

Mental Health Disparities in Rural Communities

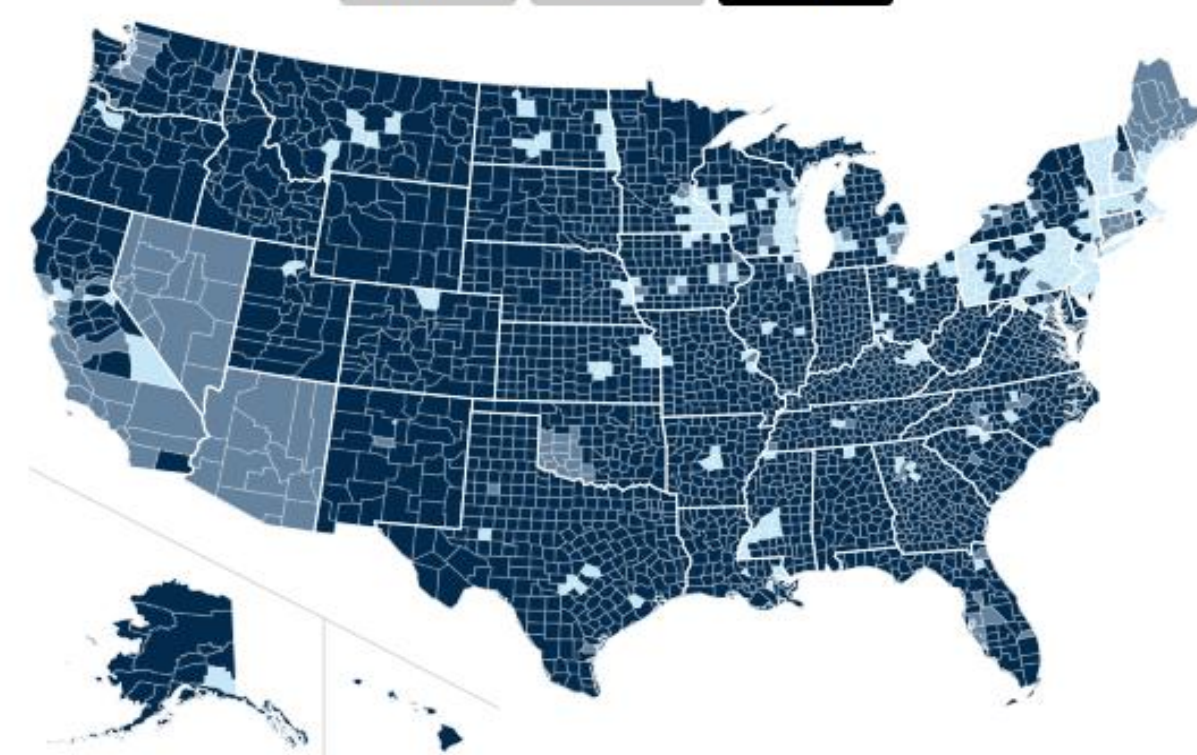
Ashley Augustine, Marisa Ascencio, Mary Howk

Method

- Literature Review
- Databases Used: PsychINFO, Google Scholar, InfoHawk+
- Key Terms: Rural AND Mental Health OR Severe Mental Health, Rural Mental Health AND Stigma OR outcomes, Rural Mental Health Disparities
- Supporting information was retrieved from the 2020 Census data, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and Rural Health Information Hub (RHIfhub)

