

Assessment of the Capacity Virginia's Licensed Behavioral Health Workforce

Virginia Health Care Foundation
January 2022



Summary of Presentation

- There was a shortage of BH professionals in Virginia pre-COVID-19 and it is getting worse.
- The pandemic created a tsunami of demand for mental health services.
- Virginia's BH professionals are overwhelmed with no end in sight.
- There are solutions to this problem.

Virginia Ranks Poorly in Availability of Behavioral Health Services

- **38 states have more BH providers/100,000 people** than Virginia (*America's Health Rankings, 2021*).
- **Virginia ranks 39th in the U.S. for access to mental health care for adults and 41st in availability of its BH workforce** (*Mental Health America, 2021*).
- **41% of Virginians live in a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (MHPSA)**, compared to about 30% of all Americans.
- **Access to BH services is the top concern** in Community Health Needs Assessments conducted by Virginia's nonprofit hospitals.

Focus on the 5 Licensed BH Professions

- Psychiatrist (*all types*)
- Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
- Clinical Psychologist
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed Professional Counselor

Significant Portions of Virginia's BH Professionals are within 10 Years of Retirement Age

Behavioral Health Professional Type	% of Workforce Age 55+
Psychiatrist	61%*
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	39%**
Licensed Clinical Psychologist	36%
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	37%
Licensed Professional Counselor	32%

*Psychiatrist Data Source: Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) (2019).

**In 2019, 39% of Virginia's Psych NPs were age 61 or older and 60% were age 51 or older. Data Source: Healthcare Workforce Data Center, Virginia Department of Health Professions (October 2020).

LCP, LCSW and LPC Source: Profession reports, Healthcare Workforce Data Center, Virginia Department of Health Professions (2020).



Need for More Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Virginia's BH Professionals

Race/Ethnicity	Virginia	Licensed Professional Counselor	Licensed Clinical Social Worker	Licensed Clinical Psychologist
	2020 Census	2020 Virginia Department of Health Professions Reports		
White	60.3%	76%	79%	82%
Black	18.6%	16%	14%	7%
Hispanic	10.5%	4%	3%	4%
Asian	7.1%	1%	2%	4%
2+ Races	8.2%	2%	2%	2%
Other	5.8%	1%	1%	1%

