



The Supply of Mental Health Professionals in Tarrant County - 2005

July 2007

Texas is experiencing a shortage of Mental Health professionals, according to a recent analysis of health provider supply data conducted by the Health Professions Resource Center.¹ Mental Health providers include, but are not limited to, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, social workers, licensed professional counselors, licensed chemical dependency counselors, marriage and family therapists, and psychiatric nurses. Also, primary care physicians provide a growing percentage of mental health services, particularly with increased availability of psychotropic drugs. All of these professions play an important role in improving the mental health of Texans, yet to some degree there is evidence to suggest that there is a shortage of all of these professional types who serve the 23 million people in the state. Being an urban area, Tarrant County, with 1.6 million people, is better served than many areas of the state, as the following maps show. However, for many mental health professions, the supply ratios for Tarrant County are below the Texas average, and are even declining for some professions.

Psychiatrists

The data on psychiatrists were obtained from the Texas Medical Board's licensing database. Psychiatry is one of about 80 direct patient care² physician specialties. Overall, Texas has a severe shortage of psychiatrists. In 2005, there were 84 psychiatrists in Tarrant County; this is an increase from 54 in 1985 (Table 1). However, when this increase is related to the growth of the population, the supply ratios – the numbers of providers per 100,000 people – have fluctuated over the years, but the net result is a ratio of 5.2 in 2005, the same as in 1985 (ratios are rounded to one decimal place; extending the number of decimal points shows a slight increase in the ratio from 5.18 in 1985 to 5.24 in 2005). These ratios are lower than those of Texas as a whole. The databases show an increase in the numbers in the mid-1990s, followed by a decrease to the same levels found in the early 1990s. HPRC is unable to determine if this fluctuation did in fact occur, or if there were errors in the databases at that time. This spike in the numbers did not occur for psychiatrists in the state as a whole, nor did it occur for the total number of physicians in Tarrant County.

While some areas of Texas may have an adequate number or even an abundance of psychiatrists based on supply ratios, other areas - such as the rural, West Texas, South Texas, and Panhandle areas - have been designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)³ for mental health, and are eligible for various incentives to increase the supply of psychiatrists in those areas. In September of 2005, 188 (74%) of 254 Texas counties held designations as HPSAs.⁴ However, Tarrant County does not have any areas that are designated as HPSAs.

The average age of psychiatrists increased slightly over the last few years – from 51.3 in 1998 to 51.7 years in 2005 (Table 2). This was higher than the average age of all direct patient care physicians in Tarrant County, which was 48.2. This suggests that the psychiatrist workforce is

older and will reach retirement age sooner than will the “average” physician. This underscores the need to stimulate interest in this specialty among medical students and to research and implement effective recruitment methods for more psychiatrists to enter the workforce to replace those who will leave due to retirement. However, this was lower than the average age of all of the psychiatrists in Texas, which was 52.9 in 2005.

Table 1. Psychiatrist Supply Ratios*: Tarrant County, Texas

Year	Number of Psychiatrists In Tarrant	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
1985	54	5.2	6.2
1990	76	6.5	6.8
1995	102	8.0	6.5
2000	79	5.1	6.2
2005	84	5.2	5.6

*The supply ratios are the number of psychiatrists per 100,000 population.

Figure 1.

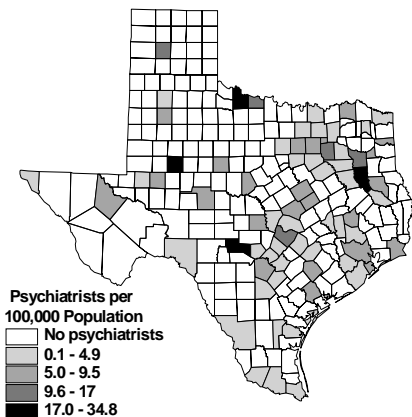


Table 2. Average Age of Psychiatrists: Tarrant County, Texas

Year	Tarrant Co.	Texas
1998	51.3	51.9
2005	51.7	52.9

Table 3. Demographics of Tarrant County Psychiatrists, 2005

Characteristic	Number	% of Total
White	48	57.1 %
Black	5	6.0 %
Hispanic	2	2.4 %
Other	25	29.8 %
Unknown	4	4.8 %
Male	55	65.5 %
Female	29	34.5 %

