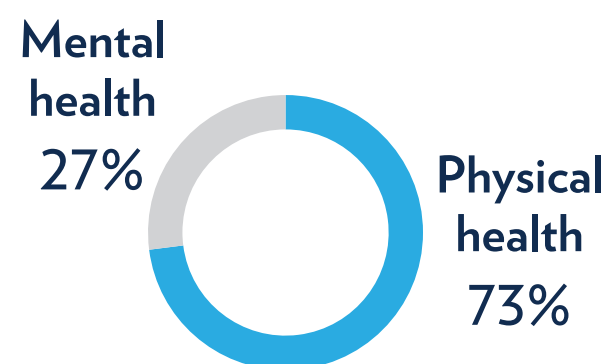


CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS IN MEDICAID: HEALTH CARE USE AND SPENDING

One in five U.S. children has a mental health condition, but little is known about their health care use and spending. The authors looked at 2016 Medicaid claims for approximately 775,000 children (ages 3-17) with a mental health diagnosis and at least 11 months of continuous Medicaid coverage. They compared utilization and spending of “top spenders” (patients who spent the most overall on health care, or the top 1%) and “typical spenders” (patients with more usual spending, the remaining 99%).

TOP SPENDERS

\$164,003
per member, per year

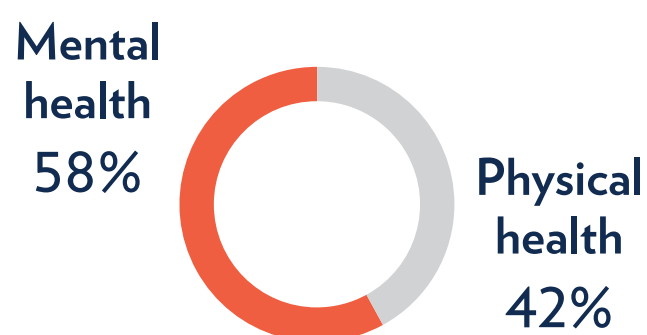


36% Inpatient general hospitalizations

14% Ambulatory mental health services

TYPICAL SPENDERS

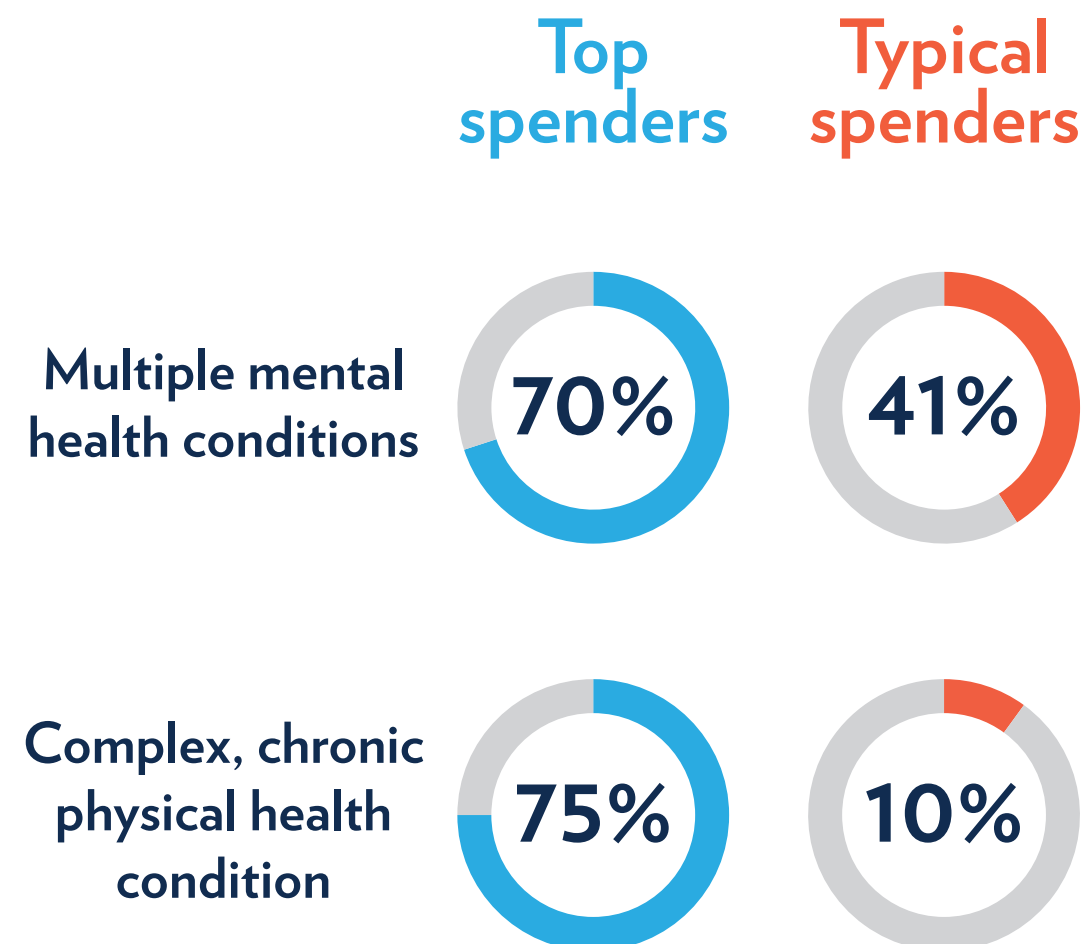
\$6,907
per member, per year



37% Ambulatory mental health services

17% Mental health pharmacy services

CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS



In 2016, 55% of all Medicaid spending for patients ages 3-17 (\$5.3 billion) was for children with mental health conditions. Having a complex, chronic physical health condition was the strongest predictor of high spending. Addressing co-occurring physical and mental health needs is critical to controlling costs and improving quality of care for these patients. Future work should examine strategies to integrate mental and physical health care for children with mental health conditions, such as developing an interdisciplinary workforce.