Mental Health Professional Shortage Designation Tool:
Helping Los Angeles County get quality mental health professionals in high need areas
By: Rachel M. Gannon

Abstract:
This paper looks at federal and state mental health loan repayment programs in order to determine how to get designate more areas in Los Angeles County as a Mental Health Professional Shortage Designated Area. To do this, maps are used to show the problem: disparities in mental health services among the number of mental health professionals in large populations of people of color who live in poverty, the process: mental health loan repayment programs and survey/application process, and the solution: creation of a web-based GIS tool to help agencies easily complete the surveys and apply for the loans. The web-based GIS tool assists hiring mental health professionals, agency location planning and directs funding to address future needs.

Introduction:
The U.S. Surgeon General's 2001 report discovered there are disparities in accessing medical, dental and mental health resources throughout the country (DHHS, 2001). The report found that in areas with large percentages of persons of color availability and access to these health services were extremely scarce. Specifically, minority populations living in poverty lack local mental health services. The report ascertained that minorities do not have more severe or more of a prevalent of mental illness than White populations, but minorities receive less care and less quality of care than their White counterparts. To address this problem, the State of California and the United States Federal Health and Human Services Department have developed two loan repayment programs in order to attract mental health professionals to theses areas of need: the State Loan Forgiveness and National Health Services Corp Loan Forgiveness Programs. The programs repay mental health professionals' student loans if they agree to work in Mental Health Professional Shortage Designated Areas (MHPSAs) upon graduation.

Background MHPSA:
The areas involved in the MHSPA designated process are called Medical Study Service Areas (MSSAs). MSSAs are determined by population and Los Angles County (LAC) has 100 of them. Each of these MSSAs goes through an arduous process to assess various demographic data to see if they are good candidates to qualify for the loan repayment program (poverty, number of psychiatrists to population, etc). Surveys are completed by the psychiatrists* (who provide services in the MSSA) which are then submitted to the state/federal programs for review. Once the MSSA can prove that it is an area of mental health need, the MSSA can be awarded an MHPSA designation. The Workforce, Education and Training (WET) division in the LAC Department of Mental Health (DMH) is currently involved in helping agencies apply for this designation and loan repayment programs by implementing GIS mapping tools.

Policy Question:
How can Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health help identify areas of need and attract highly qualified mental health professionals?

Analysis of Map 1 - Shortages of Psychiatrists in Los Angeles County
This map shows the density of psychiatrists in LAC in relation to 4 racial/ethnic groups: Hispanic, Black, White and Asian. Psychiatrists are most populous in MSSAs with large White populations. Almost half of the MSSAs in LAC are 50% or more Hispanic where psychiatrists are especially scarce. Nine of these MSSAs have six or fewer psychiatrists. Only one of 16 most heavily populated Hispanic MSSAs has more than six psychiatrists. The scarcity of psychiatrists in MSSAs with non-White populations shows that people of color cannot receive mental health services where they live and have to travel farther for service than their White counterparts.

Analysis of Map 2 - Organizational Surveying Strategy of MSSAs

Map 2 shows the progress of the surveys. An agency must survey every psychiatrist in their agency, all agencies in their MSSA, and all agencies (public & private) in a 7-mile radius (denotes 40 minute travel time) as part of the MHPSA application. This map shows the number of private and DMH-affiliated psychiatrists (~2,000). This helps agencies see the status of each MSSA (i.e. which MSSAs have been surveyed (4), are actively completing surveys (10), and which MSSAs have received the MHPSA designation (4)). These different statuses are colored, shaded and labeled separately for organizational purposes. It also guides WET to help determine which MSSAs should be surveyed because they have an easier chance at designation. There are 18 MSSAs that meet this criteria (30% + population living below the Federal Poverty Line & 1:20,000 psychiatrist to population ratio). The MSSA that was selected is "78.2 uuu" which is the Athens/Gardena NE/Harbor/Gateway North area with only 1 psychiatrist and 50% of its population living below the 200% poverty line. The enlarged map in Map 2 shows the same MSSA and contiguous areas (26) in the 7-mile radius. It also shows the location of private (36) and DMH affiliated psychiatrists (438) who practice in the area. As soon as an entire MSSA has completed the survey their status will be changed and displayed accordingly on the map.

