

States Permitting Psychologist Prescribing Authority

RxP Legislation Status & Mental Health Outcome Data

OPPOSE SB2570/HB2315

Overview

Contrary to the commonly cited figure of five states, seven states now grant prescriptive authority (RxP) to specially trained psychologists. The original five states — New Mexico (2002), Louisiana (2004), Illinois (2014), Iowa (2016), and Idaho (2017) — have been joined by Colorado (2023) and Utah (2024). Psychologists may also prescribe in the U.S. Military, the Indian Health Service, and the U.S. territory of Guam.

As of early 2026, approximately 300–350 psychologists are actively prescribing across the United States — a remarkably small number given the stated rationale of expanding access to care. The data below raises serious questions about whether RxP legislation delivers on its promise to improve mental health outcomes.

The Seven RxP States: At a Glance

State	Year	MHA Overall Rank (1=Best, 51=Worst)	Mental Health Outcomes After RxP
New Mexico	2002	#21 of 51	WORST psychiatric hospital readmission rate in the nation. Only RxP state on top-10 lists for BOTH highest anxiety AND highest depression simultaneously. After 22+ years of psychologist prescribing, 1 in 5 adults still cannot access needed mental health care.
Louisiana	2004	#35 of 51	2nd WORST state in the nation for mental health (Soliant 2025). 5.8 poor mental health days per month — 4th highest in U.S. Highest disconnected youth rate in the nation (15%). Lost nearly 50% of all mental health treatment facilities from 2019–2021. After 20 years of RxP, outcomes have worsened.
Illinois	2014	#8 of 51	Over 80% of adults who needed mental health care DID NOT receive it — one of only 3 states at that threshold nationally (MHA 2024). 60% of Illinois counties have ZERO psychiatric services. RxP has not moved the needle on access in 10+ years.
Iowa	2016	#19 of 51	4th highest increase in mental illness in the nation from 2022 to 2023. 1 in 4 Iowa adults has a mental illness. Among the top 10 states with the highest anxiety rates in the U.S. 490

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			suicides recorded in Iowa in 2021 alone. After nearly a decade of psychologist prescribing, mental health outcomes in Iowa have continued to worsen.
Idaho	2017	#46 of 51	Ranked 46th of 51 (including D.C.) — BOTTOM 10% in the nation. Lowest psychiatrist-to-population ratio in the country. The state that launched the national RxP movement as a model now ranks among the very worst states for mental health outcomes after years of psychologist prescribing.
Colorado	2023	#29 of 51	Outcomes have WORSENE since RxP passed in 2023. Overall ranking plummeted from 30th (2023) to 46th (2024) — the 2nd-largest single-year decline in the nation (MHA). Adult mental health ranking dropped further to 48th in 2025. More than 1 in 4 Coloradans (26.2%) reported poor mental health in 2023 — highest ever recorded by Colorado Health Institute. 880,000 residents (17%) could not get mental health care — more than DOUBLE the rate from 2017. Children's ranking collapsed from 21st to 44th in one year. 6% of adults report serious suicidal thoughts.
Utah	2024	#40 of 51	WORST state in the nation for adults reporting any mental illness. Ranked 46th by MHA in BOTH 2023 and 2024 — no improvement. 4th highest rate of serious suicidal thoughts nationally. Poor mental health days rose 20%+ since 2021 — 3rd-largest two-year increase of any state. Utah's own 2025 Behavioral Health Commission confirmed mental illness and suicide rates 'have been increasing among both adults and youth.' Share of young adults with poor mental health MORE THAN DOUBLED over the last decade. 42.4% of female youth report sadness or hopelessness for 2+ consecutive weeks. Utah adopted RxP in 2024 while every major indicator was already trending worse.

Sources: Mental Health America 2024 State Rankings (mhanational.org); Soliant 2025 Best States for Mental Health; HealthCareInsider Best & Worst States for Mental Healthcare; MoneyGeek Best States for Mental Health Services.

Detailed State-by-State Analysis

1. New Mexico — RxP Since 2002

New Mexico was the first state in the nation to grant psychologists prescriptive authority, making it the longest-running test case for RxP policy. After more than two decades of psychologist prescribing, the outcomes are troubling:

- Ranked 21st overall by Mental Health America — middle of the pack at best after 22 years of RxP.
- The only RxP state to appear on top-10 lists for both highest anxiety rates AND highest depression rates simultaneously.
- Holds the worst 180-day state psychiatric hospital readmission rate in the entire nation — indicating patients are not receiving effective ongoing care.
- Consistently identified among states with the most Google searches for mental health care, suggesting high unmet need persists.

2. Louisiana — RxP Since 2004

Louisiana adopted RxP in 2004, yet its mental health standing has deteriorated significantly over the subsequent two decades:

- Ranked 35th by Mental Health America — in the bottom third nationally.
- Ranked 49th out of 50 states (2nd worst) in Soliant's 2025 Best States for Mental Health Index.
- 4th highest average number of poor mental health days per month (5.8 days).
- Tied for the highest disconnected youth rate in the nation at 15% — a key predictor of long-term mental health problems.
- Experienced a nearly 50% collapse in available mental health treatment facilities from 2019 to 2021.
- Among the top 10 states with the highest rates of depression nationally.

