



MORaine TOWNSHIP
Community Mental Health Board

MORaine TOWNSHIP MENTAL HEALTH BOARD
SUPPLEMENTAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT
FEBRUARY 2026

PREPARED BY: LEADING HEALTHY FUTURES

MORaine TOWNSHIP MENTAL HEALTH BOARD SUPPLEMENTAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2026

I. TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Table of Contents 2
- II. Executive Summary 3
- III. Introduction 4
 - A. Background 4
 - B. Purpose 4
 - C. Methods 5
- IV. Youth Health Indicator Data 6
 - A. Youth Substance Use in Lake County 6
 - B. Youth Mental Health 8
- V. Adult Health Indicator Data 10
 - A. Adult Alcohol and Tobacco Use 10
 - B. Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Mortality 13
 - C. Adult Mental Health 14
 - D. Cognitive Disability 16
- VI. Access to Care 17
 - A. Provider Ratios 17
 - B. Geographic Access 18
 - C. Other Barriers to Care 19
- VII. Conclusion 20

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This needs assessment, prepared for the Moraine Township Community Mental Health Board (MTCMHB) by Leading Healthy Futures (LHF), offers a comprehensive examination of the mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) needs of residents in Moraine Township, Illinois. The assessment fulfills requirements set forth by the Illinois Community Mental Health Act and serves as a foundation for strategic planning, program development, and community engagement.

Since its establishment in 2025, as a result of a referendum passed in 2024, MTCMHB has been committed to promoting access to resources to address mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability services within the Moraine Township population, through the impactful use of funds to address gaps in the system and enhance the well-being of Moraine Township residents.

This needs assessment covers Moraine Township, which includes the entirety of Highwood, nearly the entirety of Highland Park, and small portions of both Deerfield and Lake Forest. It supplements the demographic analysis and community survey conducted by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University in early 2025 by providing additional quantitative analysis of secondary sources. This includes collecting quantitative data using the most recently available data sets from sources such as the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), Lake County Illinois Youth Survey, CDC PLACES, SparkMap, and other publicly available data sources.

Key findings reveal that Moraine Township generally performs better than state and national averages on many behavioral health indicators, including lower rates of depression, suicide mortality, and tobacco use among adults. Many youth indicators have improved over time, including decreases in tobacco use, poor mental health, and suicidal ideation. However, the community faces elevated rates of alcohol use among youth and binge drinking among adults, and there is a notable gap between perceived and actual substance use among adolescents.

Moreover, there are persistent disparities in a variety of indicators between Highland Park and Highwood, with Highwood faring worse than Highland Park on adults who currently smoke, depression prevalence, poor mental health, and the population with a cognitive disability. This may be exacerbated by the fewer number of mental health providers in Highwood and the northern half of the township, as well as other access barriers around cultural competency. Inadequate provider to population ratios for addiction/substance use providers are another gap.

Overall, this needs assessment reaffirms the importance of MTCMHB's work promoting access to resources to address mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability services within the Moraine Township population. The findings highlight the ongoing need to increase provider availability, reduce barriers to access, provide education and outreach to improve awareness of available resources, and target interventions to address gaps in access and equity.

III. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Moraine Township Community Mental Health Board (MTCMHB) was established pursuant to the Illinois Community Mental Health Act, 405 ILCS 20/0.1. It was formed in 2025, funded by a Moraine Township referendum passed by Township voters in 2024, which provided approximately \$900,000 in tax revenue for its work. The MTCMHB is authorized to allocate these public funds for the planning, funding, coordination, and evaluation of services for Moraine Township residents that address mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use/addiction disorders.

MISSION

MTCMHB is committed to promoting access to resources to address mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability services within the Moraine Township population, through the impactful use of funds to address gaps in the system and enhance the well-being for our residents.

VISION

Our goal is to foster a supportive, responsive, and inclusive environment that promotes recovery, resilience, and empowerment for individuals and families affected by mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental challenges.

Values

- Inclusive and equitable
- Caring, compassionate, and empathetic
- Transparent and accountable to the community
- Creative, innovative, and open to new solutions

B. Purpose

This community needs assessment was conducted by Leading Healthy Futures in late 2025/early 2026 to help MTCMHB identify unmet mental health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental disability needs in the community. It helps fulfill requirements for the Illinois Community Mental Health Act, which mandates that each CMHB in the state:

- Review and evaluate community mental health services and facilities.
- Plan for programs of community mental health services and facilities.
- Consult with others regarding the most efficient delivery of services.
- Authorize distribution of funds to mental health services and facilities.

This needs assessment supplements the needs assessment conducted by Northern Illinois University in early 2025. Together with that assessment, it provides a foundation for a variety of key purposes, including strategic planning, program planning, distributing funds to programs for expanding or enhancing access to services, convening grantees and partners, communicating with residents around community needs and gaps, and policy development.

