

# American Social Welfare Policy: A Pluralist Approach

## Chapter 13

### Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy

# Mental Health Reform

- National Association for Mental Health (NAMH)
  - Pioneered efforts to provide social support and treatment for the mentally ill
- World War II
- Dr. Robert H. Felix

**TABLE 13.1** Percentage Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders

Lifetime estimates	Brazil	Canada	Germany	Mexico	Netherlands	Turkey	USA
Any anxiety	17.4	21.3	9.8	5.6	20.1	7.4	25.0
Any mood	15.5	10.2	17.1	9.2	18.9	7.3	19.4
Any substance	16.1	19.7	21.5	9.6	18.7	0.0	28.2
Any disorder	36.3	37.5	38.4	20.2	40.9	12.2	48.6
One disorder	21.2	21.2	25.5	14.8	23.0	7.9	21.3
Two disorders	8.8	9.3	8.1	4.0	9.3	3.0	13.1
Three disorders +	6.3	7.0	4.8	1.4	8.6	1.3	14.3

# The Community Mental Health Centers Acts

- Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC) Act
  - Passed by Congress and signed by President Kennedy on October 31, 1963
- Transferring mental health care from the state hospital to the community

# Deinstitutionalization

- By the end of the 1990s:
  - 93% of state psychiatric beds that had existed in 1955 were lost to deinstitutionalization
- Effect on institutional care for patients with mental impairments

# The Psychopharmacological Scandal

- Psychotropic medication became a routine form of treatment
- Desperate former mental hospital patients turned to petty crime to gain income
- The ascendance of the biomedical model
- Side effects attributed to SSRIs

# Children's Mental Health

- The FDA does not require RTCs for medication
  - Unless it is specifically intended for children
- Off-label prescriptions for children
- 80 percent increase in autism during the previous decade

# Mental Health and Substance Abuse Funding

- Since 1981, all mental health expenditures have been in block grants to states
- Static funding has prompted innovation in service delivery
  - Provided the rationale for subsidizing private treatment innovations in substance abuse

**TABLE 13.2** Distribution of Mental Health Expenditures, %

Source	1986	2003	2006	2014
Private				
Out of pocket	18	14	14	12
Private insurance	21	24	24	26
Other private	7	3	4	3
Public				
Medicare	6	7	11	11
Medicaid	16	26	24	27
Other federal	6	4	3	1
Other state & local	26	21	20	16

**TABLE 13.3** Distribution of Substance Abuse Expenditures among Payers, %

Source	1986	2003	2008	2014
Private				
Out of pocket	14	8	8	6
Private insurance	30	10	9	7
Other private	6	5	5	4
Public				
Medicare	4	4	4	5
Medicaid	10	18	18	20
Other federal	7	15	14	14
Other state & local	29	40	42	45

# Parity for Mental Health Care

- Congress agreed on legislation establishing parity for mental health care
- May have marked the end of the downsizing of mental health care
  - Yet much remained to be done

# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- A decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Not only were mental health disorders among returning soldiers delayed
  - But they were more prevalent among reservists

**TABLE 13.4** Mental Health Disorders among Returning Soldiers

Type of Disorder		Return from Iraq (%)	Three to six months later (%)
Interpersonal conflict	Active duty	3.5	14
	Reserves	4.2	21.1
Post-traumatic stress disorder	Active duty	11.8	16.7
	Reserves	12.7	24.5
Depression	Active duty	4.7	10.3
	Reserves	3.8	13
Overall mental health disorder	Active duty	17	27.1
	Reserves	17.5	35.5

# Substance Abuse

- Mental health services are often associated with substance abuse
- Interaction of emotional difficulties, alcoholism, and substance abuse

# Substance Abuse

- Alcohol Abuse
  - Americans steadily increased their consumption of alcohol
    - From the end of World War II
    - Fetal alcohol syndrome

# Substance Abuse

- Drug Abuse
  - The prevalence of drug abuse is more difficult to ascertain
  - Types of illegal substances vary considerably
  - The federal response to illicit drug use
  - Intervention strategies focus on treatment

**TABLE 13.5** Types of Illegal Substances

Type of Substance	Millions of Users
Illicit drugs	22.6
Marijuana	17.4
Psychotherapeutics	7.0
Cocaine	1.5
Hallucinogens	1.2
Inhalants	0.7
Heroin	0.2

**TABLE 13.6** Location of Substance Abuse Treatment

Location	Numbers (thousands)
Self-help group	2,334
Outpatient rehabilitation	1,689
Outpatient mental health center	999
Inpatient rehabilitation	986
Hospital inpatient	731
Private doctor's office	653
Emergency room	467
Jail or prison	342

# Conclusion

- Mental health and substance abuse policies have been complex
- Should responsibility for the aberrant rest with the federal government or the states?
- Should the focus be on treatment or interdiction?