Map 3: Solution (http://egis3.lacounty.gov/mssa/Viewer.html?Viewer=LACountyMSSA)
The web-based MHPSA application tool was developed with the Mental Health Services Act Data Team from DMH and Latitude Services. This ESRI-based, geo-cortex technology tool allows individual agencies to select their MSSA and export psychiatrist information to Excel files (psychiatrist name, address and telephone number). The tool also has a feature to select individual psychiatrists to access their contact information with the click of the mouse. Similar color-coded and shading techniques to Map 2 are also present in the web-based application.

Analysis of Map 4 - Asian Language Disparities in the Delivery of Mental Health Services
Another important factor in the receipt of mental health services is language use of the mental health provider. Map 4 examines mental health services in seven of the most Asian populated MSSAs. It provides a target list of agencies that should hire mental health professionals who speak Asian Languages since only 11 of 37 agencies in these areas provide some type of Asian language support. A chart is also included that lists which agencies speak specific Asian languages. The most common languages spoken in large Asian populated MSSAs are Mandarin, Japanese and Korean. This map can assist LAC DMH to identify the specific needs of each MSSA by using mental health Cultural Competency policy. Specifically, this map can help place qualified mental health professionals who provide services in the spoken languages of the area. Consumer utilization of services and quality of care increase when language services are provided.

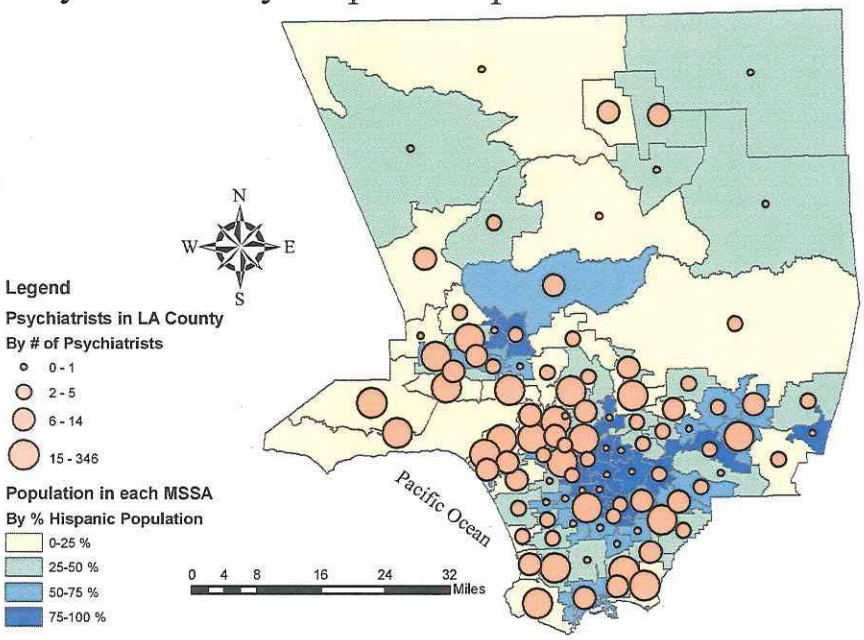
Conclusion & Recommendation
The maps have explored the issue of disparity of mental health services in populations of color and poverty and have identified areas that are underserved which can be used to help providers identify whether or not they qualify as a part of loan repayment programs for recent graduates. In particular, the web-based GIS application offers a solution to the problem by helping agencies to qualify for designation for federal and state loan repayment programs and it increases the number qualified mental health professionals. The application will assist LAC DMH's future multi-million dollar WET funding and mental health professional recruitment. The GIS tool will also help to drive planning and implementation of future agency placement to address unmet needs throughout Los Angeles County.

Note: The reason why only psychiatrists are surveyed and not all mental health professionals is because of the large size and population of Los Angeles County. More rural and smaller populated counties must survey all mental health professionals, but Los Angeles County does not have to do so. If any area is designated MHPSA in Los Angeles County by surveying psychiatrists only, all mental health professionals (Psychologists, MFTs, and Licensed Social Workers) are still eligible for the loan repayment program.