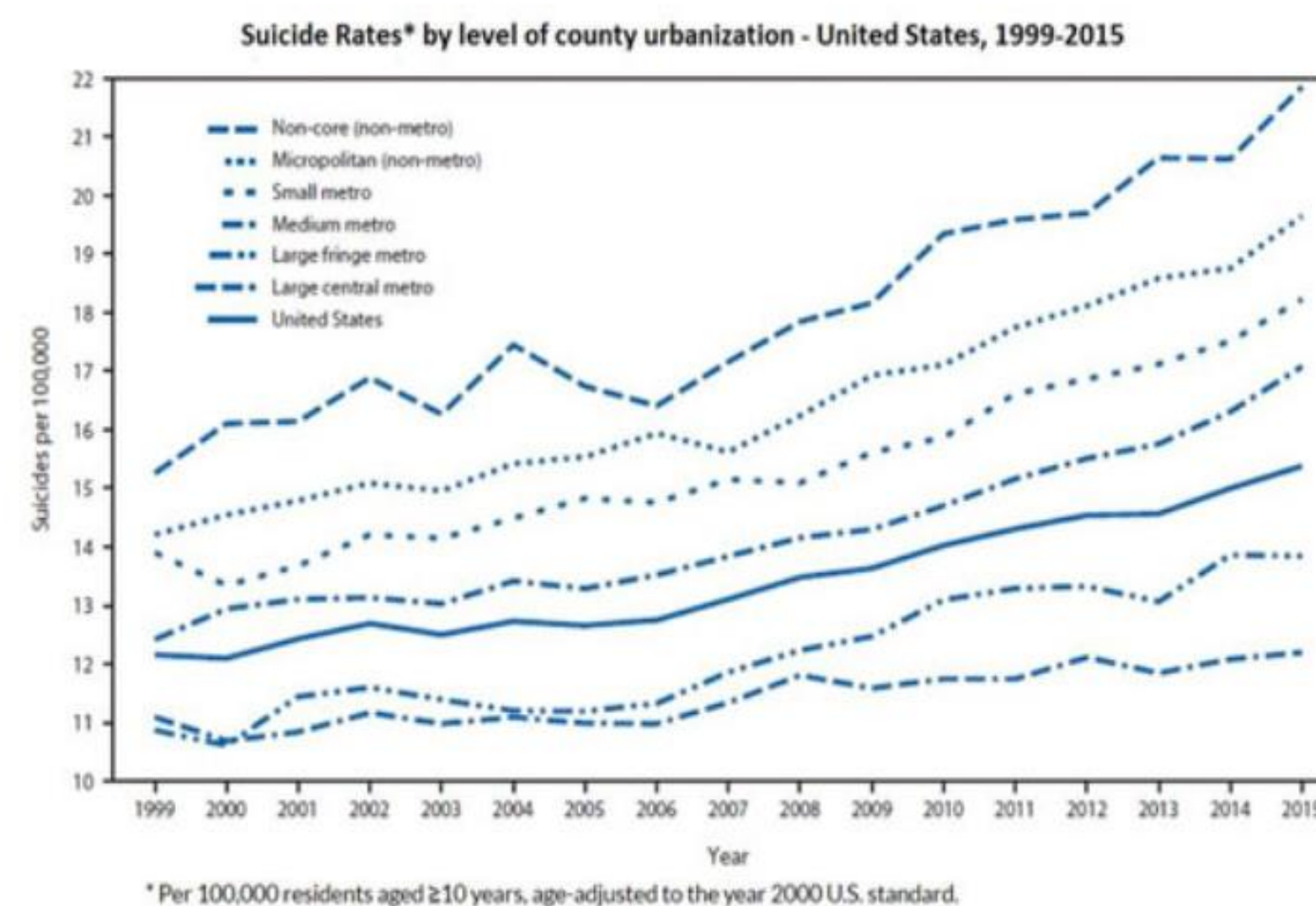
Objectives

- Highlight health disparities in rural areas that individuals with mental health issues face.
- Investigate current challenges rural communities face when dealing with mental health issues.
- Discuss current interventions rural communities are implementing to help individuals with mental health issues.



