

Four in 10 children's behavioral care facilities offer autism services

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(HealthDay)—Fewer than half of U.S. mental health treatment facilities

providing care for children offer services for autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to a report published in the June issue of *Health Affairs*.

Jonathan Cantor, Ph.D., from RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California, and colleagues assessed the availability of behavioral health care services for children with ASD. In August 2019, a survey of 8,184 mental health treatment facilities in the contiguous United States was conducted.

The researchers found that 43.0 percent of facilities reported providing behavioral health care for children with ASD, and even fewer (36.6 percent) were accepting such children as new patients. Just over one in 10 (12.7 percent) reported having a clinician with specialized training, and only 4.3 percent reported having a specialized treatment program. Rural and [lower-income communities](#) had poorer access to specialized ASD care.

"Increasing the availability of behavioral health care services at such facilities for [children](#) with ASD is a challenge that faces [policy makers](#) at national, state, and county levels," the authors write. "Future work is needed to understand how the availability of care (or lack thereof) at these facilities affects outcomes for this vulnerable population."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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