



### **Background Detail**

**Among MHA screeners, the most common screening taken is for depression, but anxiety screenings have increased dramatically in 2020.**

Among our first five million screeners, more than 45 percent screened for depression – the most common mood disorder – while an additional 19 percent screened for bipolar disorder and 14 percent screened for anxiety. These were among the first four screening tools available when the program launched in 2014.

In recent years, as more tools were offered, people screened more widely for other conditions. In 2019, for example, depression screeners represented 36 percent of all screens taken, followed by anxiety at 18 percent, bipolar at 15 percent, and psychosis at 14 percent.

But through the first few months of 2020, anxiety screening increased significantly as the pandemic took hold. Through mid-May, the share of anxiety screenings rose from 14 percent overall in 2014-2019 to 22 percent of 2020 screenings.

**Significant percentages of screeners are positive, but most of these either have never been diagnosed, are not currently in treatment, or are receiving treatment that isn't working for them.**

MHA's screening population is a help-seeking population, many of whom have never been diagnosed with a mental health condition or treated for one or have stopped treatment in the past. Among all screeners:

- 3.7 million, or 73 percent, screened "positive" or "moderate to severe" for the condition for which they screened.
- Of nearly 2 million people in this positive group who were asked if they had ever been diagnosed or received mental health treatment in the past, 60 percent – or 1.25 million people – said that they had not.
- And of those who when asked said that they had received treatment in the past, 55 percent – or more than 216,000 – were no longer receiving any treatment at the time they took a screen.

For a period of time, MHA surveyed those currently in treatment to find out why they were taking a mental health screening. Of the 83,825 who answered this question, 41 percent said their treatment was working but something else was going on, and 40 percent said either that they weren't getting the help they needed or that their treatment no longer was working for them.

**MHA screeners are young, which is consistent with the age of onset of most serious mental health conditions.**

Mental health concerns are concentrated among younger people. Among MHA's 3 million screeners who provided their age, 64 percent were under the age of 25, with half of that group under the age of 18. This is consistent with national data suggesting that half of all mental illnesses emerge by the age of 14 and three-fourths by the age of 25 – and so we would expect the vast majority of screeners to be young. Young people experience more moderate to severe depression and anxiety than all other age groups.

But while two million screeners were under the age of 25, MHA screening has reached many thousands not in this age group. Nearly 100,000 screeners, for example, are over the age of 55, offering valuable insights into mental health conditions affecting the population as we age.

**MHA screeners are representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the population. In addition, students, LGBTQ, caregivers, military, and trauma survivors all screen in large numbers.**

MHA screening reaches important segments of the population. Screeners are predominantly female (74 percent), reflecting a lower inclination among males to talk about mental health problems. Otherwise, the screening population is a diverse one: 64 percent white/non-Hispanic or Latino and 36 percent racial/ethnic minority. Among racial or ethnic minority groups, the following numbers of screeners self-identified:

- 350,086 Hispanic or Latino
- 250,399 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 224,868 Black or African American
- 154,421 Mixed Race
- 31,421 Native American or American Indian

These volumes offer meaningful opportunities to compare and analyze data across population groups.

In addition:

- 1.7 million screeners identified as students
- 557,810 identified as LGBTQ
- 135,445 identified as caregivers
- 76,871 as veterans or active duty military
- 72,789 as new or expectant mothers
- 163,024 identified as trauma survivors (trauma survivor was not added as an option until 2018. In 2019, 23 percent identified as trauma survivors).

**People seeking help for their mental health are also frequently living with other serious chronic health conditions.**

More than 578,000 screeners reported living with other chronic health conditions. The most common one reported – by 179,609 (31 percent) of those reporting another chronic condition – was chronic pain or arthritis. More than 71,000 screeners reported having COPD or other lung conditions, more than 71,000 reported having diabetes, more than 48,000 reported having heart disease, and more than 15,000 reported having a movement disorder. More than 6,600 reported having cancer, and 3,600 reported having dementia.

**People seeking help are not just looking for referrals to treatment services, they are also looking for information, peer and family support, and tools they can use themselves.**

Roughly one third of screeners (1.7 million) responded to a question about what they would do with their screening results. Slightly more than 500,000 screeners said that they planned to discuss their screening results with a professional, family member, or friend.

While 31 percent of the 1.7 million people who answered that question said that they planned to take no action, of the 1.1 million screeners who said they wanted help, 45 percent (506,000) wanted to receive additional information about mental health (45%, N=506,340), followed by 42 percent (471,000) who wanted online or mobile programs to help track or manage symptoms and 40 percent (454,000) who said they wanted worksheets or coping skills to use at home. An additional 28 percent (320,000) wanted to be connected to a provider or support organization.