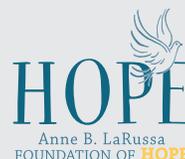


2019 Psychiatric Intake Response Center Annual Report



A Letter from the PIRC Director

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

~ Dr. Seuss

Dear Collaborators, Providers and Friends:

We hear it a lot. "What's being done for children's mental health?"

We're listening and responding. In fact, Children's of Alabama's Community Needs Assessments in 2013, 2016 and 2019 found mental and behavioral health to be one of the top priorities for pediatric health.

The Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) plays an integral role in connecting communities to mental and behavioral health services statewide, and was the spark for Children's continued expansion of these services in 2019.

The PIRC offered its services to more than 5,800 callers and patients, fielded more than 2,200 calls statewide and consulted on more than 3,600 Emergency Department (ED) patients. Demand was highest in the months of March, April, September and October. The PIRC received the most calls in April and October (238 calls each). The total number of ED consults in October came to 429, nearly 700 needs identified in October alone.

Children's Behavioral Health, along with a workgroup of Children's leaders, qualified for a Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Tele-Mental Health grant. The \$2.09 million, five-year grant was awarded to the Alabama Department of Mental Health in partnership with Children's. The Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services (PATHS) program launched in 2019 with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Public Health and the Alabama Department of Public Health as sub-contractors. PATHS provides behavioral health education, collaboration and consultation to rural pediatricians. The PIRC was identified in the grant as having the infrastructure for connecting pediatricians to mental health providers in their communities.

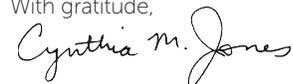
The PIRC partnered with Children's Behavioral Health Access Center, also established in 2019. The center is designed to provide more access to Children's Behavioral Health outpatient services in the Ireland Center and the newly named Patriot Park as well as community mental health services. On average, the PIRC referred 48 patients and callers a month to Children's outpatient services. Also, the PIRC has been actively involved in the development and implementation of a Partial Hospitalization/Intensive Outpatient Program (PHP/IOP) to launch in 2020.

We continue to receive generous support from the Anne B. LaRussa Foundation of Hope. The Hill Crest Foundation, in its efforts to improve mental health access, committed \$300,000 to the PIRC. We are grateful to these foundations for their trust in the PIRC to fulfill their missions for children's mental health.

We accomplished a lot in 2019 and are proud to support behavioral and mental health needs throughout the state. Children's and the PIRC steadfastly remain committed to our communities.

There is much more to be done, but we care "a whole awful lot."

With gratitude,



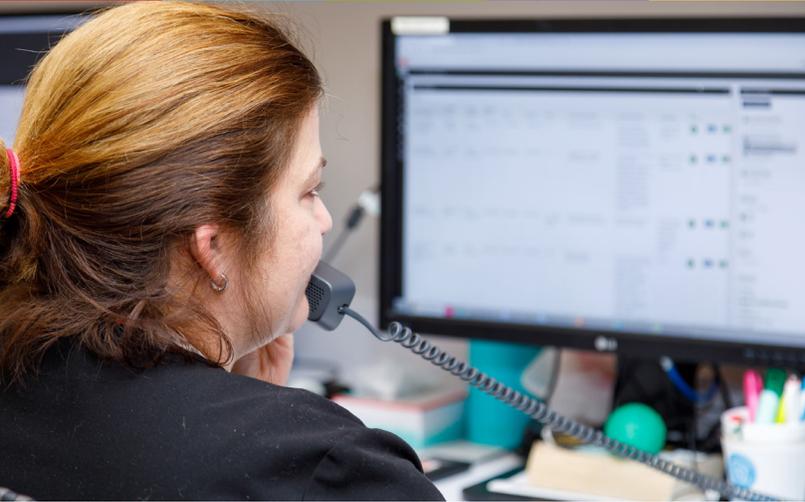
Cynthia "Cindy" M. Jones, MA, LPC-S, NCC, CRC

PIRC Director, Children's of Alabama



PIRC Director Cindy Jones, left, with radio personality Hilary Mills of Birmingham's Magic 96.5 FM at the Music & Miracles Radiothon, which raised more than \$70,000 for Children's of Alabama in 2019.