C. Methods

This needs assessment covers Moraine Township, which includes the entirety of Highwood, nearly the entirety of Highland Park, and small portions of both Deerfield and Lake Forest. The service area was defined as all the census tracts that make up the township, inclusive of one census tract that is only half in Moraine Township (see adjacent map).

This needs assessment supplements the demographic analysis and community survey conducted by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University during early 2025 by providing additional quantitative analysis of secondary sources. This includes collecting quantitative data using the most recently available data sets from sources such as the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), Lake County Illinois Youth Survey, CDC PLACES, SparkMap, and other publicly available data sources.



Map of Moraine Township, Illinois (black outline), with census tracts outlined and numbered in red. Municipalities are shaded in different colors.

At times, the best available data may be only available at the county or state levels rather than census tract, zip code, or municipal level. For example, Illinois Youth Survey data is shown only at the Lake County level in this report. In most other cases where data is not available at the desired geographic level, a standard extrapolation methodology is used to estimate the percent of a population with a certain condition in each zip code or census tract. This methodology allows data only available at the state or county level to be reliably extrapolated down to a smaller geography such as a township. Extrapolations in this report were provided by either CDC PLACES or SparkMap. Data can then be compared to benchmarks such as national or state averages.

IV. YOUTH HEALTH INDICATOR DATA

A. Youth Substance Use in Lake County

Substance use indicators vary among youth in Lake County. Lake County youth report slightly higher alcohol use in 12th grade than the statewide average (38% compared to 37%), as well as slightly higher e-cigarette or vaping product use than the state average (13% compared to 12%).

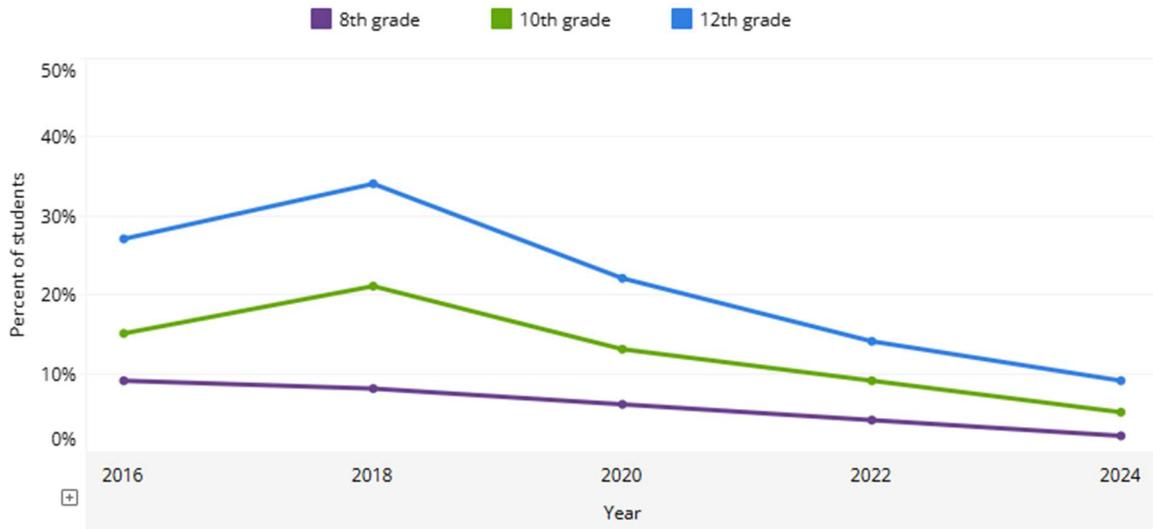
Conversely, Lake County youth report lower marijuana use in the past year than the state average (16% compared to 18%) and lower binge drinking in the past two weeks compared to state average (7% compared to 8%). For all indicators, however, the difference in reported substance use by youth statewide and in Lake County youth was relatively small.

Youth Health Indicator	Lake County	State
Used alcohol in the past year (grade 12)	38%	37%
Used e-cigarettes or other vaping products in past year (grade 12)	13%	12%
Used marijuana in the past year	16%	18%
Binge Drinking in the past 2 weeks	7%	8%

Source: Illinois Youth Survey, 2024.

Lake County youth tobacco and vaping usage has been decreasing at all grade levels (8th, 10th, and 12th) over the past eight years.

Use of Any Tobacco or Vaping Product Among Lake County 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students



Source: Illinois Youth Survey, 2016-2024, as visualized by [Lake County Health Department's tableau dashboard](#).

