



# Accessibility of Mental Health Services in Hawaii

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## Abstract

The purpose is to analyze the availability of mental health services in the state of Hawaii in order to determine if there is adequate access/resources for the population. So, this brings about my research question, is there adequate accessibility to mental health services? The research methods that I used to design this study was quantitative and correlational types of research. After conducting the surveys and interview and analyzing the data collected, I found out that the outcomes were as follows: A lack of accessibility to mental health services exist due to reasons such as expenses, major gaps in the professional field and unprecedented crisis.

## Research Design & Data Collection

The methods that I used to design this research study was quantitative, which is, the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that the studied observations reflect. The specific data collection that I used to utilize this method was surveys. The net method that I used to design this research study was correlational, which is, non-experimental research method which studies the relationship between two variables with the help of statistical analysis. The specific data collection that I used to utilize this method was interviewing a mental health professional.



Taken from <https://elitecarehouston.com/may-is-mental-health-month/>

## Introduction & Research Question

Mental health is the psychological, emotional and well-being and it affects how we think, feel and act. The contributing factors included biological factors (chemicals, genetics), external factors (experiences, environment), and internal factors (self-esteem, and confidence). If you have a negative state of mental well-being, it can lead to developing serious mental health issues. Some of the early warning signs of mental health problems include, excessive/under eating or sleeping, increased irritability, uptick in use of substances (drugs, alcohol, smoking), low or no energy, distancing from families, friends, normal activities, hearing voices or thoughts that are not true, mood swings and the inability to perform everyday tasks.

### Research Question

Is there a lack of accesibilit8y of mental health services?

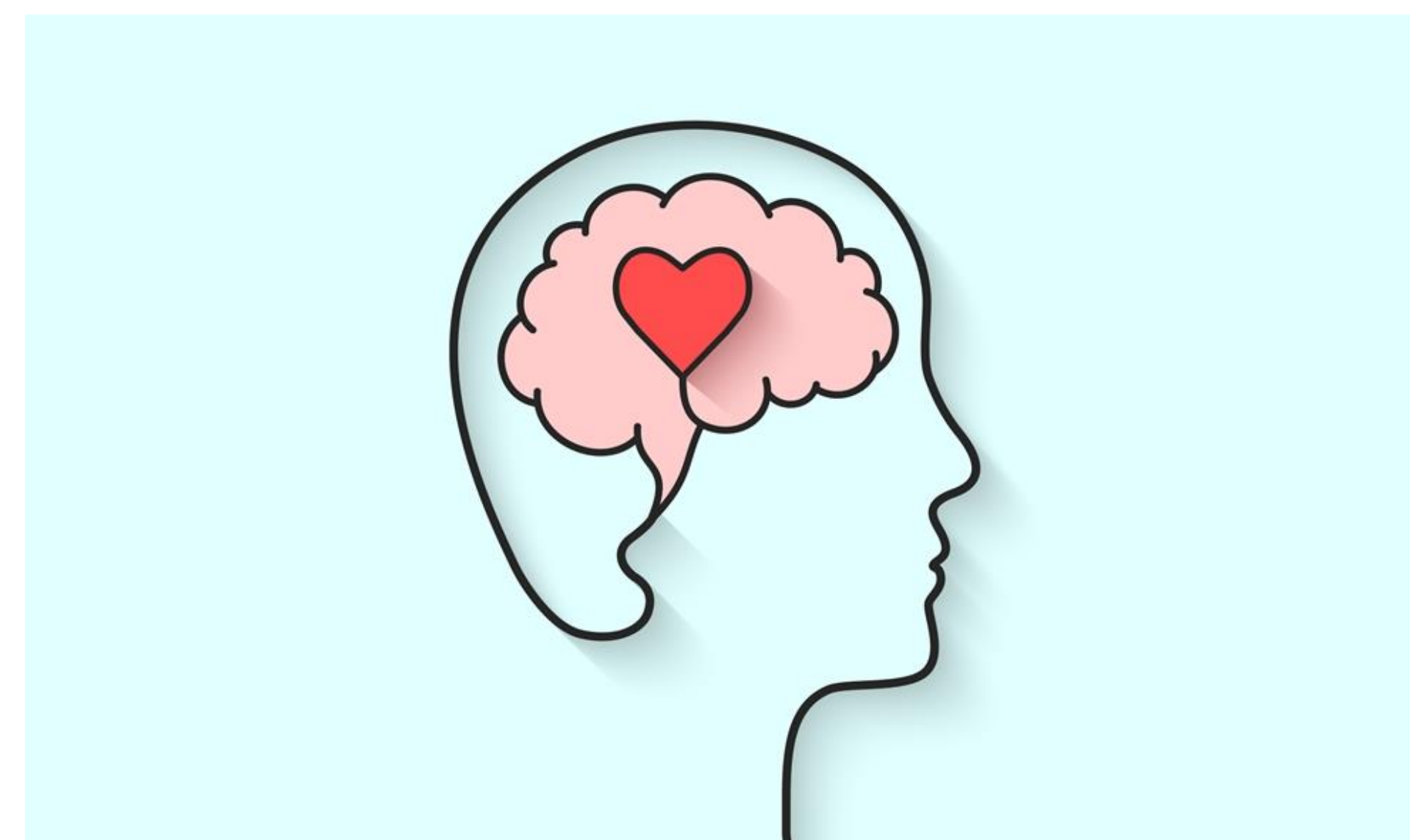
### Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that there will be a lack of availability due to people cannot afford the services and there is not enough professionals in the field to meet the demand.