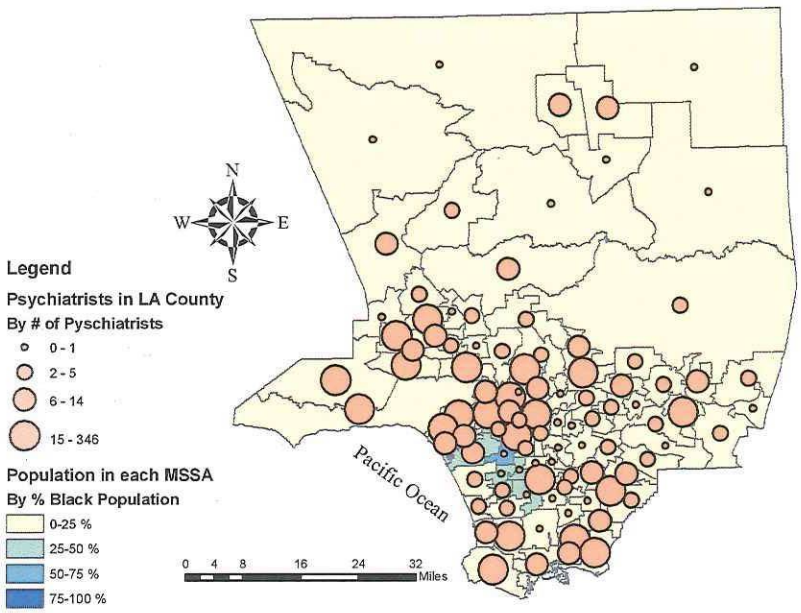
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity—A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.* Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

Density of Psychiatrists in Los Angeles County

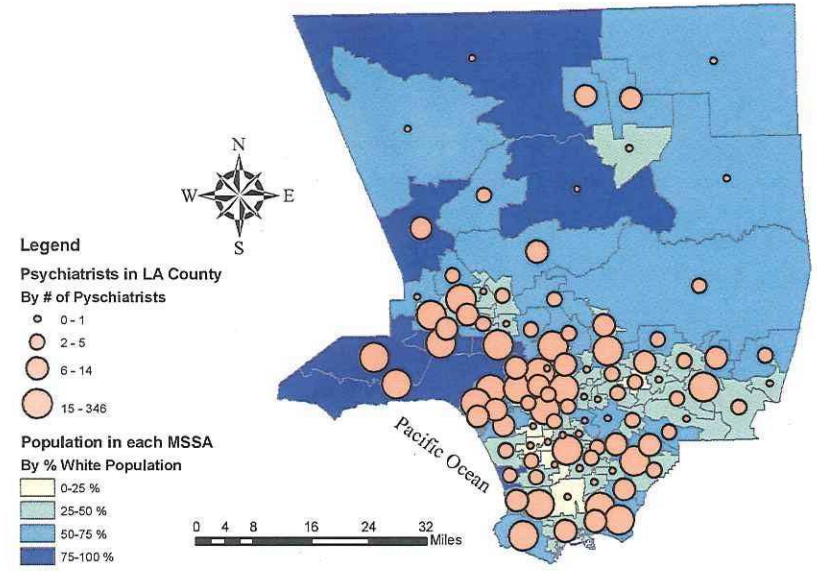
Psychiatrists by Hispanic Population



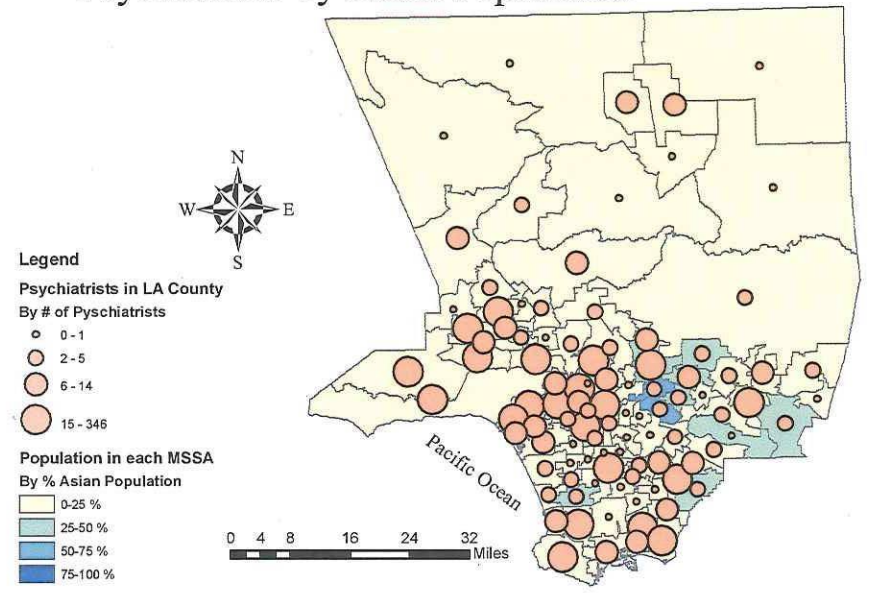
Psychiatrists by Black Population



Psychiatrists by White Population



Psychiatrists by Asian Population



Sources: LAC DMH, OSHPD, CA Health Care Network, Color Brewer,Claritas Population Estimates, Census 2000 TIGER/Line Data Description, American Fact Finder