PIRC Statistics

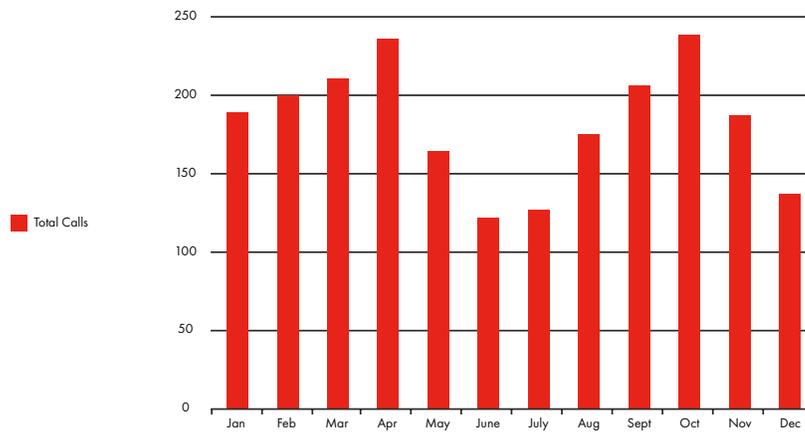


PIRC Therapist Shannon Messina accesses mental health providers in the PIRC database for a caller. The PIRC team fielded more than 2,200 calls in 2019.

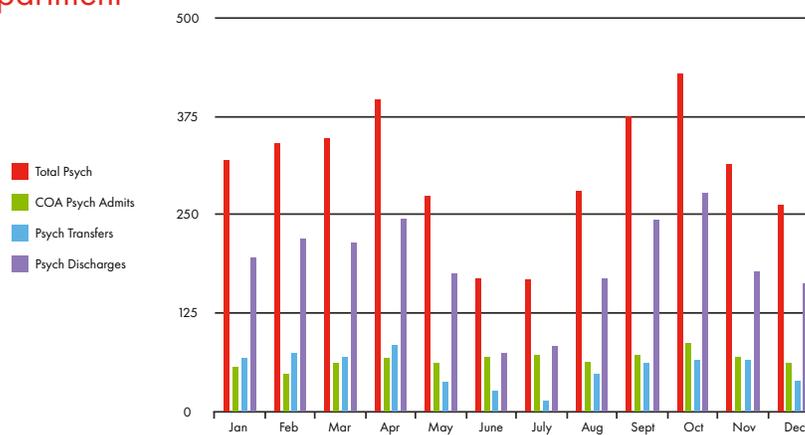


PIRC Therapist Susan Bennett-Smith interviews a patient in the Emergency Department. The PIRC team consulted on more than 3,600 patients in 2019.

Total PIRC Calls



Total Emergency Department Psychiatric Consults



PIRC Team

The PIRC experienced tremendous growth in 2019 due to increasing community needs and the PIRC's reputation for providing quality mental healthcare. Despite the notable increase in calls and consults, the team continued to go above and beyond to listen to, identify and solve concerns presented by callers, patients and caregivers. Of more than 2,000 callers surveyed, 99% said their experience with the PIRC was positive.

Call volumes increased 58% from 2018 to 2019. With 2,198 calls for the year, the staff averaged 183 calls per month. Emergency Department (ED) consult cases increased by 23% from 2018 to 2019. Weekday activity showed our team had 24 encounters on average by phone or consult per day.

Follow-up calls increased in August, growing from 6% to 60% by year's end. Results indicated many were connected to providers while others were not. Callers who experienced barriers found our follow-up calls to be helpful in finding solutions.

Quality was among the PIRC's performance improvement goals in 2019. Most notably, the PIRC/Psychiatric Consult Team and ED staff reduced patients' length of stay (LOS) by working more efficiently across teams. Despite increased volume, there was a decrease in LOS by 2.1 hours, from 7.4 hours in 2018 to 5.3 hours in 2019.

With the team's efforts, the database grew to more than 1,400 providers statewide, including six targeted rural counties served by the PATHS program's first cohort of pediatricians.

Engaged in mental health advocacy and hospital partnership, Children's Behavioral Health Department along with ED employees participated in the 2019 NAMI Walk at Railroad Park in downtown Birmingham. Nearly 500 participants were in attendance and Children's won the team trophy for the most members to participate at 94 strong.

Children's dedicated employees are passionate about helping children with behavioral and emotional concerns. Committed to the PIRC's mission, our team offered exceptional care throughout the year.



Children's of Alabama Behavioral Health and Emergency Department employees are presented with a team trophy for most team members participating in the 2019 NAMI Walk in downtown Birmingham.

