Understanding the Superstorm Sandy Profiles: Utilization of Health Services At-a-Glance
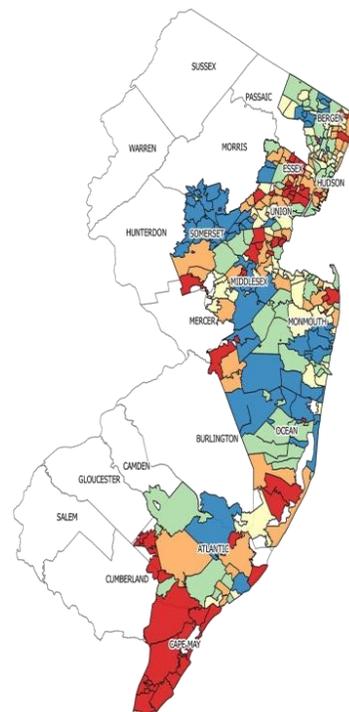
Superstorm Sandy Devastates New Jersey

On October 29, 2012 Superstorm Sandy hit the Eastern Seaboard of New Jersey displacing thousands of residents and destroying homes and businesses.

The disaster placed more than 822,000 Medicare Fee-for-Service beneficiaries at an elevated risk for behavioral health issues, especially those with pre-existing mental health conditions.

Project Framework

HQSI received funding from Medicare for a special innovations project designed to develop data profiles to assist 10 selected communities—within the 10 FEMA-declared disaster counties—form targeted, community-based approaches to:

- Increasing Medicare-covered depression screenings among at-risk beneficiaries residing in the 10 targeted communities
- Using behavioral health data to enhance each community's ability to coordinate behavioral health services during and after a disaster

Utilization of Health Services

Many beneficiaries with behavioral health conditions may receive medical services due to physical problems caused by their behavioral health condition, or they may wish to avoid using behavioral health services altogether. Therefore, these profiles observe the use of both medical and behavioral health care services.

Also, since one of the goals of this project is to increase the use of the annual Medicare depression screening benefit, an emphasis has been placed on this service in these profiles.

What's in These Profiles?

Observations on the annual trend, widespread presence, and percent change of behavioral health assessments used to diagnose beneficiaries

- County: Pages 43-49; Community: Pages 36-42

Observations on the annual trend, widespread presence, and percent change of behavioral health therapies used to treat beneficiaries

- County: Pages 52-56; Community: Pages 45-48

Observations on the annual trend, widespread presence, and percent change in the use of inpatient health services

- County: Pages 61-64; Community Pages 50-53

Observations on the annual trend, widespread presence, and percent change in the use of inpatient health services within 30 days of an acute care hospital discharge

- County: Pages 67-69; Community: Pages 55-57

Observations on the annual trend, widespread presence, and percent change in the use of health services in other settings

- County: Pages 72-75; Community: Pages 59-62

How to Use These Profiles

- The utilization of health services data can help providers determine which services are most used and where potential gaps in care may exist when planning for the treatment of beneficiaries with behavioral health conditions

Where to Find the Profiles

All 10 county and community profiles are available on the HQSI website at:
http://www.hqsi.org/index/Super-Storm-Sandy/Super-Storm-Sandy-Profiles.html