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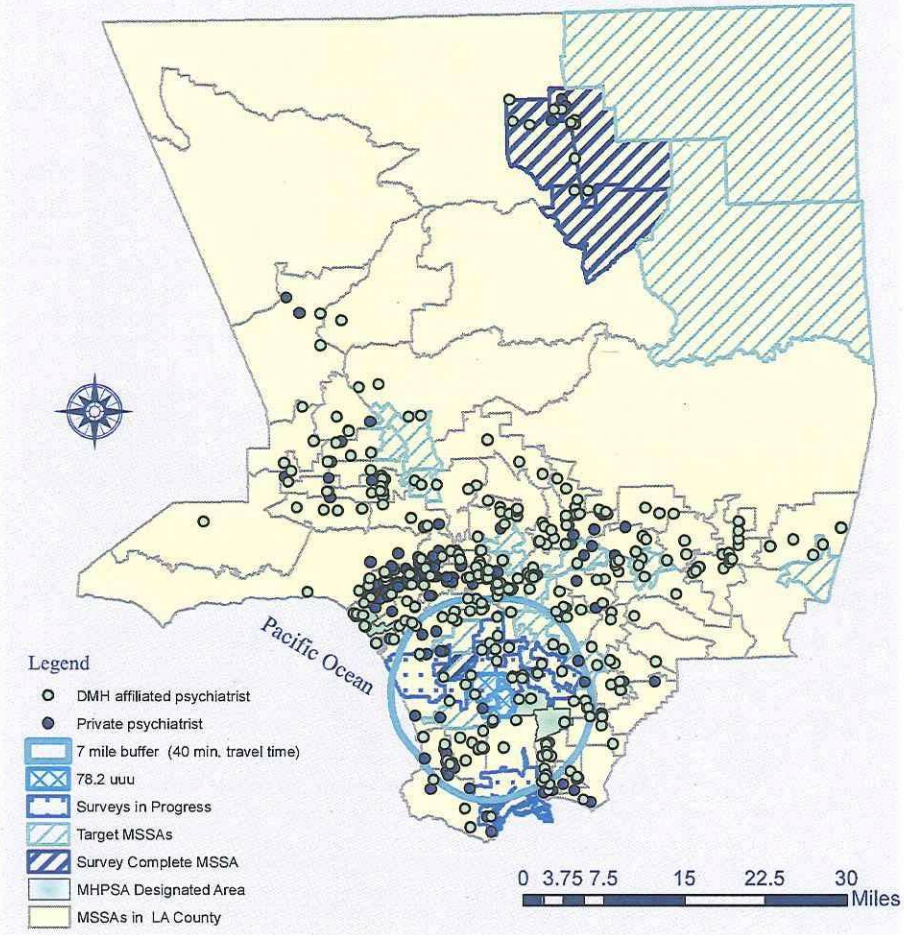
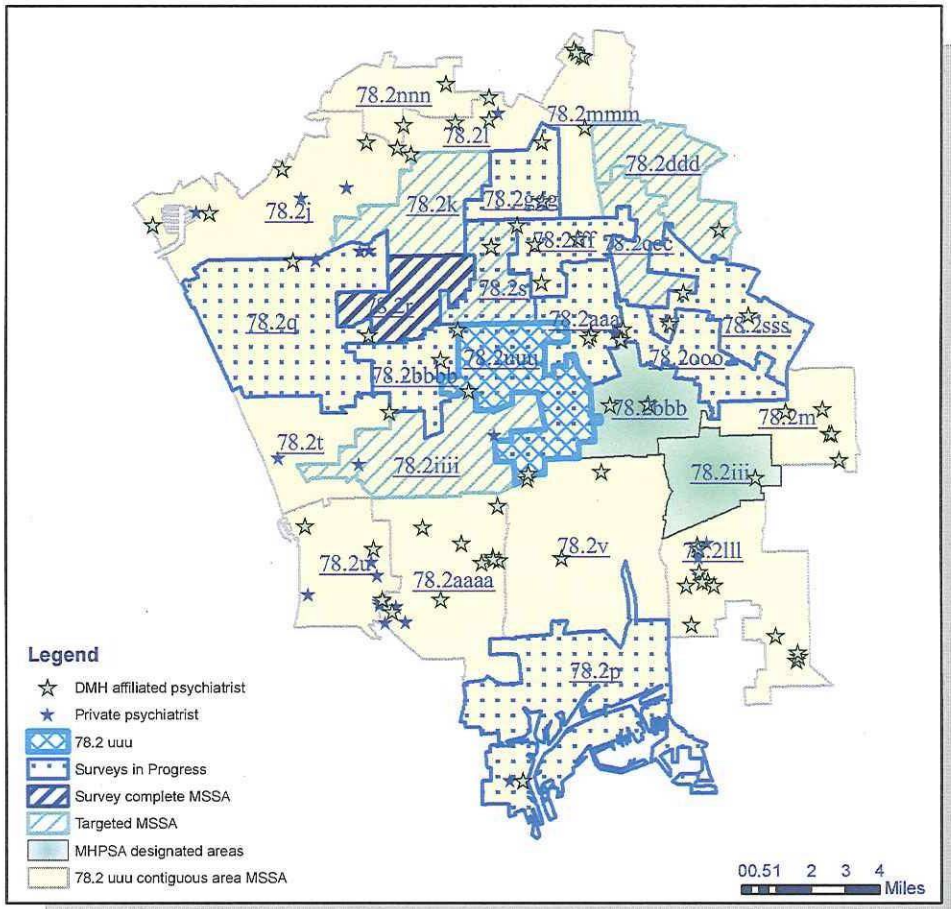
MHPSA Designation Process