Number of Virginia Localities with *NO* or ≤ 1 Licensed BH Professionals

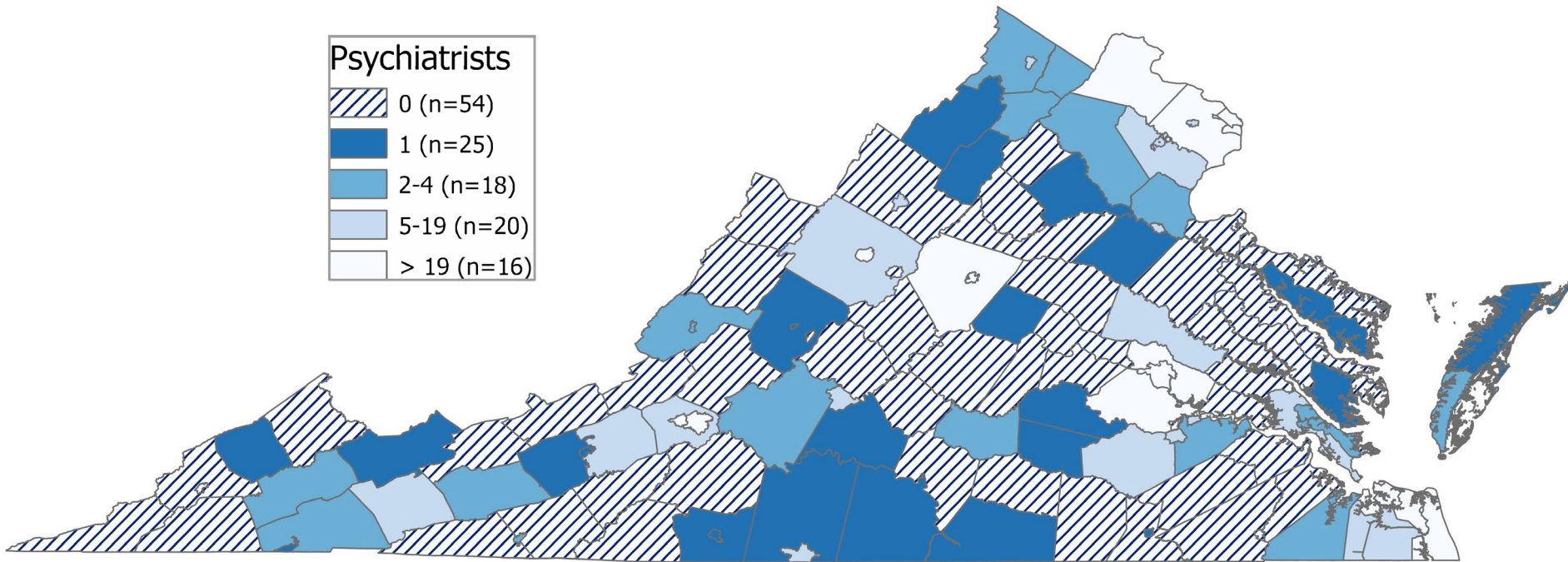
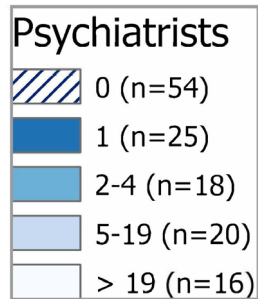
# BH Professionals/ Locality	Psychiatrists	Psych NPs	Clinical Psychologists	LCSWs	LPCs
0	54	51	33	6	3
≤ 1	25	28	15	5	13
<i>TOTAL</i>	79	79	48	11	16

Data for LCPs, LCSWs and LPCs practicing in Virginia in 2020: Healthcare Workforce Data Center, Virginia Department of Health Professions.

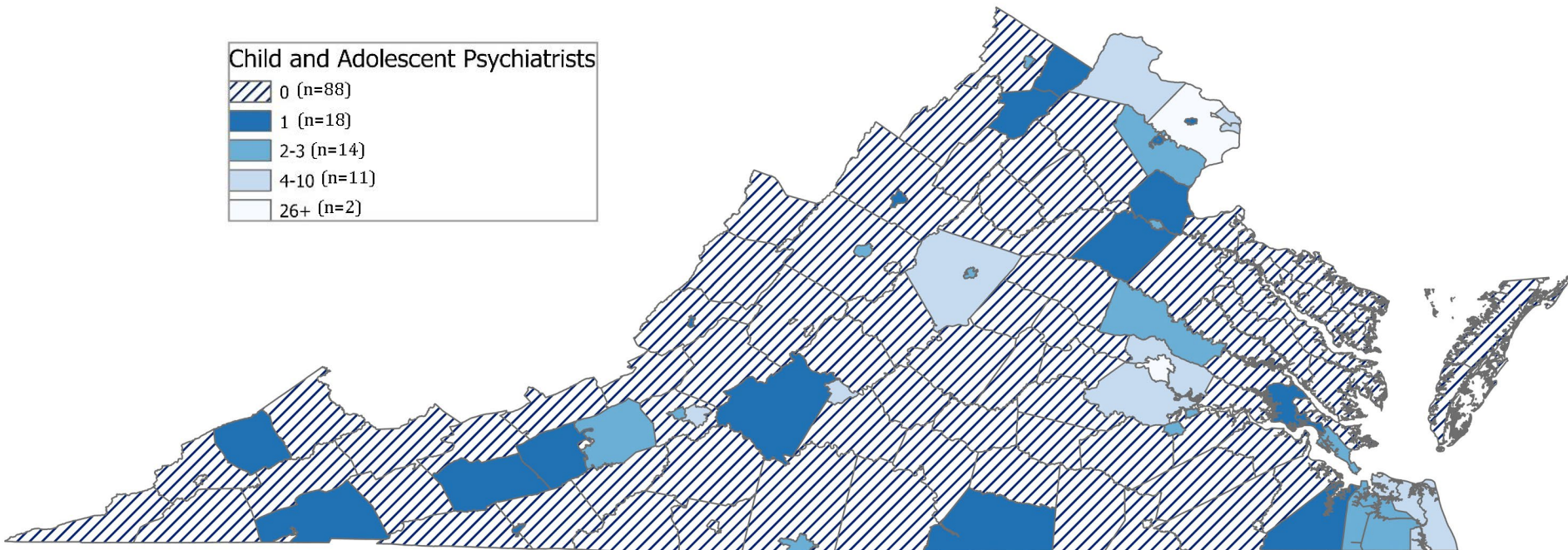
Data for Psychiatrists & Psych NPs practicing in Virginia in 2021: Healthcare Workforce Data Center, Virginia Department of Health Professions and National Provider Identifier registry (*NPI*).