PIRC Administrators and Directors

William Michael "Mike" Warren Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, Children's of Alabama

Thomas "Tom" G. Shufflebarger, FACHE, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Children's of Alabama

William "Bill" Brodie III, Behavioral Health Division Director, Children's of Alabama

Jesse "Tobias" C. Martinez Jr., M.D., Assistant Professor and Director, Child Psychiatry Clinical Services, University of Alabama at Birmingham. Medical Director, PIRC and Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry, Children's of Alabama

Cynthia "Cindy" M. Jones, MA, LPC-S, NCC, CRC, PIRC Director, Children's of Alabama

PIRC Mental Health Therapists

Susan Bennett-Smith, LICSW, PIP

Ahmad Brewer, LICSW, PIP

Cristal Cummings, LPC-S

David Dees, LMSW

Matt Foster, LPC

Heather Forbes, LPC

Jalana Johnson, LPC

Monique Johnson, LPC-S

Deidra Keener, LPC-S

Shannon Messina, LICSW

Lynette Myers, LPC

Rachel Parker, LICSW

Tahuna Rembert, ALC

PIRC Impact

- 2,200 calls for the year, averaging 183 a month
- 3,600 Emergency Department consults
- Average of 24 encounters by phone or consult per day
- Decreased Emergency Department length of stay by 2.1 hours (5.3 hours in 2019, down from 7.4 hours in 2018)
- Increased database to 1,400 providers statewide
- Follow up phone calls increased from 6% to 60% by year's end
- Referred more than 45 callers and patients a month to Children's Behavioral Health outpatient

PIRC Advisory Committee

The PIRC committee successfully focused its efforts on making children's mental and behavioral health a priority in communities throughout Alabama.

Brian Blakes, Fire Chaplain, City of Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service

Bill Brodie, Behavioral Health Divisional Director, Children's of Alabama

Beth Clark, Care Coordination Director, Children's of Alabama

Jeff Cobb, Physician Relations Coordinator, Children's of Alabama

Kyle Echols, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Private Practice

Joan Elder, Former President, NAMI Alabama

Katrina Freeman, Behavioral Health Outpatient Director, Children's of Alabama

Jake Harper, Behavioral Health Inpatient Director, Children's of Alabama

Gus Heard-Hughes, Vice President of Programs, Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham

Lauren Howard, Manager, Anne B. LaRussa Foundation of Hope

Cindy Jones, PIRC Director, Children's of Alabama

Morissa Ladinsky, Associate Professor of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, UAB and Children's of Alabama

Leigh Long, Director of Guidance, Homewood City Schools

Jesse "Tobias" C. Martinez, Jr., UAB Assistant Professor and Director Child Psychiatry Clinical Services and PIRC and Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry Medical Director, Children's of Alabama

Kathy Monroe, UAB Professor and Emergency Department Medical Director, Children's of Alabama

Artie Nelson, Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatrist, Private Practice

Kadie Peters, Vice President of Community Impact Strategy and Resource Development, United Way of Central Alabama

Robin Sparks, Community Mental Health Advocate

Garland Stansell, Chief Communications Officer, Children's of Alabama

John Stone, Government Relations Community Action Manager, Children's of Alabama

Stacy White, Behavioral Health Administrative Director, Children's of Alabama

Jake Zisette, Special Care Unit Director, Children's of Alabama



Morissa Ladinsky, M.D., associate professor of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at UAB and Children's of Alabama, and Children's Government Relations Community Action Manager John Stone are pictured at a quarterly PIRC Advisory Committee meeting.

PIRC Community Outreach



PreSchool Partners students sent a "thank you" to the PIRC for participating in the caregiver's education forum. PIRC Director Cindy Jones spoke about PIRC services to 70 attendees.

PIRC Therapist Lynette Myers attended three Shelby County Board of Education Mental Health Fairs where she talked to more than 300 students about the PIRC and local mental health services.

The PIRC is committed to active engagement in the communities we serve in multiple counties statewide. The PIRC participated in 80 events, resulting in 107 hours of outreach in 2019.

Schools

Schools play an important role in children's lives. They are the backdrop to a child's social and emotional development. However, schools are also a source of social and emotional distress. Ideally, children experience rigorous learning, adult and peer support, role modeling, friendships and fun. But at school, they also encounter bullying, violence, discrimination, peer pressure and marginalization. The PIRC partnered with schools to provide education and guidance for children and families. There were many opportunities in 2019 to collaborate with educators and community leaders addressing students' mental health concerns.

