



Children's Hospital of Colorado
Pediatric Mental Health Institute



Department of Psychiatry

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**



Behavioral Telehealth Visits in Colorado Pre and Post COVID-19 Pandemic

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Telehealth

- Telehealth is a form of health services that allow patients to connect with professionals regardless of distance
- It was not widely spread before the pandemic because of federal policies surrounding interstate licensure, prescriptions, reimbursements of doctors, and privacy (Shaver, 2022).
- Prior to the pandemic, telehealth accounted for less than 1% of all outpatient visits but at the peak, it represented nearly 13% (Lo et al., 2022).
- In Colorado, mental health visits were the highest, amassing 31% of all telehealth visits. (CIVHC APCD)

Objective

Identify the effects of increased telehealth usage on rural and urban counties in Colorado to identify areas of high need and resource shortages.

Rural vs Urban?

Rural areas are defined as having less than 500 people per square mile or places with less than 2,500 people.

- U.S. Census Bureau



Research Question

How did the increased usage of telehealth affect rural communities in Colorado?

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Hypothesis

There will be a greater per capita increase of telehealth visits for rural communities compared to urban areas.

Datasets

CIVHC APCD

December 2017 - July 2020

*Includes: payer, provider types,
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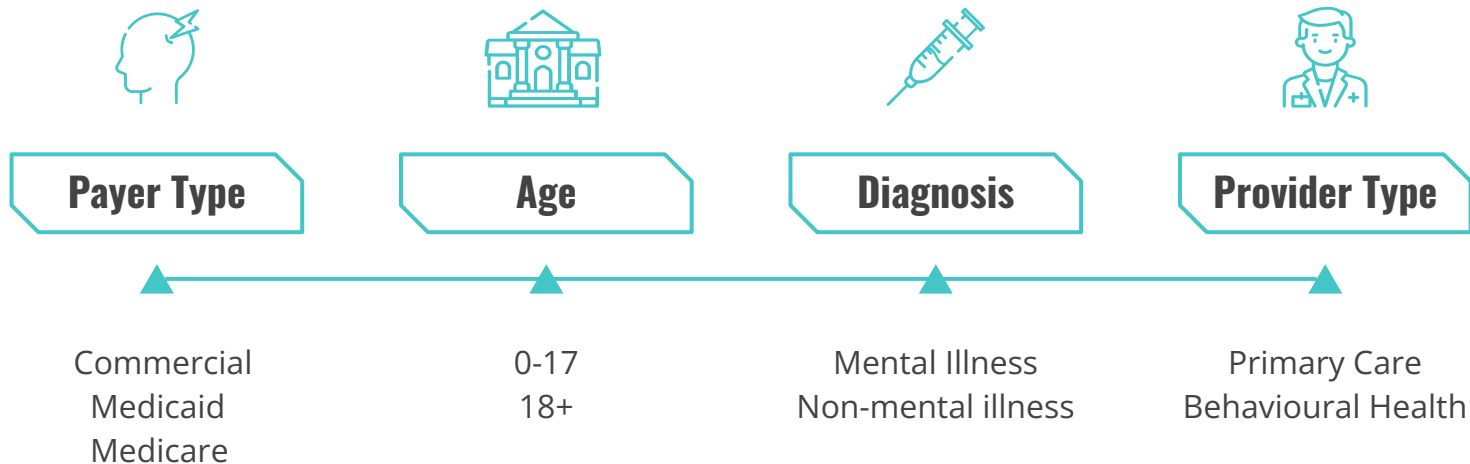
CDPHE

2019

Includes: types of behavioural health providers, and geographic locations.

*Taken from surveys

Quantitative Methods



Qualitative Methods

Interviews

- Conducted with two licensed professional counselors to learn more about personal experiences with telehealth.