Note: 35 localities have no BH prescriber (*Psychiatrist, Psych NP*). 

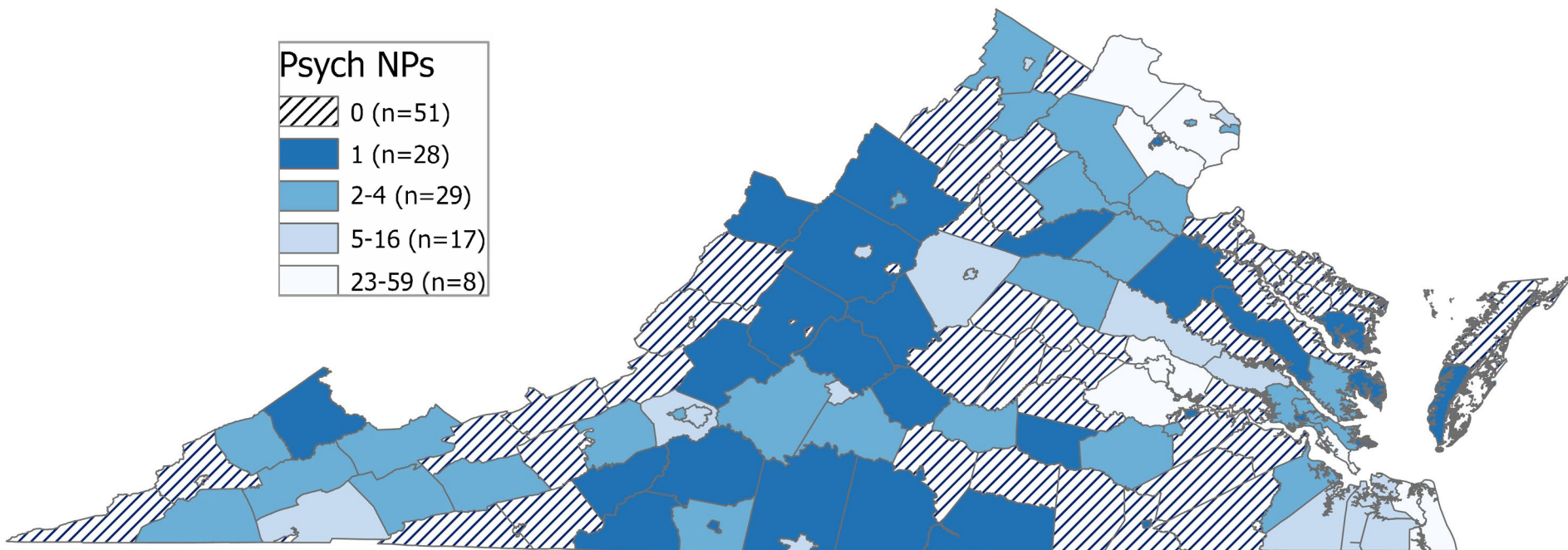
Distribution of Psychiatrists in Virginia



