

The Development of Perinatal Psychiatry Specialty Clinic in West Texas, Serving Hub City Lubbock, TX, and Surrounding Rural Counties

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Background

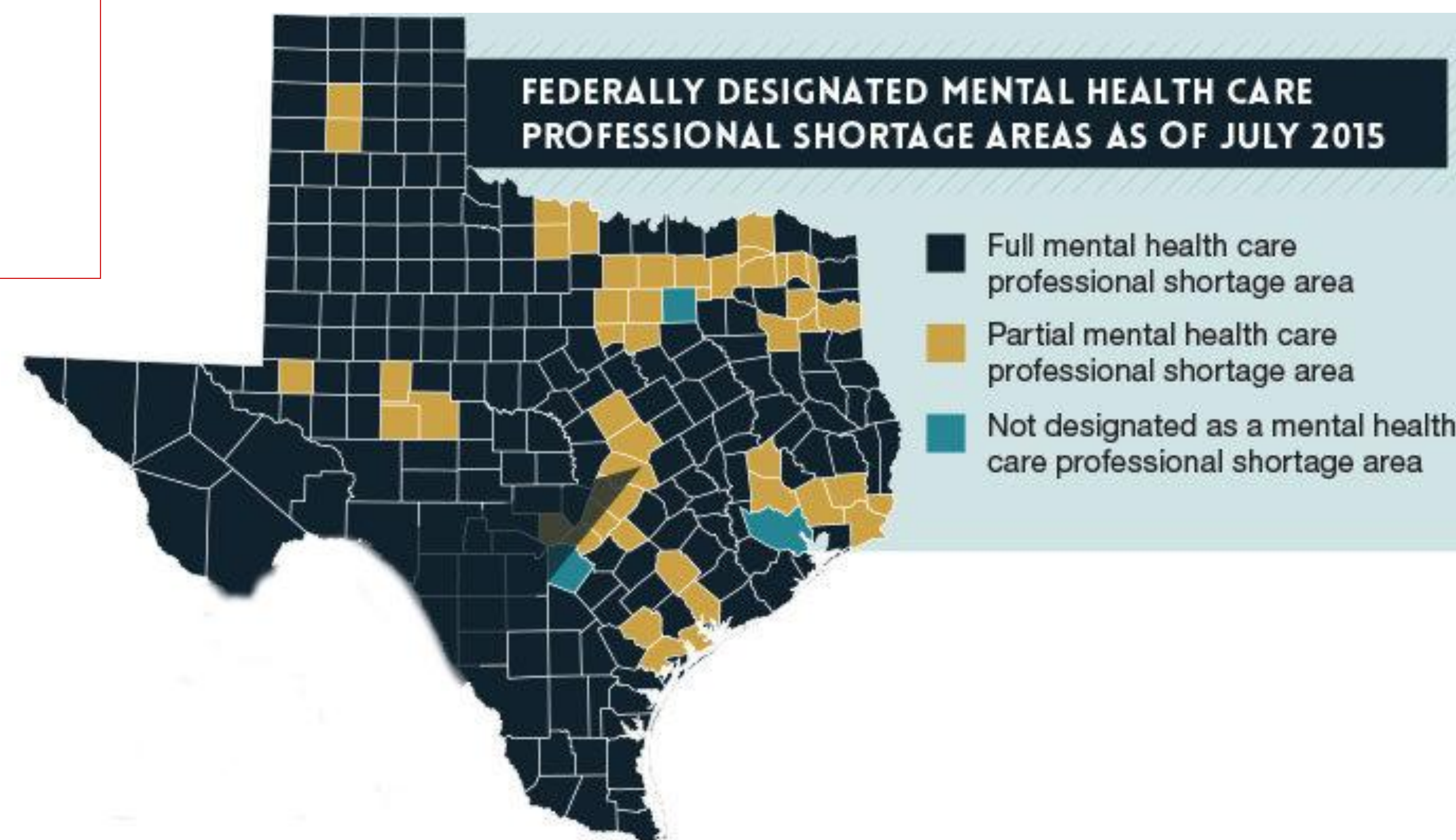
Data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicated that many counties in Texas are designated as mental health care professional shortage areas; affecting 9.6 million Texans. The Department of State Health Services reported that nearly 73 percent of counties had no psychiatrists; affecting three million Texans. Lubbock, TX, is located in the center of West Texas, and although it serves as a hub city for economic, educational, and healthcare for surrounding rural counties, it is designated as a mental health care professional shortage area. There exists a large need and demand for perinatal psychiatric services, albeit a shortage of providers. This is especially important for perinatal patients with complicated psychiatric presentations, diagnoses, and symptoms.

Mental health care professional shortage areas

As the map suggests on the right, with data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2015, many counties in Texas are designated as mental health care professional shortage areas.

Implementation of perinatal psychiatry consultation clinic

- Faculty member Dr. Wakefield, at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock, TX, implemented a perinatal psychiatric clinic as part of residency training as part of the third year psychiatry continuity clinic curriculum.
- Each resident rotates through 3 months of continual perinatal clinic, occurring every Friday morning, supervised by perinatal psychiatrist Dr. Wakefield.
- Patients were referred by their primary care provider, or are recently hospitalized at the local mental health hospital.
- Interested 4th year general psychiatry residents can continue this interest through their 4th year curriculum.



Results:

The result of this implementation is positive, based on patient, physician, and resident feedback. The average wait time for a new patient to be seen is dependent on the severity of their reported symptoms on the referral form, with an estimation of 1 weeks to 3 weeks. There continues to be a strong demand for further expansion of this speciality clinic. The result of this implementation is improvement of physician collaboration, improvement of patient health, improvement of fetal health, identifying the demand of such services, and is pivotal for residency education.

Future Vision:

The future vision for this program is to provide access to psychiatric care for all perinatal women in need in the West Texas region. In addition, we wish to inspire future psychiatric providers to familiarize and further specialize in the care of perinatal psychiatric patients.