

Missed Opportunities: Up to 9 in 10 Women Eligible for Public Health Services in California Have Unmet Mental Health Needs

Women with **mild and moderate mental health distress** who qualify for **public health insurance** have high levels of need for – but the least access to – **mental health services**. This **unmet need** puts women of color at risk of progressing into more serious distress, according to a new study by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Levels of distress and need for mental health services vary within this group by **race, citizenship, language, and more**.



Which women are most likely to qualify for public health coverage?

Non-U.S. citizens

Nearly **3x** higher rate than U.S. citizens

Women of color

Nearly **4x** higher rate than non-Latino white women

Women with less than a high school education

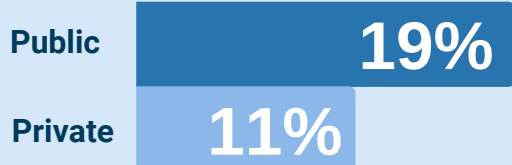
Nearly **4x** higher rate than women with a graduate degree

Single women with children

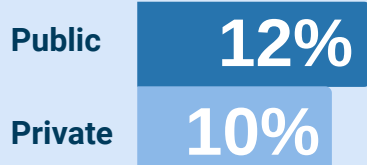
Nearly **6x** higher rate than women who are married without children

Women who are eligible for public insurance have higher rates of mental health distress compared to those with private insurance

Serious psychological distress (SPD)



Moderate psychological distress (MPD)



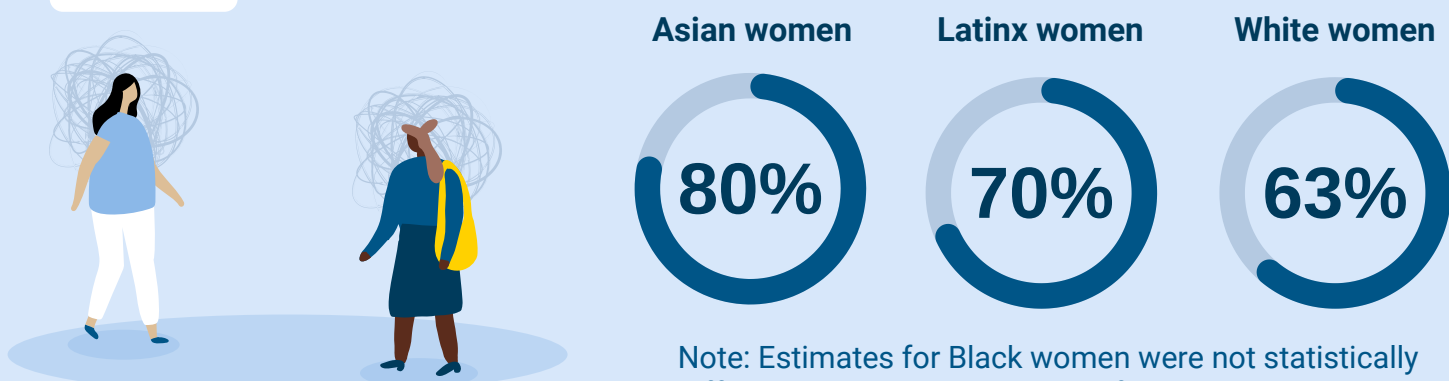
Proportion of women eligible for public insurance who have unmet need by level of distress



Unmet need for mental health services by women with MPD who are eligible for public insurance

The following data are focused on women with MPD. Without intervention, they are most at risk for progressing into the SPD level.

By race

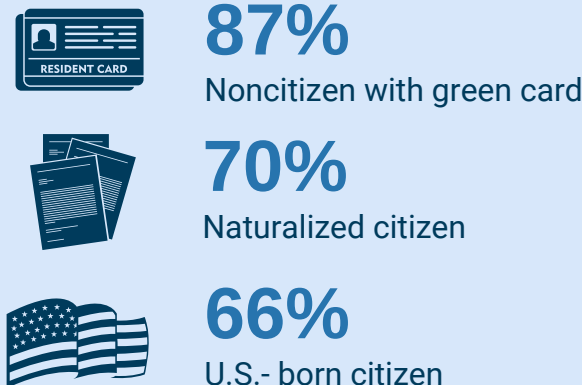


Note: Estimates for Black women were not statistically different compared with those of white women.

By language



By citizenship



Policy Recommendations

- Implement the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service Standards in all mental health care settings.
- Increase mental health screening and awareness in multiple settings.
- Reduce socioeconomic inequities.

Read the policy brief: <https://ucla.in/3DdcyUN>



california health interview survey



healthpolicy.ucla.edu