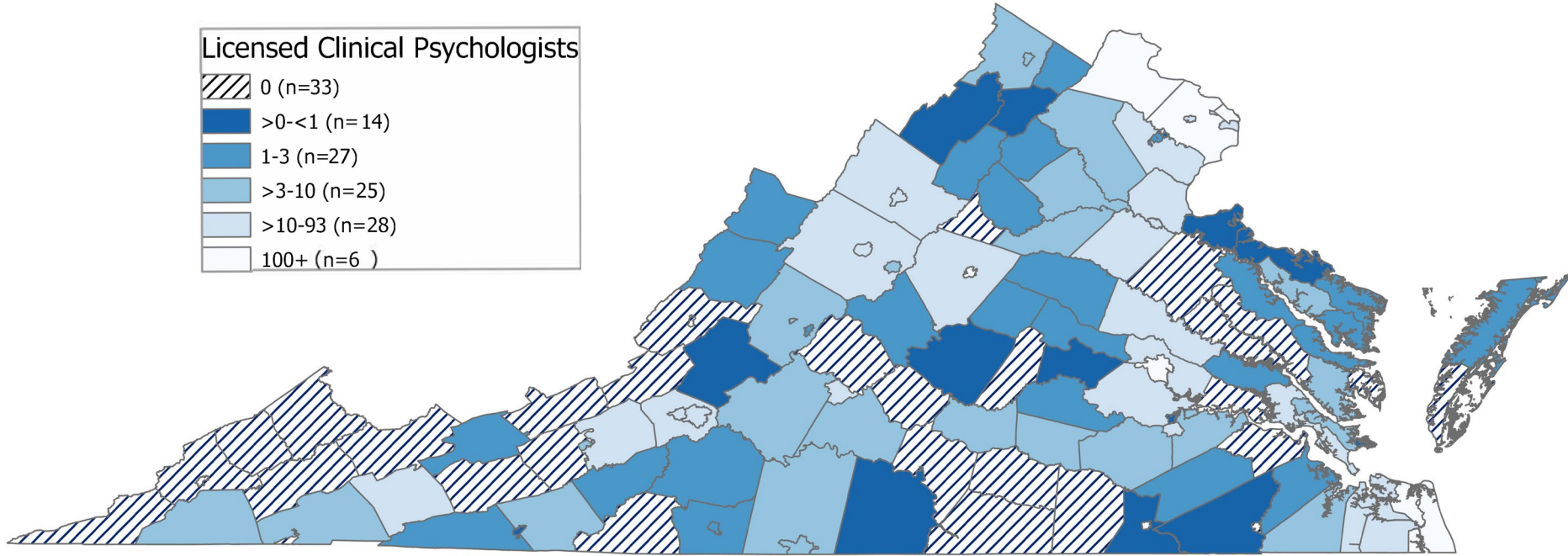
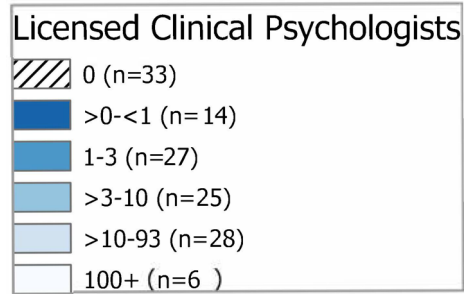
Distribution of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists in Virginia



