



PRELIMINARY REPORT

UW and Seattle Children's Consultation and Referral Lines for Mental and Behavioral Health

Legislative Auditor's Conclusion:

Providers were satisfied with consultation lines, which they said have improved patient access to mental and behavioral health care.

The referral service has helped families find outpatient care but has struggled to meet timeliness goals and achieve statewide participation.

JLARC to evaluate four consultation and referral lines for mental and behavioral health

(SHB 2728, 2020)

Seattle Children's and University of Washington operate the lines under contract with the Health Care Authority.

Combined, the lines have cost \$12.9 million.
(fiscal years 2020 through 2022).





3 consultation lines for providers

Allow providers to discuss patients' condition with consulting psychiatrist.



1 referral service for families

Mental Health Referral Service provides a list of outpatient mental or behavioral health providers.



Presentation Overview

Provider consultation line satisfaction

Family referral service satisfaction, timeliness, and use

Three consultation lines for providers who treat different patient groups

Psychiatrists answer questions about diagnoses, medication, treatment, and other topics.
UW and Children's offer care guides, newsletters, and conferences.

Psychiatry Consultation Line (PCL)

Adults
(18+ years old)

24/7

Perinatal PCL

Pregnant or postpartum
(any age)

9am-5pm, M-F

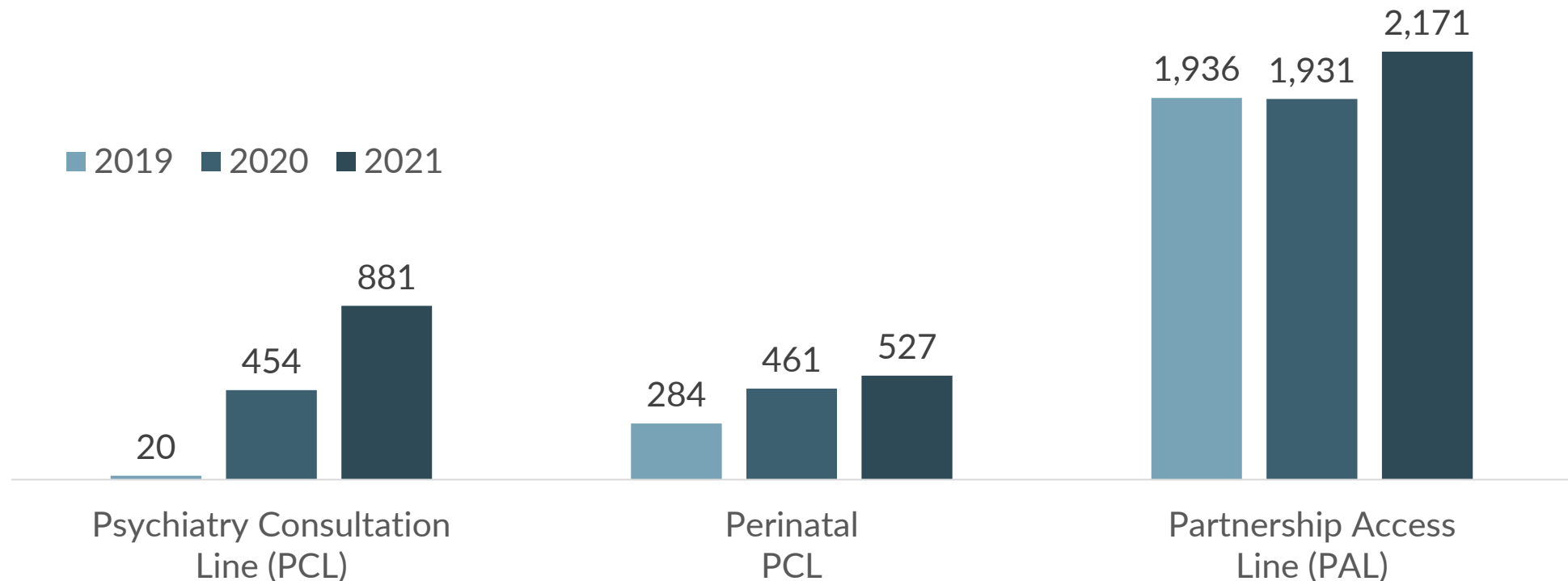
Partnership Access Line (PAL)

Children and adolescents
(0-19 years old)

8am-5pm, M-F

Provider consultation line calls have increased since 2019

Lines were used statewide.