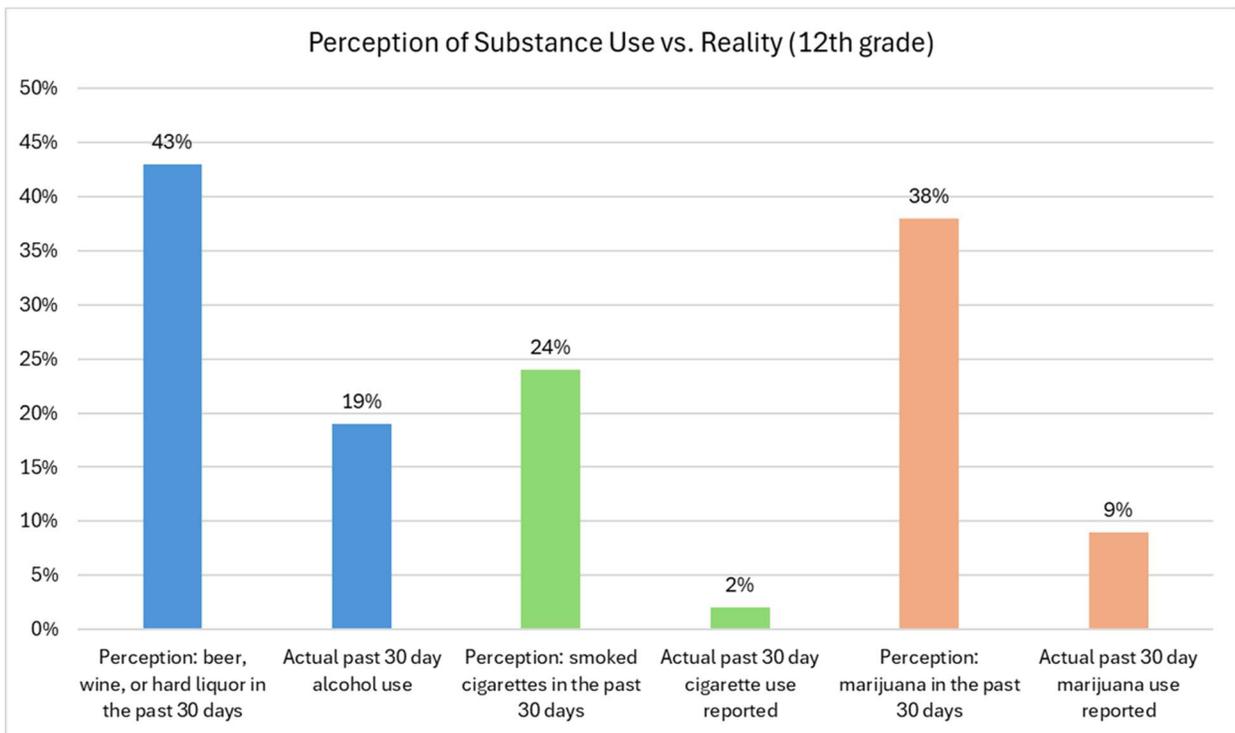
Youth were also asked what percent of students at their school they think have used different substances in the past 30 days. Notably, for all substances, youth perceive the use to be much higher than the actual use is.

The graph below shows perceived peer alcohol use in the last 30 days compared to actual alcohol use in the past 30 days among 12th graders. As shown, Lake County 12th graders believe 43% of their classmates have had alcohol in the past 30 days, whereas only 19% have reported doing so.

Similarly for cigarette use, youth overestimate the degree of usage among their peers. Lake County 12th graders estimate that 24% of their peers have smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days, whereas only 2% of them have reported actually doing so.

The same pattern can again be seen in perceived versus actual marijuana use. Lake County 12th graders estimate that 38% of their peers used marijuana in the last 30 days, while only 9% have reported doing so.

This overestimation of peer substance use is so large and so consistent across substances (and indeed across other geographic areas) that even if there is some underreporting of actual substance usage among youth, the perception remains higher than the reality.



Source: Illinois Youth Survey, 2024. Response among 12th graders to “what percent of students at your school do you think have had [substance] in the past 30 days?” compared to self-reported use of that substance in the past 30 days.

B. Youth Mental Health

Lake County fares slightly better than the state on several youth mental health indicators. Among Lake County 8th graders, 36% reported having been bullied, which is concerning but is in fact lower than the statewide average of 38%.

Similarly, 9% of Lake County 12th graders have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, which is concerning but still slightly better than the statewide average of 10%.

Furthermore, 25% of Lake County 12th graders have, in the past year, felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some of their usual activities. This is slightly better than the statewide rate of 30%.