## Results

After distributing the survey amongst all eligible candidates (Hawaii Residents attending University of Hawaii), the following results were what I found applicable to this research study. The first question that I presented on the survey was "Do you have health insurance?", out of the 22 responses that I got, 15 responded that they have health insurance and 7 responded that they were uninsured. The next question that I presented was "Does your insurance cover mental health services?", out of the 22 responses, 9 responded with yes, 5 responded with no and 8 responded that they were unsure or not applicable. The third question that I presented was "If you do not have insurance, are you able to afford mental health services?", out of the 22 that responded, 6 answered yes or probably, 8 answered no and 8 answered unsure. The last question that I presented was "Has obtaining appointments for mental health services become harder after the start of COVID 19?", out of the 22 that responded, 14 answered yes, 2 responded no and 6 responded not applicable or unsure.

After I conducted the survey, I interviewed a practicing psychologist who said that there has been a shortage of mental health professionals for a while and that the burnout, and the heavy nature of the field is why professionals is stopping or leaving their practice. She also said that COVID-19 has produced an exponential amount of strain on the mental health service sector.



Taken from <https://www.memotext.com/the-adoption-of-digital-mental-health-interventions/>

## Discussion

After the limited research I was able to conduct in this activity, I found that much of my hypothesis seemed to be true. The data and results show that Hawaii indeed (as well as other states/countries as well) lacks practical accessibility to mental health related services. Whether it is due to expenses, lack of insurance coverage, not enough availability o meet the increasing demand due to the COVID 19 pandemic (as well as even prior). Steps need to be taken in order to provided mental health services to all those who need it. Receiving the proper care for your mental health and well-being should not be determined upon your financial status, nor should receiving an appointment be equivalent to "winning the lottery." Further advocacy for eradicating the stigma surrounding receiving help for mental health, as well as encouraging others to get involved with the professional field in order to bridge the gap between demand and service should continue. Additionally, creating mental health funds on a state or federal level could help provide services for those who may not be able to afford it.

## Conclusions

After researching and conducting surveys and an interview, I found out that mental health services are not as accessible to the community as they should be. One of the reason is because insurance does not always cover such services, which can lead to individuals not getting the proper help they need, due to inability to pay out of pocket. Another reason that I found was that mental health professionals (such as psychologists) are dwindling due to much internalized factors. The last reason is that because there is a lack of mental health professionals and a rise in service demand (particularly during crisis like COVID 19), there are backed up appointments, strain on the system and an overall lack of vital accessibility.