293 providers gave feedback to JLARC

There was statewide representation.



Focus groups



Interviews



Questionnaire



Emails

Providers overwhelmingly satisfied



Excellent and evidence-based

Providers would use the service again and recommend to their colleagues.

Reliable and timely

Providers able to give dependable, same-day care to their patients.

Helps diagnose & treat

Some providers unable to provide care without the consulting line.

Providers say lines increase access to care

Providers also said there is no resource equivalent to the consultation lines.

Fills gaps in system

Some areas in WA have few psychiatrists and lines help bridge the gap.

Overcomes barriers

Lines reduce time to receive treatment, and reduce other barriers.

Educates providers

Information received helped treat current and future patients.



Presentation Overview

Provider consultation line satisfaction

**Family referral service satisfaction,
timeliness, and use**

Mental Health Referral Service helps families find outpatient providers for minors

Operated by Seattle Children's
8am – 5pm, M-F
6,700+ families since 2019



Referral process has five steps



Families surveyed were generally satisfied with referral process

JLARC surveyed 1,607 families who used the referral service in 2021.



No significant differences in satisfaction based on race, language, or location.

Fewer families agree the service helped them access care

62% of families surveyed who received a letter agreed the service helped them access care.

Some families may face additional barriers and don't make an appointment with a provider.



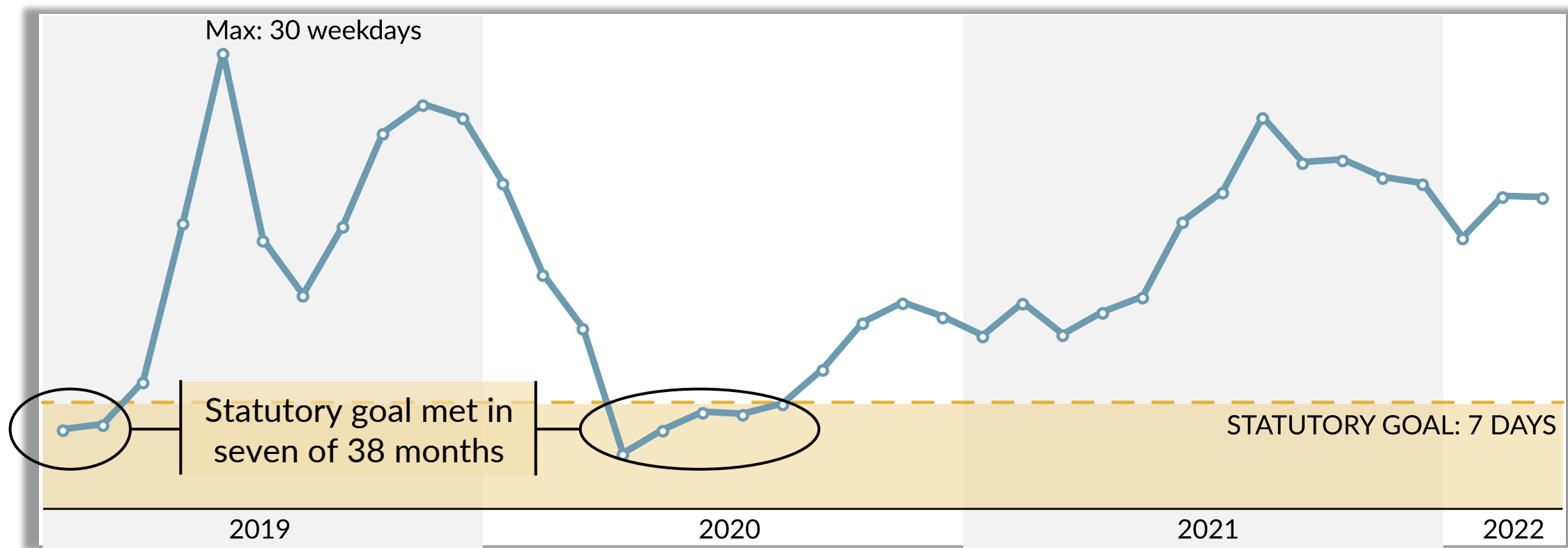
Less than half of families surveyed were satisfied with timeliness

Families unsatisfied with time to speak with staff or receive a referral list.



Referral line has rarely met statutory goal to send list of providers in 7 days

Children's cites rising demand, staffing shortages, and provider availability.



Some families receive referral lists more quickly than others

Wait time is shorter for Medicaid participants.