Los Angeles County MSSAs & Survey Process



Source: Sources: LAC DMH, OSHPD, CA Health Care Network, Color Brewer,Claritas Population Estimates, Census 2000 TIGER/Line Data Description, American Fact Finder

Enlarged Buffer Area: MSSA 78.2 uuu Survey Process



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Los Angeles County

Department of Mental Health - MHPSA Tool

24/7 ACCESS Center: 1-800-854-7771

206 Results Found

• Refine Results • List View • Zoom to All • Reports
• Export to CSV

Psychiatrist - Private | Psychiatrist - Public

OBJECTID	Full Address
30	8019 COMPTON AVE, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90
31	8019 COMPTON AVE, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90
32	8019 COMPTON AVE, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90
33	8019 COMPTON AVE, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90
34	6277 AVALON BLVD, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
35	6277 AVALON BLVD, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
36	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
37	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
38	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
39	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
40	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
41	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
42	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
43	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
44	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
45	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
46	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
47	439 E 97TH ST, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90003
48	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
49	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
50	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
51	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
52	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
53	7410 S BROADWAY, LOS ANGELES, CA, 900
68	1720 E 120TH ST, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90059
69	1720 E 120TH ST, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90059
70	3031 S VERMONT AVE, LOS ANGELES, CA, 9
71	3031 S VERMONT AVE, LOS ANGELES, CA, 9

I want to... | Select MSSA: 78.2s

Culver City | Ladera Heights | View Park - Windsor Hills | Vernon | East Los Angeles | Inglewood | Lennox | Westmont / West Athens | Florence-Graham | Walnut Park | El Segundo | Del Aire | Hawthorne | Gardena | West Alondra Park | Redondo Beach | Harbor City

2.5 mi
2.5 km

BHARDWAJ

• Zoom to feature • Pan to feature • Create a Report • Copy feature • Add to Selection

Feature Details

None Available

Attributes

Field Name	Field Value	Origin of Field
OBJECTID	68	Psychiatrist - Public
Full Address	1720 E 120TH ST, LOS ANGELES, CA, 90059	Psychiatrist - Public
Street Address	1720 E 120TH STREET	Psychiatrist - Public