Results

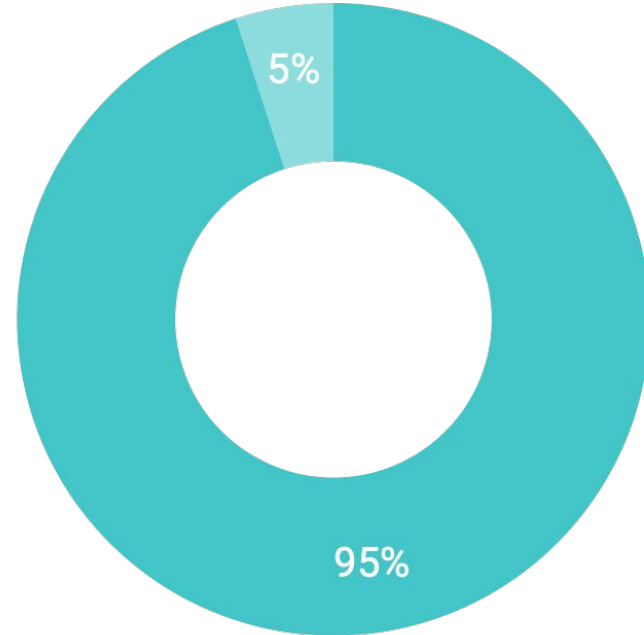
292,287

Total number of **urban** mental health telehealth visits



14,708

Total number of **rural** mental health telehealth visits



● Urban ● Rural

Results

6,223

Per capita number of **urban** mental health telehealth visits

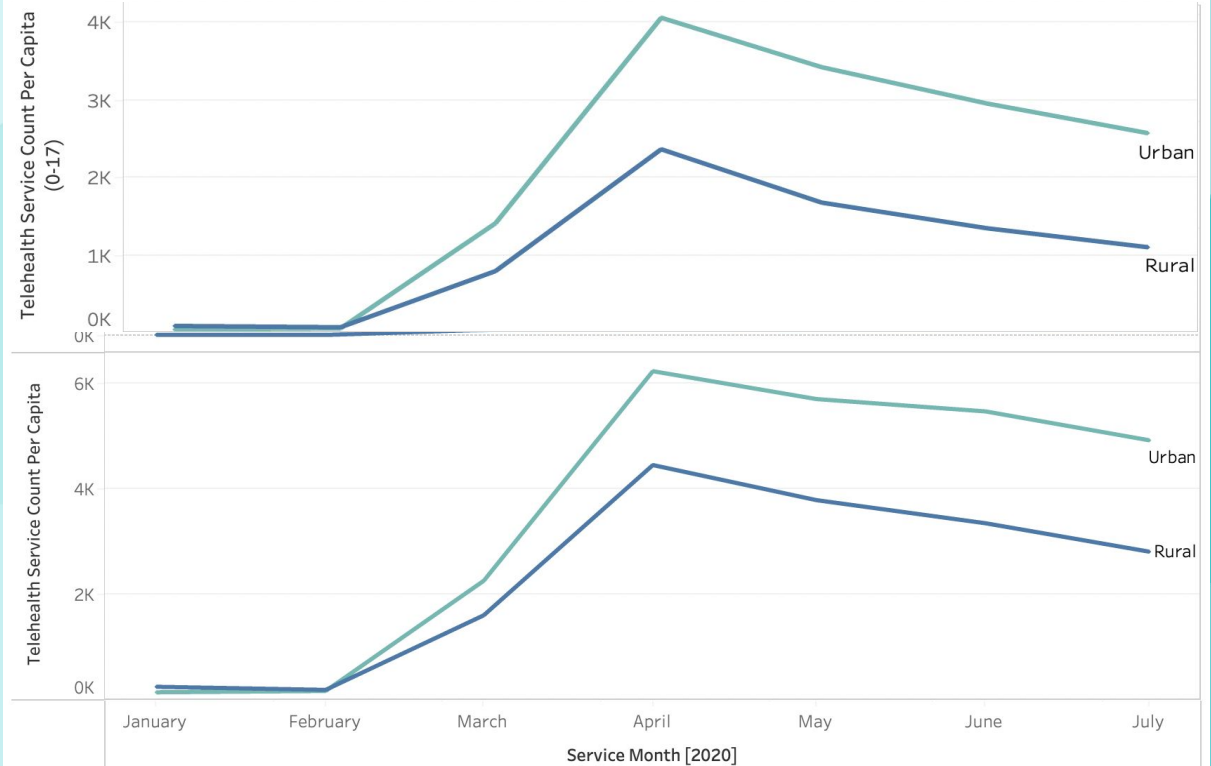


4,446

Per capita number of **rural** mental health telehealth visits



Telehealth Services (Urban vs Rural)