- Medicaid: 9 weekdays avg.
- Private insurance: 19 weekdays avg.

Callers with African American or Hispanic children received letters more quickly than callers for white or Asian children.



Almost all referral service families are from Western WA

Unclear why families in Eastern Washington are underrepresented.

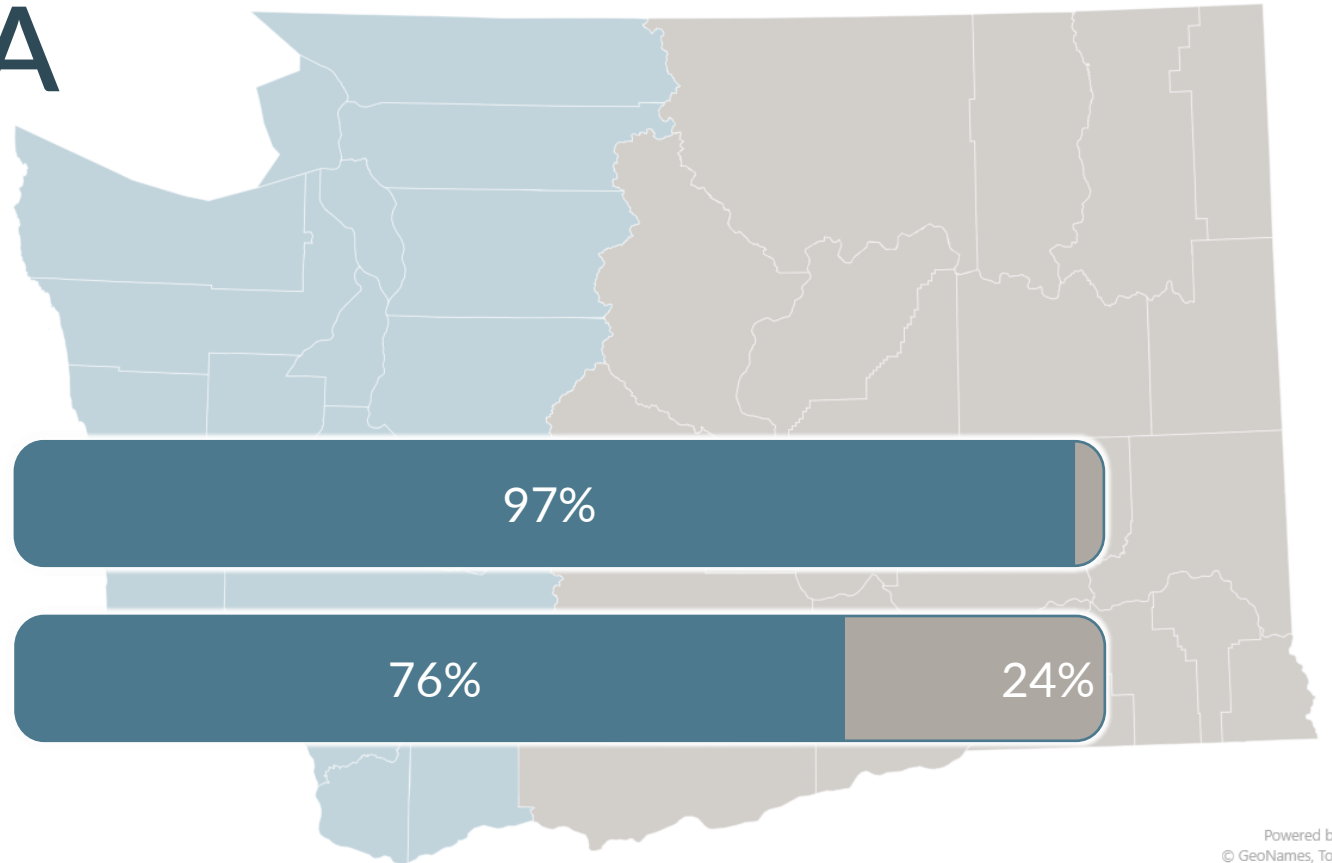
Referral service participants

97%

All Washington children

76%

24%





Legislative Auditor's Recommendation

HCA and Children's should:

- Develop a plan to meet statutory and contractual timeliness requirements.
- Investigate disproportionately low participation in the referral service from Eastern Washington families.

Next Steps

Proposed Final Report

November 2022

View the full report:

www.leg.wa.gov/jlarc



Video Summary



One Page Overview



PDF Version



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