Child Psychiatrists

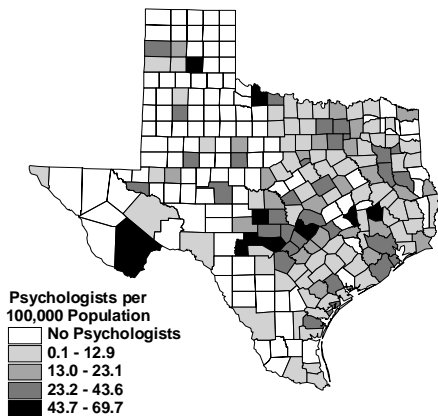
In 2005, there were 10 child psychiatrists in Tarrant County. That is a supply ratio of 2.1 per 100,000 children ages 0-18 (compared with a ratio of 2.9 for the state as a whole). The average age of child psychiatrists in 2005 was 51.1 – slightly younger than the average age of general psychiatrists, 51.7. Thirty percent of child psychiatrists were female, while 34.5% of general psychiatrists were female.

Psychologists

The data for psychologists were obtained from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists’ licensing database. Psychologists diagnose and treat mental, nervous, emotional, and behavioral disorders and ailments. In Texas, there are four categories of licensees recognized by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP): Licensed Psychologist (LP), Provisionally Licensed Psychologist (PLP), Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP), and Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA). A psychologist may hold more than one of these license types. In 2005, there were 203 LPs, 11 PLPs, 54 LPAs, and 114 LSSPs in Tarrant County. The following statistics represent an unduplicated count of those four types of licensees – resulting in a count of 314 for 2005 in Tarrant County. No race/ethnicity, gender, or age data were collected from licensees.

The supply ratio for Tarrant County increased slightly from 1999 to 2005, from 17.6 to 19.6, but still remains below the Texas average (Table 4).

Figure 2.



**Table 4. Psychologist Supply Ratios*:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Number of Psychologists In Tarrant	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
1999	265	17.6	24.8
2002	282	17.4	25.5
2004	302	19.2	24.9
2005	314	19.6	24.2

*Supply ratios are the number of psychologists per 100,000 population.

Social Workers

The data for Social Workers were obtained from the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners’ licensing database. Social Workers apply specialized knowledge and skills in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions and addictions, including severe mental illness in adults and serious emotional disturbances in children. Treatment methods include the provision of individual, marital, couple, family, group therapy, and psychotherapy. There are four types of social worker licensure. These four types of social workers provide various types of services, however, all levels are

involved in restoring or enhancing social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities. More information can be found under the “Scope of Practice” section on the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners’ website.⁵ The data in this report include all four types of licensees.

In 2005, there were 1,415 social workers in Tarrant County. The Health Professions Resource Center has been collecting data on social workers since 1999. The number of social workers has increased slightly in that time, from 1,301 in 1999 (Table 5). The supply ratios for social workers per 100,000 people have increased from 86.3 in 1999 to 88.3 in 2005, while the trend for Texas overall has been a decrease in supply ratios during that time.

Data on age were only available back to 2001. The average age of all active social workers in Tarrant County has increased since then – from 42.6 to 44.2 in 2005 (Table 6). These ages are slightly lower than those of Texas as a whole. No race/ethnicity or gender data were collected from licensees.

Table 5. Social Worker Supply Ratios*: Tarrant County, Texas

Year	Number of Social Workers In Tarrant Co.	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
1999	1,301	86.3	73.9
2001	1,294	81.7	71.6
2003	1,334	88.4	68.7
2005	1,415	88.3	68.2

*The supply ratios are the number of social workers per 100,000 population.

Figure 3.