- **Birmingham City Schools:** PIRC Medical Director Tobias Martinez, M.D., Dr. Aleiya Butler, UAB Fellow, PIRC Director Cindy Jones and PIRC Therapist Lynette Myers consulted throughout the year with administrators, educators and counselors representing 42 schools on suicide prevention and intervention. This partnership with the fourth-largest school system in Alabama is an ongoing initiative that has improved understanding of and communication about their student population's mental health concerns. Butler and Myers spoke to administrators, educators and counselors about suicide interventions at school. Jones attended the Birmingham City Schools Principal Fair held for principals and assistant principals. The PIRC was among 75 vendors who provided information on services supporting students.
- **Shelby County Board of Education:** The Student Services department organized Mental Health Care Fairs at multiple area high schools. PIRC Therapist Lynette Myers talked to more than 300 students at Shelby County, Oak Mountain, and Chelsea high schools.
- **R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Back to School Rally:** Every summer, R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Respect Every Single Person Ever Created Today), a faith-based organization, holds a rally providing information and essential services to children and families as they prepare for the upcoming school year. PIRC Therapist Matt Foster represented the PIRC at the event, called the No. 1 back to school rally in the nation with more than 20,000 youth.
- **PreSchool Partners:** PIRC Director Cindy Jones spoke at PreSchool Partners' caregivers' education forum in October. More than 70 caregivers were present. PreSchool Partners is a non-profit program dedicated to preparing underserved preschool children and their parents for kindergarten and success in school.
- **Mental Health in the School Settings Workshop:** Children's Behavioral Health sponsored its fourth annual workshop featuring nationally-known speaker Ross W. Greene, Ph.D., who discussed effective school interventions through Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS). PIRC Therapists Shannon Messina and Matt Foster provided information to 200 attendees.

PIRC Community Outreach



Albert Schweitzer Fellow Rahul Gaini surveyed caregivers and worked with the PIRC team and Crisis Consultation Clinic to decrease barriers to attending appointments. His year-long project increased appointment show-rates by 8.8%.



Children's
of Alabama

www.childrensal.org



PIRC Medical Director Tobias Martinez, M.D. appeared on Children's of Alabama's "Minute with Children's" broadcast to discuss the center and its services.

Mental Health Providers

Establishing and maintaining provider relationships is vital to community collaboration. In 2019, many providers agreed to strategic meetings and surveys by the PIRC to determine its effectiveness and measure outcomes.

- **Mental Health Provider Relations:** Throughout the year, the PIRC engaged with providers in the mental health community. Multiple agencies presented to the PIRC team on their services. Among them were:
 - **Behavioral ONE**, comprehensive behavioral health services, including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
 - **Catholic Family Services**, adolescent outpatient mental health services
 - **Hill Crest Behavioral Health Services**, inpatient, residential and outpatient adolescent programs
 - **Mustard Seed Society**, adventure-based therapeutic interventions for abused and neglected children
 - **Mental Health Summits**, three table-talk luncheons throughout the year with mental health providers. Participants included Eastside, Chilton-Shelby, AltaPointe, and Indian Rivers Mental Health Centers; Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair Mental Health Authority (JBS); Premier Mental Health, Noah's Ark Child and Family Treatment Center; and Capitol Care South, all private, comprehensive mental health services.
- **Mental Health Roundtable (MHR):** PIRC Director Cindy Jones and PIRC Advisory Committee Member Robin Sparks participated in the MHR. The organization fosters collaboration among more than 100 health systems representatives, mental health providers, faith-based entities and stakeholders in the Birmingham metro area. They served on a committee, which organized efforts to provide MHR members as mental health subject experts to the local media.

PIRC Community Outreach

- **Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (ASF):** PIRC Medical Director Tobias Martinez, M.D., and PIRC Director Cindy Jones mentored ASF Fellow Rahul Gaini. The ASF immerses a diverse group of graduate students in a experiential learning and leadership development program designed to increase their skills and commitment to more effectively address the health needs of underserved people. Gaini surveyed caregivers and worked with the PIRC team and Crisis Consultation Clinic to decrease barriers to patients and caregivers attending appointments. The result was an increased appointment show-rate of 61%, 8.8% higher than the year before. In addition, Jones was named ASF's 2020 Outstanding Community Mentor. Gaini, who nominated Jones for the honor, wrote, "Cindy is a great mentor because she gives me guidance but still allows me to grow independently."
- **Mental Health and Healthcare Conferences:** The PIRC participated in several mental health and healthcare conferences, including the following:
 - **Children's of Alabama Mental Health Awareness Conference:** PIRC Medical Director Tobias Martinez, M.D., presented "Unique Challenges Faced by Youth in Today's Society" to 200 mental health professionals statewide.
 - **Gadsden Regional Mental Health Conference:** Children's of Alabama Behavioral Health Inpatient Milieu Coordinator Amy Brown participated as a PIRC vendor and presented to 126 attendees on "Speaking without Words."
 - **Alabama Conference on Traumatic Brain Injury:** PIRC Medical Director Tobias Martinez, M.D., and Drew Davis, M.D., of Children's of Alabama Rehabilitation Medicine presented "Behavioral Health, Children and Youth: Pediatric Interventions for Traumatic Brain Injury."
 - **Children's of Alabama School Nurse Workshops:** PIRC information and an online video were provided to 550 participants, who attended five summer workshops.

