Spotlight

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Use of Behavioral Health Services Is Expected to Increase under the Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) will help more people get health care, including treatment for behavioral health problems such as substance abuse or mental health problems. According to the 2009 to 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), about 11 million uninsured adults aged 18 to 64 had a behavioral health issue. Only some of the people with behavioral health issues who become insured under ACA are expected to use services. Many adults with insurance coverage and behavioral health issues do not use behavioral health services.¹ Taking this into account, NSDUH data were used to estimate the number of people without insurance who are likely to use behavioral health services after they become insured under ACA.² In the next 1-2 years, an estimated additional 2 million previously uninsured people aged 18 to 64 will receive behavioral health services under ACA. Most of those who are expected to receive services under ACA will be Medicaid eligible (1.2 million), and 0.8 million will be eligible for the new health insurance exchanges.³

Under ACA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) seeks to integrate mental health and substance use care into the broader health system. Over the next few years, those newly insured under ACA will begin to receive behavioral health services. This will improve the health of the Nation and reduce the number of people seeking publicly funded treatment. For more information on SAMHSA's health care reform efforts, see <http://beta.samhsa.gov/health-reform>.

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). [Estimates of persons with health insurance coverage and substance use disorder in the past year who did not receive treatment from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health]. Unpublished data.
2. Logistic regression was used to estimate the number of newly insured persons who would use behavioral health services. The likelihood of using behavioral health services under ACA is based on predicted probabilities of behavioral health treatment use among those who currently have health insurance coverage.
3. Medicaid eligible is defined as having income less than 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Health insurance exchange eligible is defined as having income greater than or equal to 138 percent of the FPL.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2009 to 2011. The NSDUH is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The **Data Spotlight** may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.

Predicted Changes in Use of Behavioral Health Services