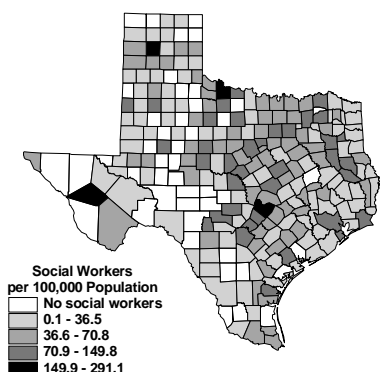


Table 6. Average Age of Social Workers: Tarrant County, Texas

Year	Tarrant Co.	Texas
2001	42.6	44.5
2005	44.2	46.3

Licensed Professional Counselors

The data for Licensed Professional Counselors were obtained from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselor’s licensing database. Licensed Professional Counselors apply mental health, psychotherapeutic, and human development principles to facilitate human development and adjustment throughout the life span; prevent, assess, evaluate, and treat mental,

emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distresses that interfere with mental health; conduct assessments and evaluations to establish treatment goals and objectives; and plan, implement, and evaluate treatment plans using counseling treatment interventions that include counseling, assessment, consulting, and referral.⁶

The Health Professions Resource Center has reliable data on licensed professional counselors dating back to 2001. The number of licensed professional counselors in Tarrant County has increased somewhat during that time, from 718 to 796 in 2005 (Table 7); however, when this increase is related to the growth of the population, the supply ratios for licensed professional counselors per 100,000 people have decreased slightly. The supply ratio for Tarrant County in 2005 (49.7) was slightly higher than that for Texas as a whole (47.4).

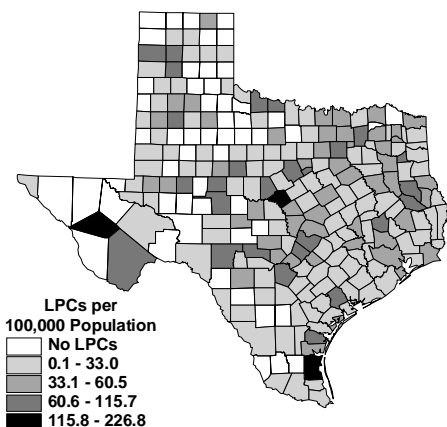
The average age of all active licensed professional counselors in Tarrant County increased since 2001 – from 50.4 to 53.8 in 2005 (Table 8). This is slightly higher than the average for Texas. No race/ethnicity or gender data were collected from licensees.

**Table 7. Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Supply Ratios*:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Number of LPCs In Tarrant Co.	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
2001	718	45.3	48.5
2003	710	47.0	48.5
2005	796	49.7	47.4

*The supply ratios are the number of LPCs per 100,000 population.

Figure 4.



**Table 8. Average Age of LPCs:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Tarrant Co.	Texas
2001	50.4	50.2
2005	53.8	53.4

Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors

The data for Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors were obtained from the Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor Program’s licensing database. A licensed chemical dependency counselor (LCDC) provides chemical dependency counseling services involving the

application of the principles, methods, and procedures of the chemical dependency profession as defined by the profession's ethical standards and the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) as defined by rule in 25 TAC ch. 441 (relating to General Provisions). The license does not qualify an individual to provide services outside this scope of practice.⁷

In 2005, there were 272 licensed chemical dependency counselors in Tarrant County. The Health Professions Resource Center has data on licensed chemical dependency counselors dating back to 2002. Both the numbers and the supply ratios of licensed chemical dependency counselors in Tarrant County have decreased during that time (Table 9). The supply ratios for Tarrant County are also below the state average.

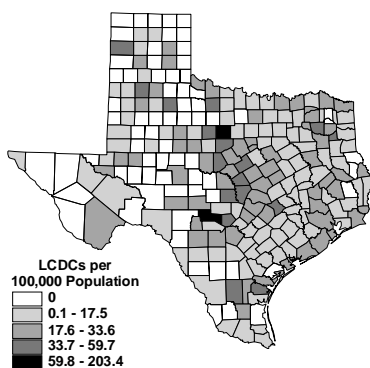
The average age of the active licensed chemical dependency counselors in Tarrant County increased since 2002 – from 50.6 to 53.2 in 2005 (Table 10). These ages are slightly higher than those for Texas as a whole, and the increase was larger than that for the state.

