hpio health policy institute of ohio

HPIO IMPACT

January **2025**

A quarterly update for supporters of the Health Policy Institute of Ohio

HPIO releases first in series of briefs on addressing child mental health in Ohio

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio recently released a new data brief titled **Mental Health Conditions among Ohio Children and Youth**.

In recent years, rates of mental health conditions have increased among Ohio children and youth. In 2023, a fifth (20%) of middle school students and a third (33%) of high school students in Ohio reported that their mental health was not good most or all of the time.

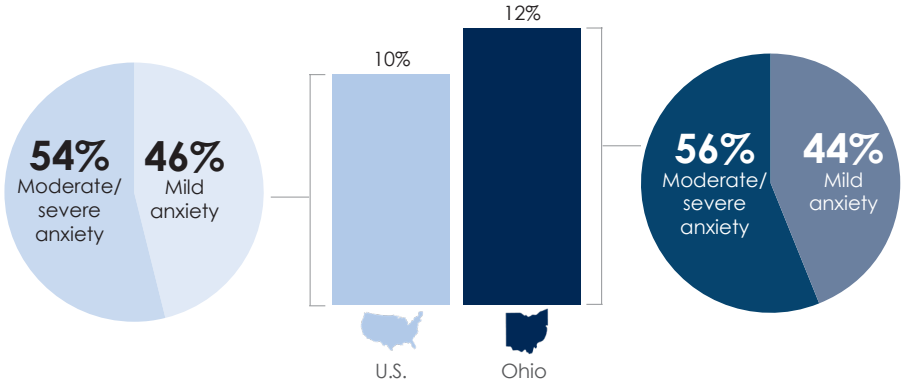
New data included in the brief shows that, similar to children across the U.S., more children in Ohio have moderate or severe anxiety as opposed to mild anxiety, as illustrated to the right.

Childhood mental health conditions are associated with an increased risk of chronic physical health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease), continuing mental health problems and worse employment outcomes in adulthood.

Ohio children more likely to have moderate, severe anxiety, data shows

Anxiety, Ohio and U.S., 2021-2022

Children in Ohio with anxiety were slightly more likely to have moderate or severe anxiety than children around the country.



Note: The source does not specify if anxiety refers specifically to generalized anxiety disorder or anxiety as a symptom. Please refer to the source for more information.
Source: HPIO data brief "Mental health conditions among Ohio children and youth." Data from National Survey of Children's Health

The brief states, "Understanding this data, and engaging children, youth and their parents and caregivers, can lay the foundation for action and policy change."

This brief is the first in a series of four planned by HPIO on child and youth mental health that will be released over the next two years.

Future briefs will address:

- **Brief 2:** Drivers of child and youth mental health challenges
- **Brief 3:** Access to child and youth mental health care services
- **Brief 4:** The influences of cost and health insurance on child and youth mental health care access

Groundwork Ohio partners again with HPIO on child dashboard

Groundwork Ohio, a statewide public policy research and advocacy organization that champions high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age five, will soon be releasing its latest Early Childhood Dashboard.

Groundwork Ohio contracted with HPIO to partner on the creation of of the Dashboard, which is a comprehensive snapshot of Ohio's performance on key metrics related to young child health and well-being. The Dashboard puts data in context by analyzing trends across years, comparing Ohio to the U.S. and highlighting disparities and inequities.

Groundwork also contracted with HPIO in 2023 for the **inaugural edition of its Dashboard**.

The second edition of Groundwork's Dashboard was developed in partnership with early childhood experts, families, community organizations, providers, and other early childhood stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels.

HPIO publications spotlight links between economic conditions and health

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio released two publications last year that explore how economic conditions can impact health.

In October, HPIO released a fact sheet titled **Uplifting Community Voices: Employment and Maternal and Child Health**.

The fact sheet highlights employment policies that support maternal and infant health, using the city of Cincinnati as a case study.

Policies outlined in the brief are important because they empower individuals and parents, enhance job opportunities and have been demonstrated to improve birth outcomes.

"Employment can support health and reduce infant mortality when it provides access to a living wage, resources and benefits such as health insurance and paid leave," the report states. "On the other hand, research indicates that unemployment during pregnancy is linked to lower birth weights and higher infant mortality rates."

The fact sheet followed the release of an HPIO policy brief titled **Creating a Financially Prosperous Ohio: Strategies to Improve Family Financial Security**.

The brief found that when Ohioans live in communities that support their health and economic well-being, their families thrive. However, many families are struggling to pay their rent, put food on their tables, cover their healthcare expenses and save for the future.

"When Ohioans live in communities that support their health and economic well-being, their families thrive. However, many families are struggling to pay their rent, put food on their tables, cover their healthcare expenses and save for the future."

— HPIO policy brief "Creating a Financially Prosperous Ohio: Strategies to Improve Family Financial Security"

Financial insecurity can negatively impact a variety of health and well-being outcomes across generations, including exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood). This can negatively affect children's long-term mental, physical and financial health.

Still, Ohioans are resilient, and Ohio leaders can create environments and opportunities that allow every family to thrive. This brief includes:

- Data and information on how financial insecurity affects families' health, well-being and ACEs exposure
- Perspectives from participants in an evidence-based program that supports financial security
- Data and information on the factors contributing to financial security
- Strategies for how public and private partners can support financial prosperity and prevent childhood adversity

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