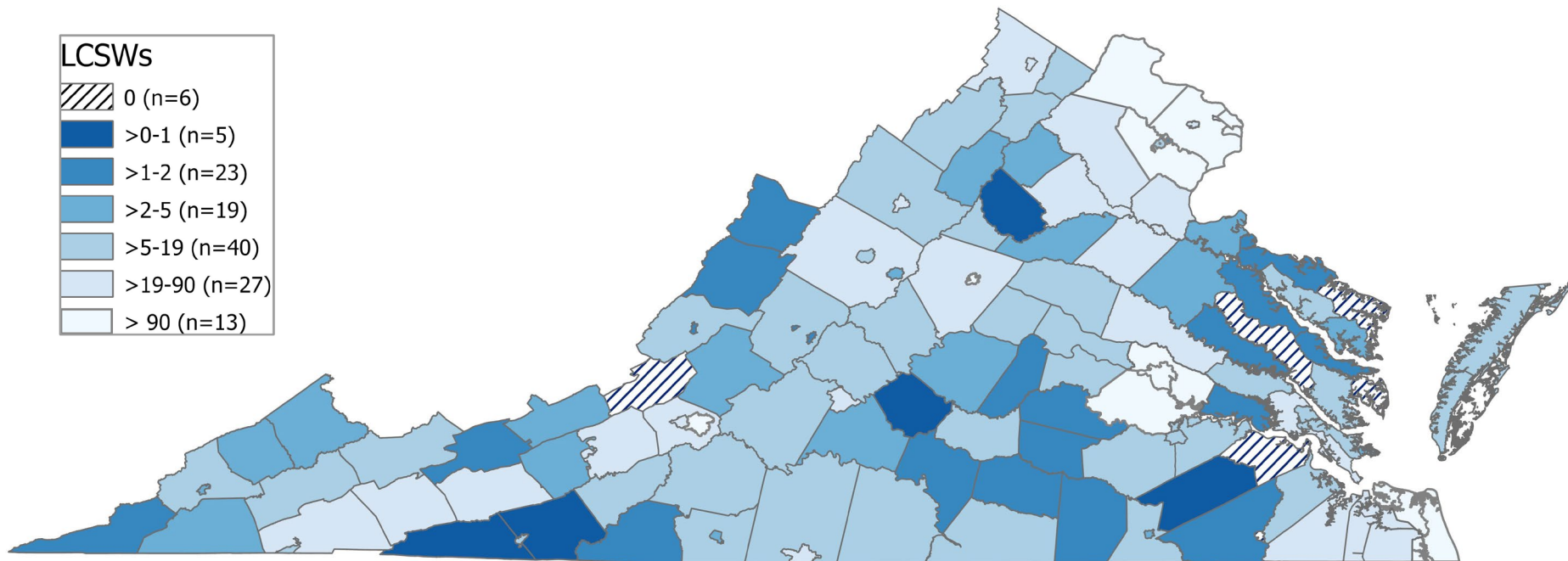
Distribution of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners in Virginia