PIRC Community Outreach



PIRC Summer Aide MiKaelah Freeman and Children's of Alabama Behavioral Health Inpatient Discharge Planner Monica Jones represented the PIRC at the No More Martyrs Minority Mental Health Awareness Summit, where 100 participants focused on the importance of cultural competence in mental healthcare and advocacy for minority populations.

PIRC Therapist Matt Foster represented the PIRC at the Alabama Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Out of the Darkness Walk to honor of those who died by suicide and raise awareness about suicide prevention.

Community Events

Many factors contribute to children's poor mental and behavioral health – stigma, bullying at school and online, violence, poor family and social support, access to inappropriate online content and abuse and neglect, to name a few. The PIRC continues to see many children who are in distress and oftentimes suicidal. Children consider suicide a real option to the challenges they face. Awareness, education and support help communities better focus on children's mental healthcare.

- **Suicide Awareness**

- **Alabama Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP):** PIRC Therapist Matt Foster represented the PIRC at this annual event, where more than 1,300 people in 150 teams walked to honor suicide victims and raise awareness about suicide prevention.
- **Mental Health Matters:** PIRC Director Cindy Jones participated in this forum initiated by three friends who lost their friend to suicide. The event was held at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute with 50 community members in attendance discussing mental health stigma in black communities.
- **Chasing Awareness Second Annual Corn Hole Tournament:** The PIRC sponsored this event at Avondale Brewing to raise funds and awareness for suicide prevention in memory of Chase Lanke, who died by suicide in July 2018.

- **Minority Mental Health Awareness**

- **No More Martyrs:** For the second year, the PIRC co-sponsored the No More Martyrs Minority Mental Health Awareness Summit. This national event, held in Birmingham, focused on the importance of cultural competence in mental health care and advocacy for minority populations. More than 100 mental health counselors, university students with interest in mental health, non-profit professionals, social workers, nurses, educators, consumers (and loved ones), mental health advocates, community health organizers and religious leaders attended. PIRC Summer Aide MiKaelah Freeman, Children's of Alabama Behavioral Health Social Worker Monica Jones and Children's Behavioral Health Interventionist Chege Munyiri represented the hospital at the event in July.

PIRC Community Outreach

- **Family Education**

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Shelby:** Albert Schweitzer Fellow Rahul Gaini represented the PIRC at the annual NAMI Shelby Mental Health Fair. PIRC Director Cindy Jones spoke at NAMI's fall educational meeting to inform members about PIRC services and trends in children's mental health.
- **CARES (Caregiver, Advocacy, Resources, Education & Support) Program:** PIRC Director Cindy Jones provided information to Children's of Alabama Behavioral Health's inpatient family members. The parent counseling and educational program provides caregivers with the information, resources and support needed to understand and cope with their child's challenges.
- **Happy Healthy Kids Fair:** PIRC Therapist Tahuna Rembert attended the fair at the Riverchase Galleria. The event educates parents about community resources, including healthcare, for children.
- **Special Needs Expo:** Children's of Alabama Government Relations Community Action Manager and PIRC Advisory Committee Member John Stone represented the PIRC at this Birmingham event highlighting services for children with special needs.
- **One Heart in the Park:** PIRC Therapist Matt Foster attended in support of victims of crime as part of National Crime Victim's Rights Week in April.