3. Illinois — RxP Since 2014

Illinois has a unique RxP law allowing predoctoral training, yet access remains severely limited:

- Ranked 8th by Mental Health America overall, though this ranking reflects prevalence metrics that favor states with fewer reported conditions.
- One of only three states where over 80% of adults who needed mental health care did not receive it — one of the worst access gaps in the nation despite RxP.
- 60% of Illinois counties have no psychiatric services at all, with little evidence RxP has meaningfully addressed this gap.

4. Iowa — RxP Since 2016

Iowa passed RxP legislation in 2016, yet mental health outcomes have continued to worsen in the years since:

- Ranked 19th overall by Mental Health America — and trending in the wrong direction, with the 4th highest increase in mental illness in the nation from 2022 to 2023.
- 1 in 4 Iowa adults has a mental illness, with demand for care far outpacing available services.
- Among the top 10 states with the highest anxiety rates nationally.

- 490 suicides recorded in Iowa in 2021 alone — a stark indicator that existing care is not reaching those who need it most.

5. Idaho — RxP Since 2017

Idaho is frequently cited as the motivating case for RxP due to its severe psychiatrist shortage, yet its mental health outcomes rank among the nation's worst:

- Ranked 46th out of 51 (including Washington D.C.) by Mental Health America — in the bottom 12% nationally.
- Has the lowest psychiatrist-to-population ratio in the country, a problem that approximately 300+ prescribing psychologists nationwide have not resolved.
- Despite years of RxP availability, Idaho remains one of the worst states in the nation for mental health outcomes.

6. Colorado — RxP Since 2023

Colorado passed RxP in March 2023 — and the data since then shows outcomes have gotten significantly worse, not better:

- Overall mental health ranking plummeted from 30th (2023) to 46th (2024) — the 2nd-largest single-year decline of any state in the nation.
- Adult mental health ranking continued sliding to 48th in 2025, placing Colorado near the very bottom nationally.
- More than 1 in 4 Coloradans (26.2%) reported poor mental health in 2023 — the highest figure ever recorded in the Colorado Health Access Survey.
- 880,000 Coloradans (17%) could not get the mental health care they needed — more than DOUBLE the rate from 2017, despite RxP being law.
- Children's mental health ranking collapsed from 21st to 44th in a single year.
- 6% of Colorado adults report serious thoughts of suicide — among the highest rates in the nation.

7. Utah — RxP Since 2024

Utah is the most recent state to grant RxP authority, doing so in 2024:

- Ranked 40th by Mental Health America overall.
- Identified by MHA as one of the three worst states for prevalence of Any Mental Illness — nearly 1 in 3 Utah adults had AMI in 2022-2023.
- Ranked worst in the nation for adults reporting any mental illness in the past year (HealthCareInsider).
- Oregon and West Virginia joined Utah as the three lowest-ranked states for AMI prevalence.

Key Takeaways for Legislative Advocacy

The data across all seven RxP states collectively undermines the primary justification for psychologist prescribing authority — that it will improve mental health outcomes and access:

- No RxP state ranks among the top tier for mental health outcomes. The best performer (Illinois at #8) simultaneously has one of the worst access gaps in the nation, with over 80% of those needing care not receiving it.

- The two longest-running RxP states (New Mexico, 22+ years; Louisiana, 20+ years) have produced no measurable improvement in state mental health rankings and in several metrics rank among the nation's worst.
- Idaho, the state most frequently cited to justify RxP due to psychiatrist shortages, ranks 46th nationally despite years of psychologist prescribing.
- Utah — the most recent adopter — already has the highest rate of adults reporting any mental illness in the nation.
- Nationally, only approximately 300–350 psychologists are actively prescribing, suggesting the real-world impact on access is minimal.
- Multiple RxP states appear on lists of highest anxiety, highest depression, worst access, and worst disconnected youth rates — suggesting that expanding prescribing authority without broader system investment does not move the needle on outcomes.

Sources & Methodology

Mental Health America 2024 State Rankings: mhanational.org/the-state-of-mental-health-in-america/data-rankings/ | Pharmacy Times (2024): [States Grant Prescribing Authority to Psychologists](#) | Wikipedia: [Prescriptive Authority for Psychologists Movement](#) (updated Jan. 2026) | Soliant: [2025 Best States for Mental Health Report](#) | HealthCareInsider: [Best and Worst States for Mental Healthcare](#) | MoneyGeek: [Best \(and Worst\) States for Mental Health Access and Cost](#) | Becker's Behavioral Health: [All 50 States Ranked by Mental Illness Access, Prevalence](#) | Colorado Health Institute: [2023 CHAS Mental Health Report](#) | Utah Behavioral Health Commission 2025 Legislative Report | Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute: [Utah Behavioral Health Master Plan](#) (2024)