**Table 9. Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC) Supply Ratios*:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Number of LCDCs Tarrant Co.	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
2002	311	19.1	22.3
2003	273	18.1	20.0
2004	281	17.9	19.3
2005	272	17.0	18.2

*The supply ratios are the number of LCDCs per 100,000 population.

Figure 5.



**Table 10. Average Age of LCDCs:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Tarrant Co.	Texas
2002	50.6	50.3
2005	53.2	52.3

**Table 11. Demographics of Tarrant County
Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors, 2005**

Characteristic	Number	%of Total
White	211	77.6 %
Black	41	15.1 %
Hispanic	12	4.4 %
Other	8	2.9 %
Male	102	37.5 %
Female	170	62.5 %

Marriage and Family Therapists

The data for Marriage and Family Therapists were obtained from the Texas State Board of Examiners’ of Marriage and Family Therapists. Marriage and Family Therapists render professional therapy services to individuals, families, and couples, singly or in groups, and involves the professional application of family systems theories and techniques in the delivery of therapy services to those persons. The term includes the evaluation and remediation of cognitive, affective, behavioral, or relational dysfunction within the context of marriage or family systems.⁸

In 2005, there were 232 marriage and family therapists in Tarrant County. The Health Professions Resource Center has data on marriage and family therapists dating back to 2001. Both the numbers and the supply ratios of marriage and family therapists have experienced a net decrease during that time; however, the Tarrant County supply ratios remain higher than those of Texas as a whole (Table 12).

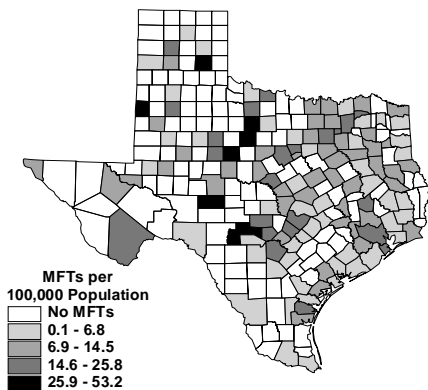
The average age of all active marriage and family therapists in Tarrant County increased since 2002 – from 54.4 to 56.5 in 2005 (Table 13). These ages are slightly higher than those for Texas as a whole. No race/ethnicity or gender data were collected from licensees.

**Table 12. Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT) Supply Ratios*:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Number of MFTs In Tarrant	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
1998	280	19.1	16.1
2001	263	16.6	14.7
2003	187	12.4	13.5
2005	232	14.5	12.1

*The supply ratios are the number of MFTs per 100,000 population

Figure 6.



**Table 13. Average Age of MFTs:
Tarrant County, Texas**

Year	Tarrant	Texas
2002	54.4	54.3
2005	56.5	56.1

Psychiatric Nurses

The data for psychiatric nurses were obtained from The Board of Nurse Examiners for the State of Texas' licensing database. The Board of Nurse Examiners recognizes psychiatric nurses based on their employment in a "psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse" work area; just as they may indicate that they work in pediatrics or home health, for example. For the following statistics, those registered nurses who indicated that their work area was "psychiatric/mental health/substance abuse" are "psychiatric nurses." Licensed Vocational Nurses may also practice in this field/work area, but their data are not included in the following statistics.

In 2005, there were 295 psychiatric nurses in Tarrant County. Even though the number of registered nurses has increased in Tarrant County, both the numbers and the supply ratios of those who identify themselves as psychiatric nurses have decreased steadily over the past two decades (Table 14). The 295 psychiatric nurses in 2005 were 2.7% of all registered nurses in Tarrant County, compared with the 6.9% of registered nurses who indicated they were psychiatric nurses in 1990.

The average age of all active psychiatric nurses in Tarrant County increased slightly over the last few years – from 50.3 in 2000 to 52.0 in 2005 (Table 15). This was much higher than the average age of all registered nurses in Tarrant County, which was 46.0 in 2005. This means that more psychiatric nurses will reach retirement sooner than registered nurses overall, which underscores the need for new psychiatric nurses to enter the workforce to replace those who will leave due to retirement.