- **Law Enforcement Training**

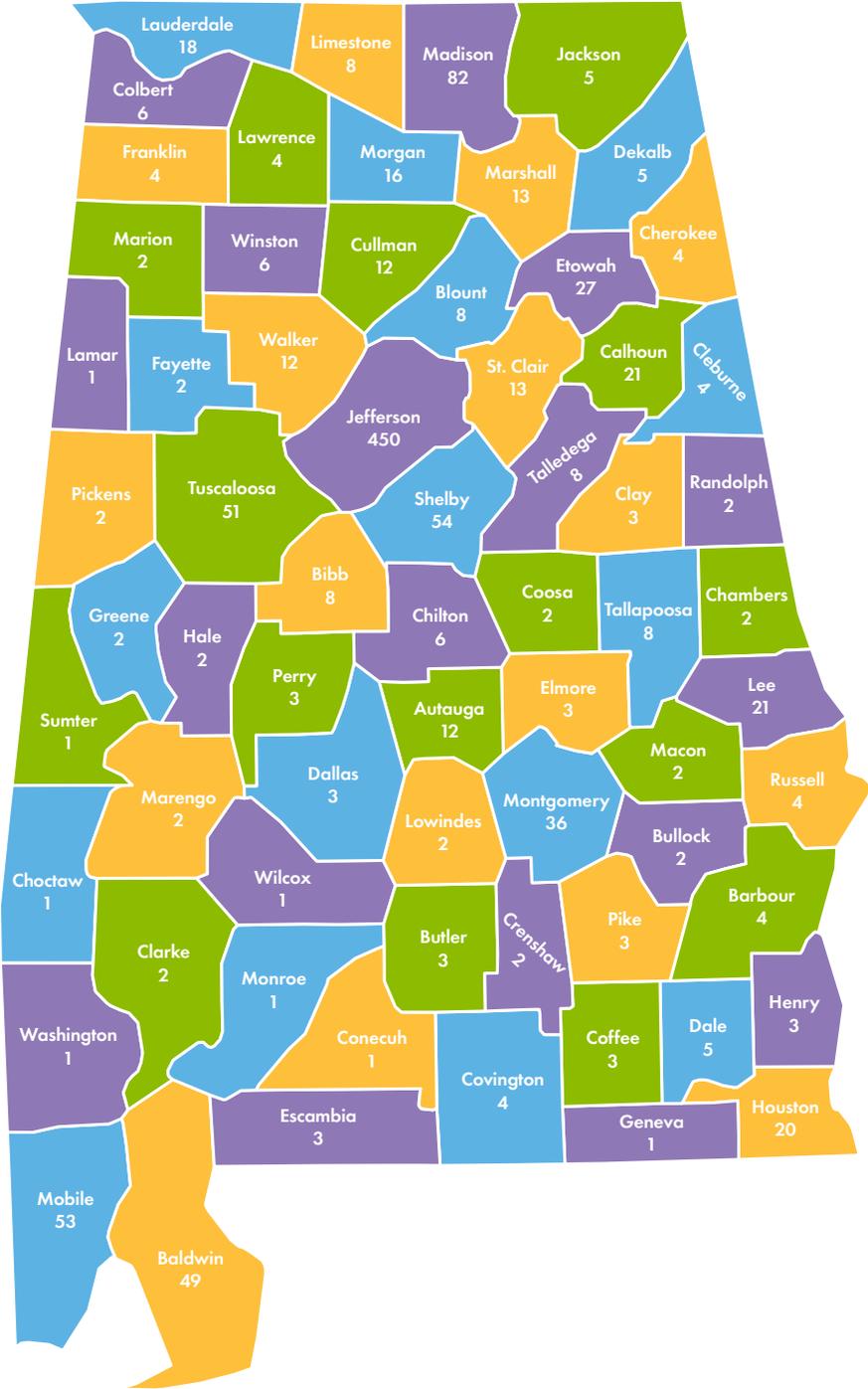
- **SCSO Professional Development Day:** PIRC Therapist Matt Foster trained 45 Shelby County sheriff's deputies in crisis response as part of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) professional development day.

PIRC Statistics

PIRC-Identified Mental Health Providers by County*

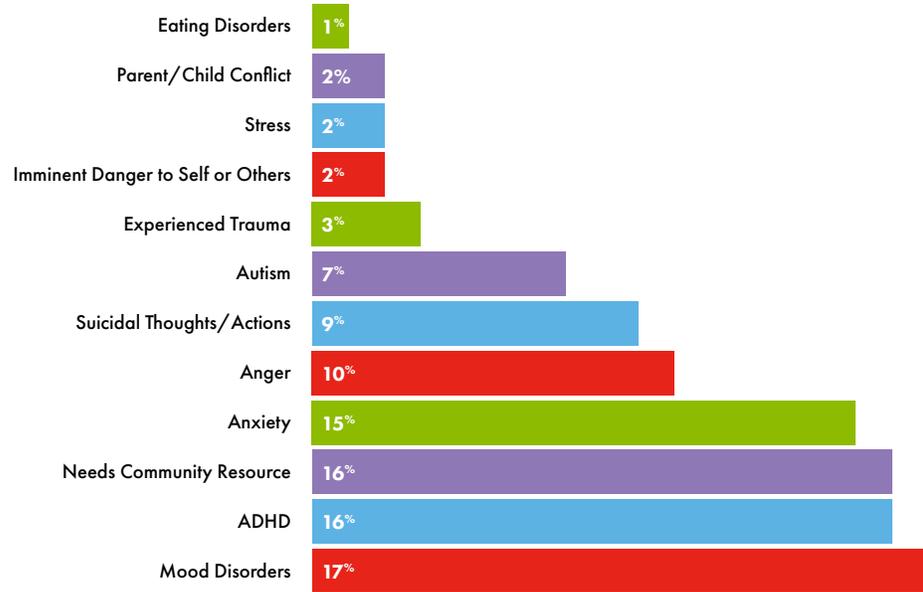
*Totals indicate the number of mental health care providers identified in the PIRC database. Though providers may have multiple specialists on staff, the database recognizes the provider as one practice.