Distribution of Licensed Clinical Psychologists (*LCPs*) in Virginia

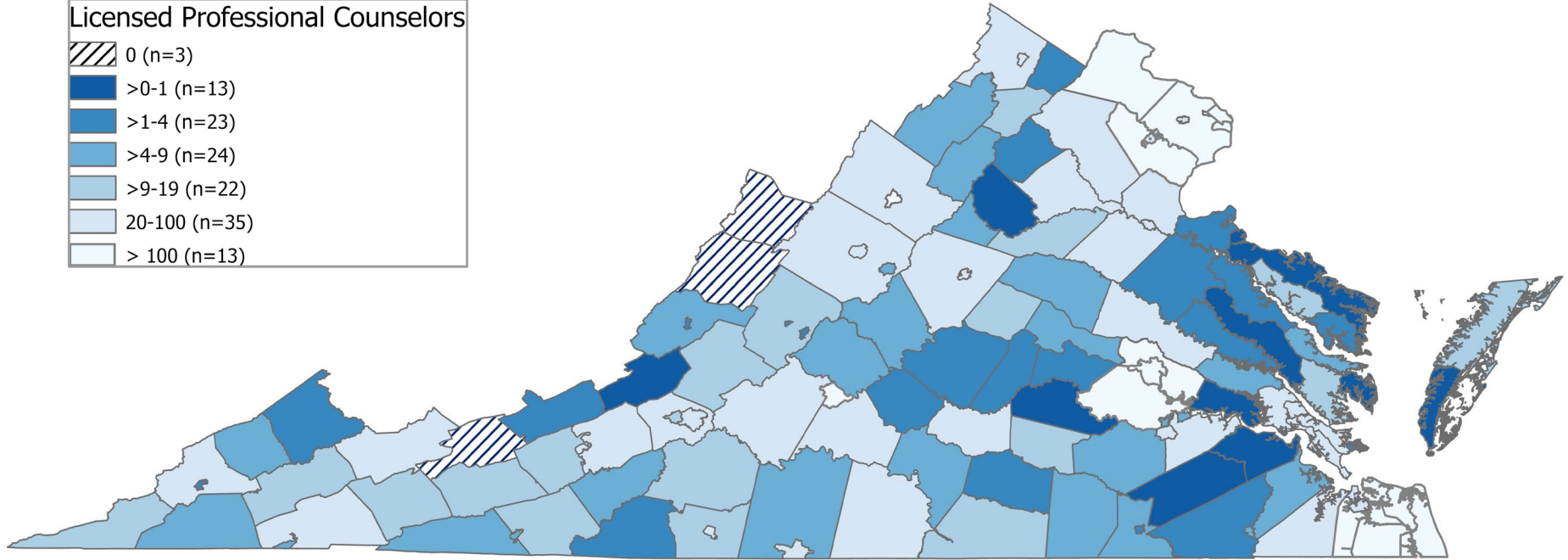
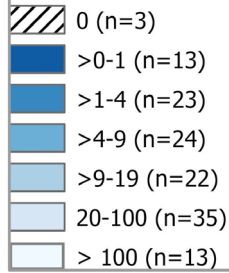


Distribution of Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs) in Virginia