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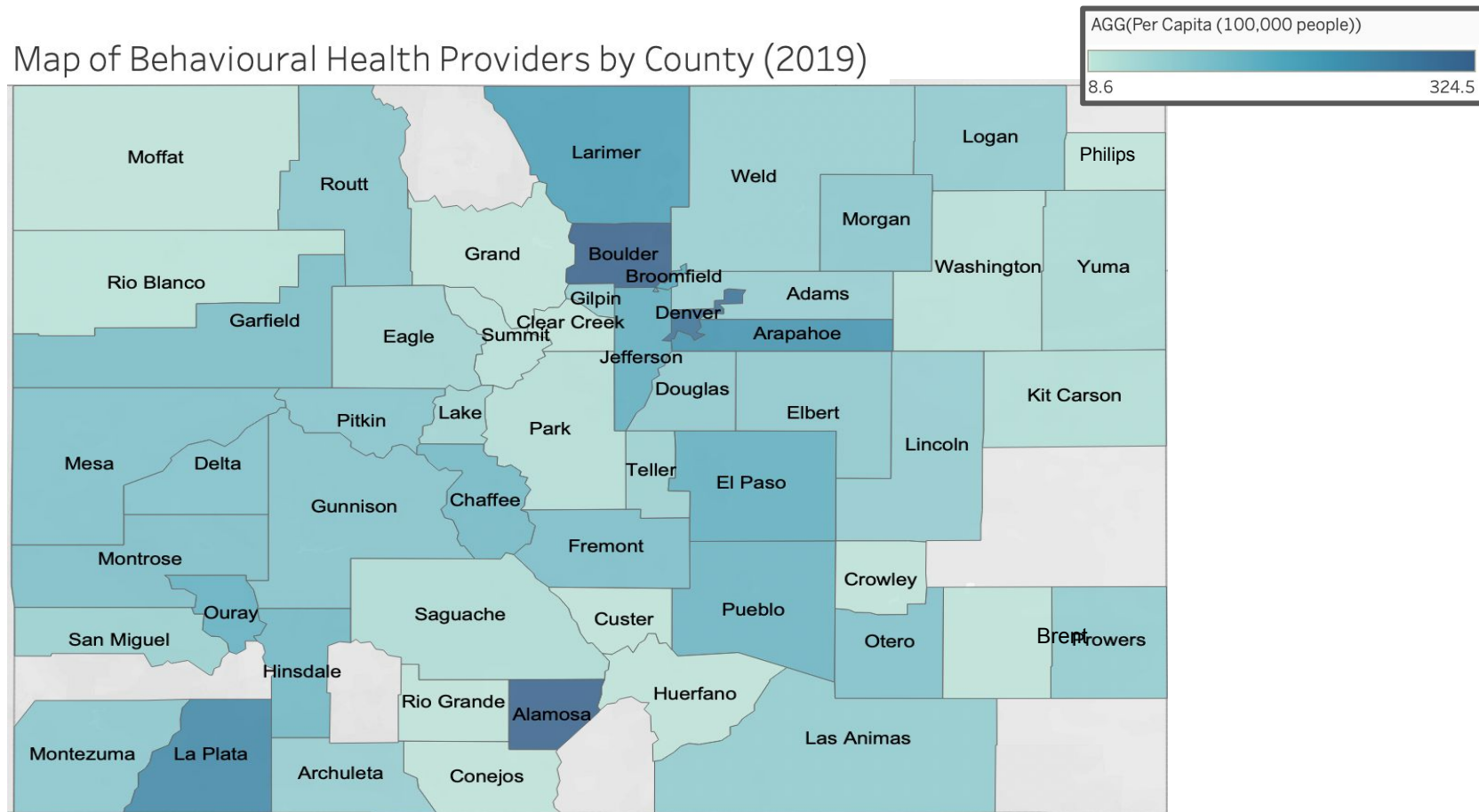
“Chronic health issues are best treated by telehealth because it takes longer to build rapport.