Table 14. Psychiatric Nurse Supply Ratios: Tarrant County, Texas

Year	Number of Psychiatric Nurses In Tarrant Co.	Tarrant Co. Supply Ratios	Texas Supply Ratios
1990	445	38.0	31.0
1996	388	29.7	26.9
2000	328	21.2	25.0
2005	295	18.4	20.0

*The supply ratios are the number of psychiatric nurses per 100,000 population.

Figure 7.

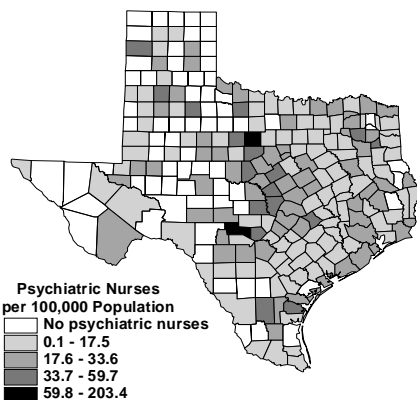


Table 15. Average Age of Psychiatric Nurses: Texas; Tarrant County

Year	Tarrant Co.	Texas
2000	50.3	49.3
2005	52.0	51.8

Table 16. Demographics of Psychiatric Nurses in Tarrant County, 2005

Characteristic	Number	% of Total
White	252	85.4 %
Black	25	8.5 %
Hispanic	5	1.7 %
Other	13	4.4 %
Male	29	9.8 %
Female	266	90.2 %

In summary:

- Texas has a shortage of many types of mental health care providers, based on supply ratios and the number of federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas for mental health. Although Tarrant County is not designated as a shortage area, its supply ratios are lower than the Texas average for many mental health professions.
- Based on past trends, existing shortages can be expected to continue for the foreseeable future, and likely to worsen, because of retirements and the lack of new recruits.
- For many mental health professions, the supply ratios are decreasing, which suggests that the growth in supply is not matching the growth in the population.
- For those professions for which age information is available, the average ages of mental health providers are often higher in Tarrant County than the Texas average, which could exacerbate the shortages in the near future, as these providers retire.

End Notes:

NOTE: Please cite the Health Professions Resource Center as the source when using or distributing information from this document. Any comments or questions should be sent to Brian King at brian.king@dshs.state.tx.us or to Dr. Bruce Gunn at bruce.gunn@dshs.state.tx.us.

Population data were obtained from the Texas State Data Center, University of Texas at San Antonio, <http://txsdc.utsa.edu/>.

¹ Highlights: The Supply of Mental Health Professionals in Texas, Health Professions Resource Center, February 2006, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/CHS/hprc/MHhigh05.pdf>.

² The Psychiatrist information that was analyzed in this study comprised physicians who are actively involved with providing patient care directly to patients (direct patient care physicians), and include only physicians with a practice specialty of psychiatry. Classes of physicians that were excluded from this analysis were federal or military physicians, residents or fellows, physicians primarily involved with research or administration, and retirees. Child psychiatrists were counted separately from psychiatrists. The source of the data is the Texas Medical Board.

³ Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are designated as such by the federal Shortage Designation Branch (U.S. DHHS) in collaboration with Texas' Primary Care Office and the

Health Professions Resource Center. More information can be found on the Health Professions Resource Center's website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/CHS/hprc/hpsa.shtm> and the Shortage Designation Branch's website at <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/>.

⁴ The Health Resources and Services Administration's guidelines use a population-to-provider ratio to determine shortages. For mental health HPSA designations, the ratio of population-to-psychiatrists must be 30,000:1 or greater to qualify as a shortage area, or 20:000:1 or greater if the poverty rate exceeds 20%.

⁵ Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners' website:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/default.shtm>.

⁶ Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors' website:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm>.

⁷ Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor Program's website:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lcdc/default.shtm>.

⁸ Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists' website:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mft/default.shtm>.

For more information on health provider supply statistics and Health Professional Shortage Areas, see the Health Professions Resource Center's website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/CHS/hprc/>.

This document was prepared by:
Rosemary Ang, MS, Research Specialist, Health Professions Resource Center
Brian King, Program Specialist, Health Professions Resource Center
Bruce Gunn, Ph.D., Manager, Health Provider Resources Branch