TOTAL: 1,125

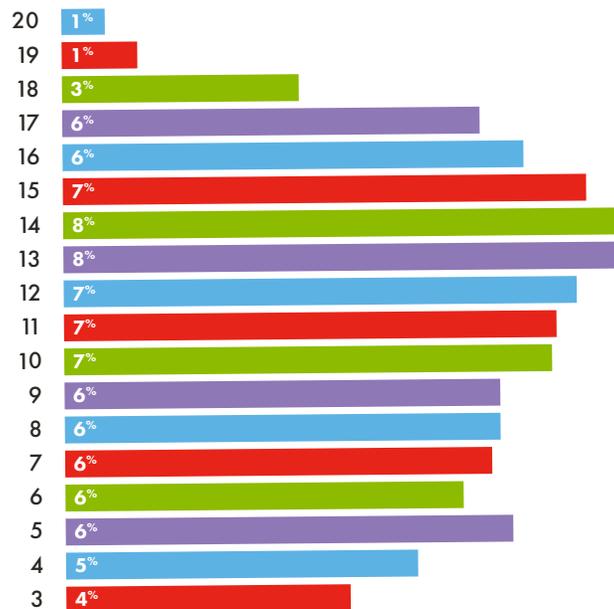


PIRC Statistics

Caller's Primary Concern

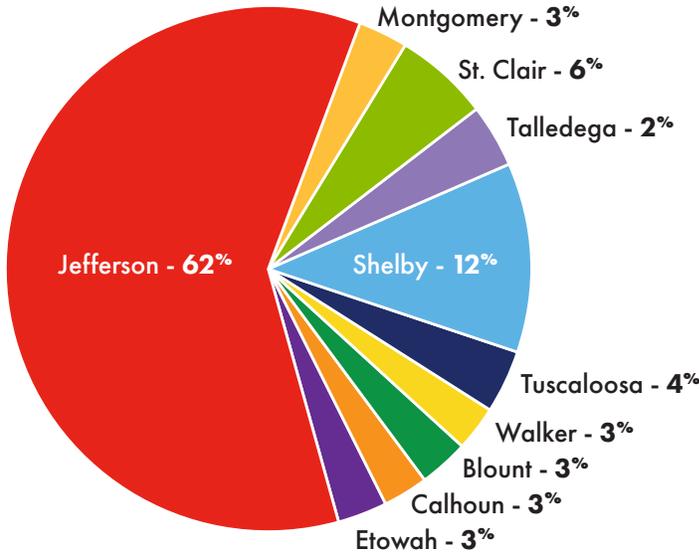


Caller's Concerns by Ages

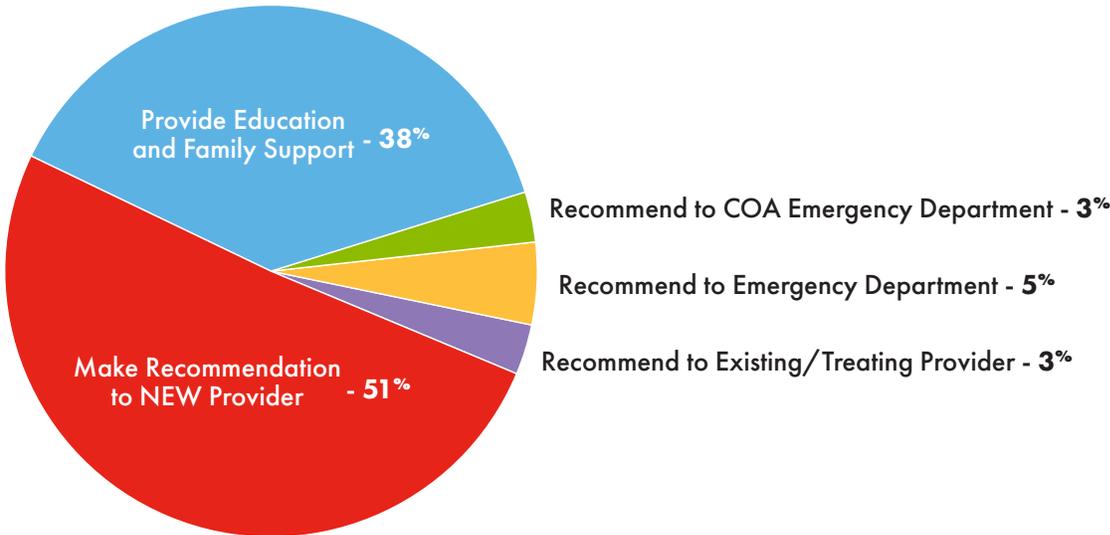


PIRC Statistics

Top 10 Counties by Caller

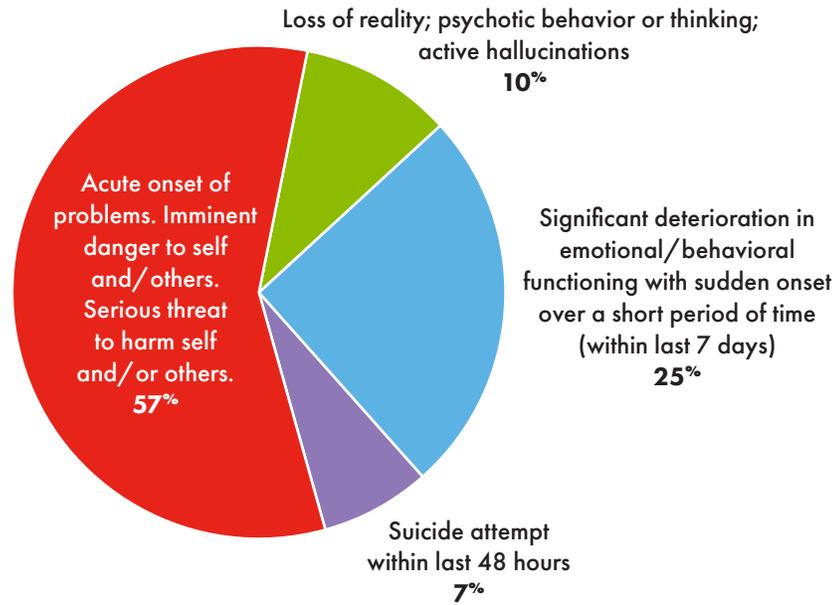


Caller's Disposition Profile

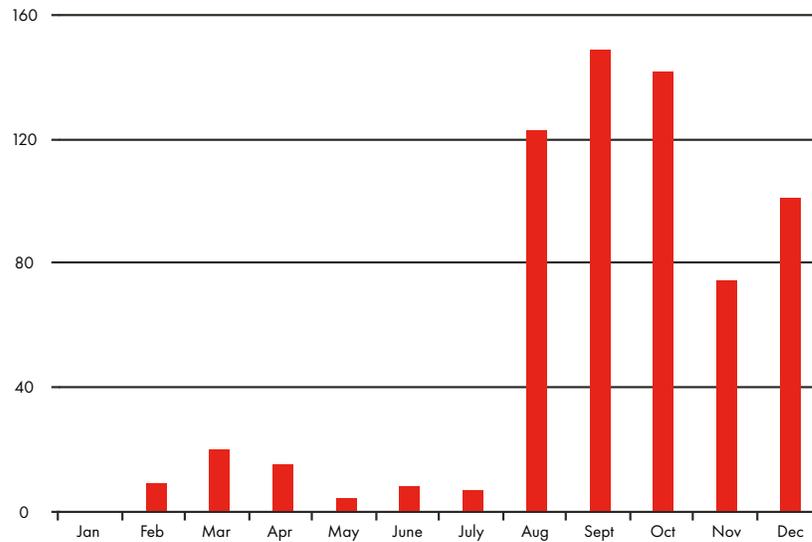


PIRC Statistics

Caller's Emergency Indicators



Follow Up Calls



PIRC Future Plans



PIRC Therapist Tahuna Rembert attended the Happy Healthy Kids Fair, educating parents and children about community resources.



A girl gets her face painted at the One Heart in the Park victims of crime event as part of National Crime Victim's Rights Week. PIRC Therapist Matt Foster represented the PIRC at the event.

During the production of this report, the world began its fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The PIRC experienced an unprecedented lower volume of patients and calls as schools and businesses shut down amid stay-at-home orders. While the future is uncertain, Children's of Alabama and the PIRC remain steadfast in helping children and families.

2020 Goals

- Expand and update the PIRC provider database. Focus efforts on larger targeted counties, i.e. Baldwin, Houston, Lee, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa counties.
- Complete 50% of all follow-up calls one week after the initial call to determine if contact was made with a provider and address any identified barriers.
- Survey sample number of providers to gain feedback on effectiveness of recommendations.
- Continue to consult with Birmingham City Schools on mental health concerns among their student populations.
- Understand how to effectively address behavioral and mental health concerns and challenges amid a pandemic that has upended children and caregivers' lives.
- Collaborate and support behavioral health initiatives at Children's of Alabama particularly, the Access Center, PATHS program and PHP/IOP programs.



Psychiatric Intake Response Center • Children's of Alabama Emergency Department
1601 5th Ave. S. • Birmingham, AL 35233 • 205-638-PIRC (7472)

ChildrensAL.org/PIRC