— **Participant 1**

A large, white, stylized closing quotation mark.

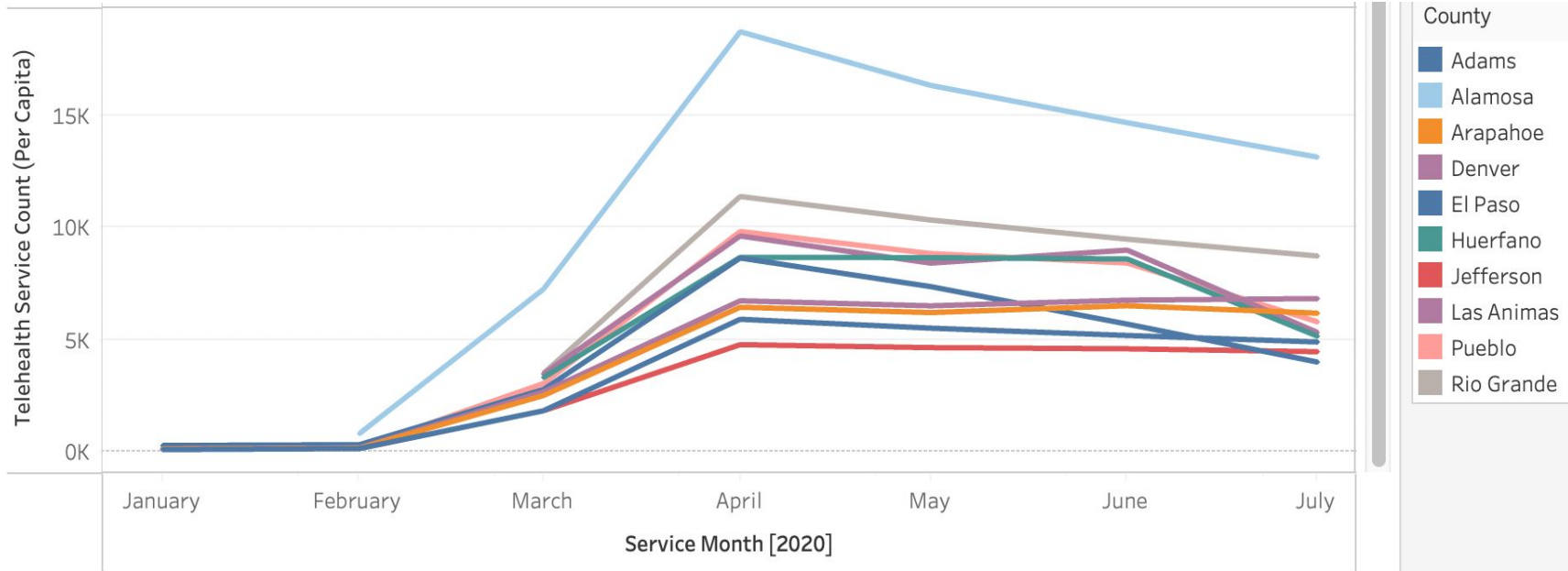
Results

Map of Behavioural Health Providers by County (2019)



Results

Top 10 Counties with Highest Telehealth Services (Per Capita)



“

“While most clinical services can be conducted normally, play therapy can’t be effectively conducted through telehealth.”

— Participant 2

”

Discussion

- While the number of rural services did not increase as much as urban services, they increased significantly in proportion to population
- Important takeaways from qualitative interviews:
 - Telehealth is still beneficial post pandemic
 - The main barriers to telehealth are still there
 - Adolescents and older benefit more from telehealth services than young children

Limitations



All Payer Claims Data

Does not include out of pocket payers



Limited Timeline

Little data, didn't capture whole pandemic



Number of Interviewees

Only 2 behavioural health providers due to time constraints

Future Directions

Repeated Visits



Ethnic Backgrounds

Outpatient Referrals



Specific Diagnosis

Acknowledgements

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Participant 1: Tripti Sharma, LPC

Participant 2: Stephanie DeJesus Ayala, MS, LPCC

References

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THANKS!

Questions?