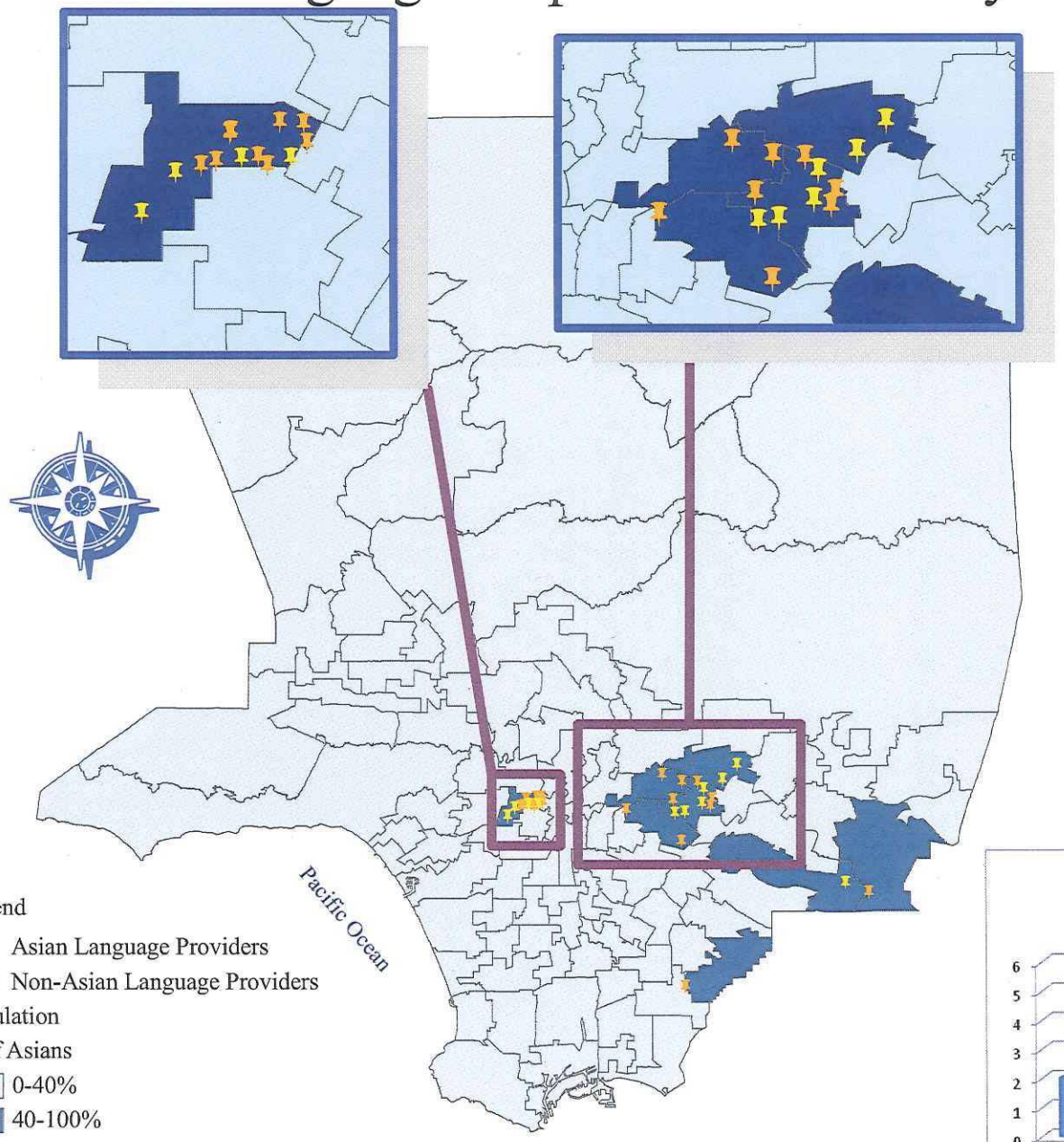
Related Data

None Available

Links

None Available

Asian Language Disparities in Delivery of Mental Health Services



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LA County Agencies in need of Asian-speaking Mental Health Professionals

AIDS Project Los Angeles
BHC Alhambra Hospital
Bienvenidos Mental Health (MH)
Homes For Life
Ingleside Hospital
Olive Crest Treatment Centers, INC
Pacific Clinics ACT- El Monte
Pacific Clinics- Portals Behavioral Health Services
Pacific Clinics- Portals Twin Peaks Residential
Portal House, INC
Portal House, Rampart
Portals Corporate Cookie
Portals House- Twin Peaks
Portals House, Community Living Program (CLP)
Portals House, Mariposa Club House
Saint Annes
Specialized Countywide Program

Sources: Sources: LAC DMH, OSHPD, CA Health Care Network, Color Brewer,Claritas Population Estimates, Census 2000 TIGER/Line Data Description, American Fact Finder