Distribution of Licensed Professional Counselors (*LPCs*) in Virginia

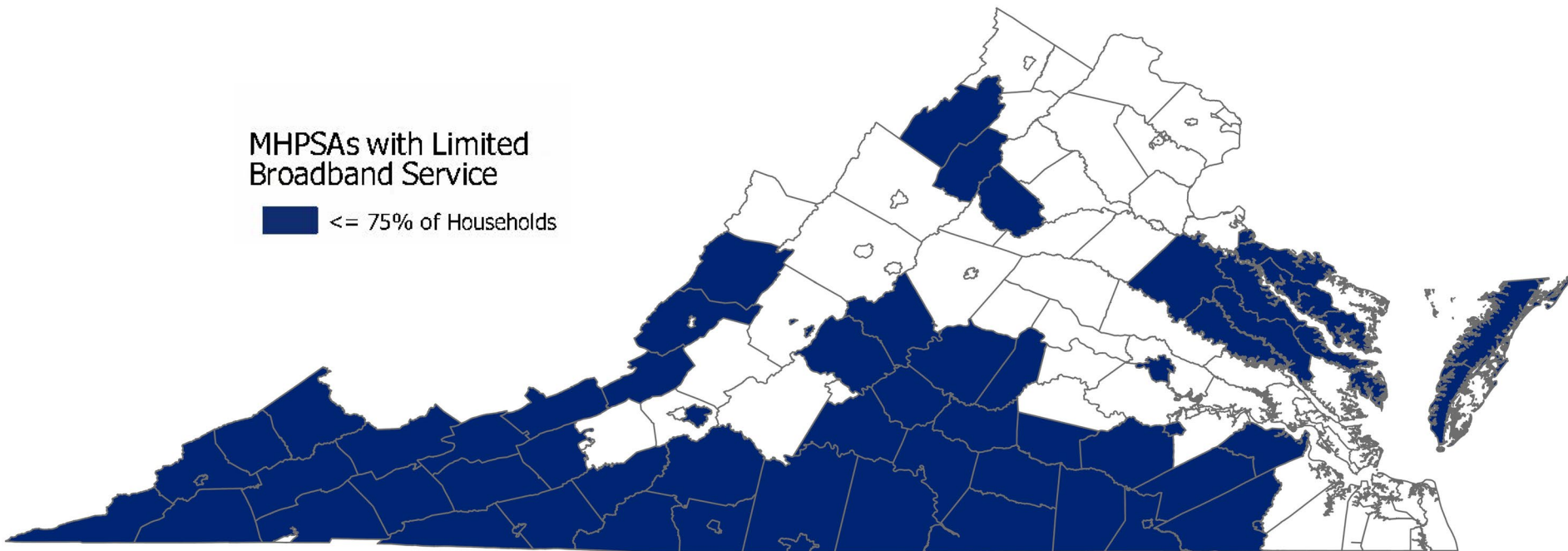
Licensed Professional Counselors



≤75% of Households in the Majority of MHPSAs Report Having Broadband Service

MHPSAs with Limited
Broadband Service

■ ≤ 75% of Households



Data Source: Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (MHPSAs), Office of Health Equity, Virginia Department of Health (August 2021). Localities where ≤75% of households have broadband internet services needed to assure ready access to BH services via telehealth (U.S. Census, 2015 - 2019).

The Lack of Local BH Professionals Has Consequences

Localities with fewer BH professionals have poorer outcomes on key BH indicators than the state as a whole:

- In all of these localities, the percent of adults reporting frequent mental distress (*14+ poor mental health days/month*) exceeds the Virginia rate of 12.5%.
- In all of these localities, the average number of adults reporting mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 days exceeds the number of days reported by Virginia adults, overall (*4 days/month*).
- In 81% of localities with ≤ 1 prescriber **and** ≤ 1 therapist, the suicide rate exceeds the state rate (*13.6/100,000 people*).

Data Sources: Data regarding poor mental health days are from the 2018 Behavioral Health Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Suicide Death Rate is from the *Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Annual Report, 2019*, Virginia Department of Health (June 2021).



BH Professional Job Postings in Virginia

BH Professional Type	# Job Postings
Psychiatrist	172
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	97
Licensed Clinical Psychologist	148
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	549
Licensed Professional Counselor	412
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1,378</i>

Data Source: Indeed.com, November 2021

Virginia BH Professional Programs and Graduates

BH Professional Program	# Virginia Schools with BH Program	# Graduates from Virginia BH Programs (2019)
Psychiatry (<i>residency</i>)	5	32
Psychiatric Mental-Health Nurse Practitioner	7	33
Clinical Psychology	10	58
Master's of Social Work	4	351
Master's of Professional Counseling	14	295
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>777</i>

Virginia's Schools Need to Produce More BH Professionals to Fill the Void of Coming Retirements

BH Professional Type	Current Virginia Workforce	Current Virginia Workforce Age 55+	<i>ESTIMATED #</i> Graduates Becoming Licensed/Yr in Virginia*
Psychiatry	1109	677 (61%)	26
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	544	212 (39%)	39
Clinical Psychology	2860	1030 (36%)	63
LCSW	6304	2333 (37%)	193
LPC	5812	1860 (32%)	202

*Estimates for LCPs, LCSWs, LPCs & Psych NPs use 5-yr averages for the number of graduates from Virginia universities *plus* licensure exam pass rates for those schools. There is no data from Old Dominion University. Its first cohort started in 2021 and there are no graduates yet. Estimates for Psychiatrists are based on the average pass rate of 80% for the national psychiatry licensure exam.



Several Opportunities Exist to Expand Virginia's BH Workforce

- Accelerate licensure of more LCSWs and LPCs by paying for required supervisory fees (*\$10,000 and \$20,000, respectively*).
- Approve Virginia's participation in Interstate Compacts for each BH profession. These authorize Virginia licensure for tele-mental health and/or reciprocity with other states participating in the Compact.
- Create more psychiatric residencies for both general psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatrists and incentivize graduating residents to practice in Virginia.
- Make recruitment, production and retention of more BH professionals in Virginia a state policy priority.