Background Information

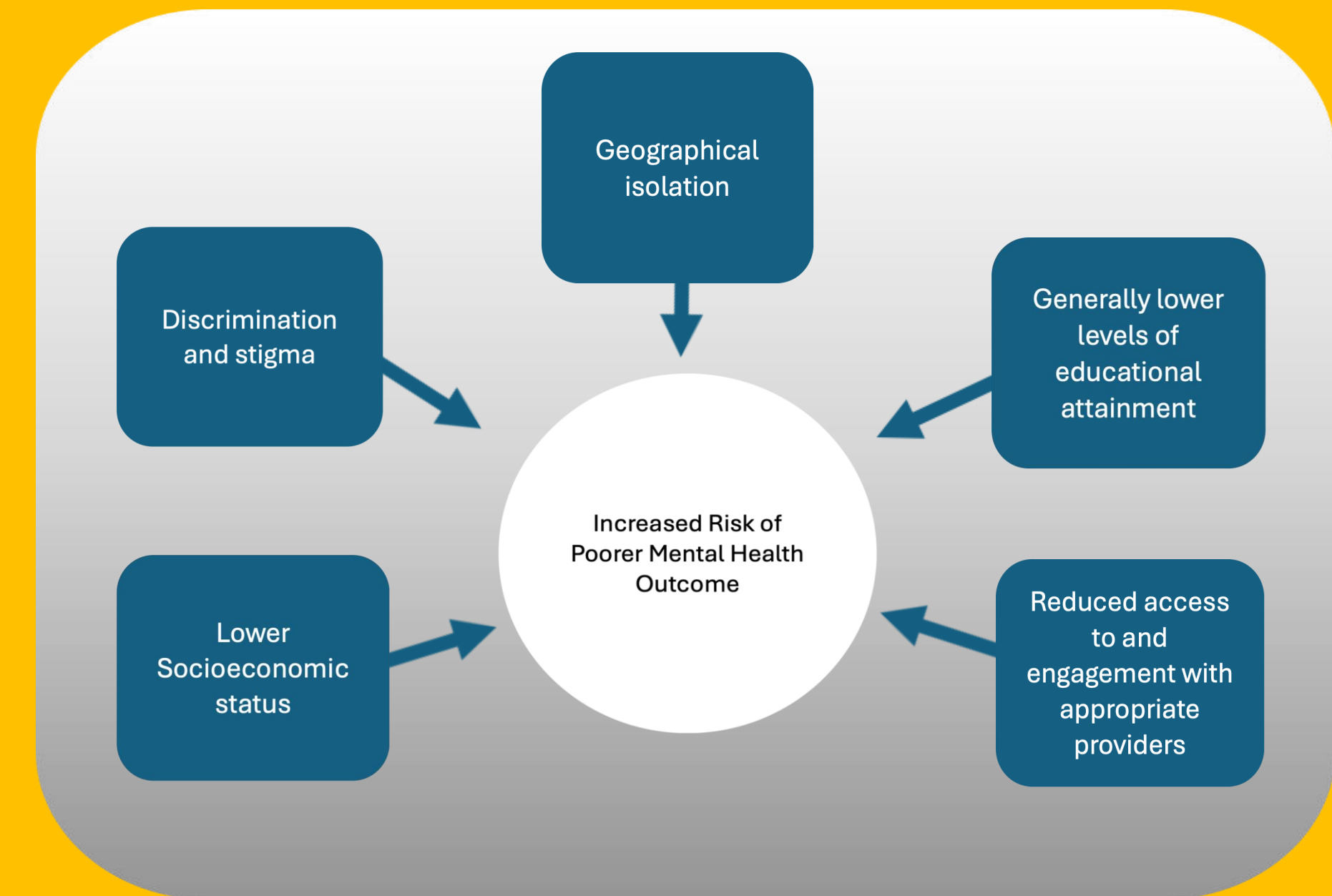
- A serious mental health disorder includes a diagnosis of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depressive disorder. It can also include other mental disorders if there is a high level of functional impairment.
- 1 in 25 adults live with a serious mental health disorder (NAMI, 2023)
- 7.7 million people living in rural communities have a mental health condition (Rural Mental Health, 2024)
- Suicide rates are much higher in rural communities when compared to urban communities. 18.9 vs. 13.2 (per 100,000) (Rural Mental Health Hub, 2024).



References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, April 25).
- National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2023, April).
- Rural Mental Health Hub. (2024, January 30).

Additional references available upon request



Summary of Findings

Current Challenges

- Reliance on generalists for specialty care – increased misdiagnosis for common mental health disorders as high as a 66-98% misdiagnosis rate (Yom-Tov et. al., 2022)
- Extreme provider shortages, specifically for Psychiatrists - 96% of counties in the US have a shortage and ¾ have a "severe" shortage – linked to lack of reimbursement and under/uninsured populations (Thomas et. al., 2022).
- Hospital closures due to lack of financial solvency – 136 closures in 2010-2021 (reports show another 414 hospitals vulnerable to closures in rural areas) (AHA, 2022).

Current Interventions

- Increase in first year residency positions for physicians to train in psychiatry (AMA, 2015)
- Implementation of telemedicine to increase access of psychiatric services (Di Carlo et. al., 2020)
- Integration of collaborative care models to educate primary care physicians on treatment of common mental health illnesses (Olfson, 2016).