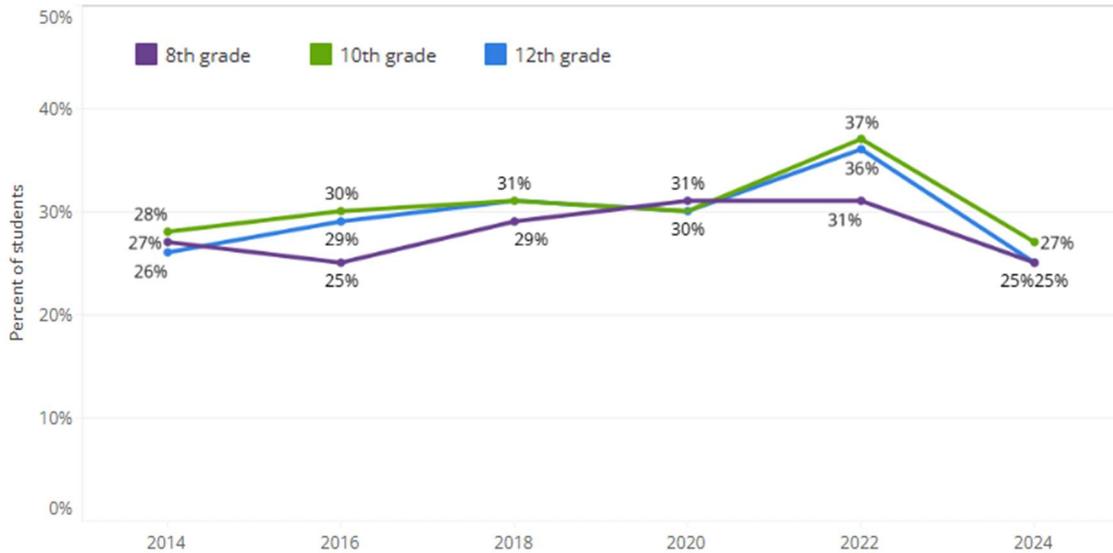
Youth Health Indicator	Lake County	State
Were ever bullied (8th grade)	36%	38%
Seriously consider attempting suicide in the past 12 months (12th grade)	9%	10%
Feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities in the past 12 months (12th grade)	25%	30%

Source: Illinois Youth Survey, 2024.

These same indicators can be seen over time and broken out by grade. For both 10th and 12th graders, poor mental health increased meaningfully between 2020 and 2022, potentially resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 2024, reported poor mental health was as low as it had been in a decade, albeit still at more than 25% of each grade. Suicide rates are also trending down among both 10th and 12th graders (please note the suicide ideation question was not asked to 8th graders).

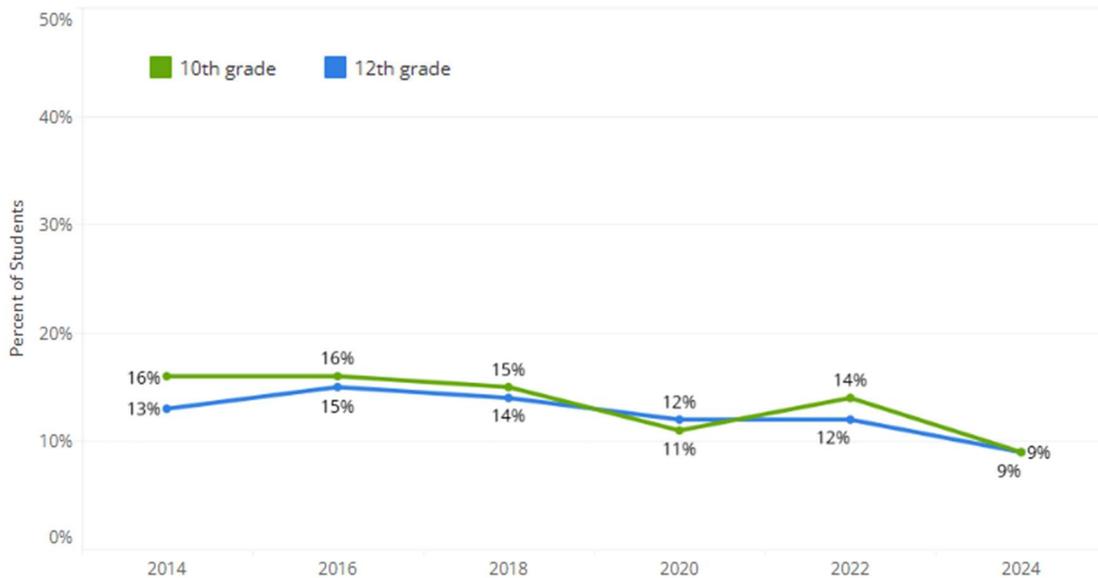
Reported Poor Mental Health Among Lake County Students

Poor mental health is defined as feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities



Lake County Students Considering Suicide

Considering suicide is defined as seriously considering attempting suicide*



Source: Illinois Youth Survey, 2014-2024, as visualized by [Lake County Health Department's tableau dashboard](#).

V. ADULT HEALTH INDICATOR DATA

A. Adult Alcohol and Tobacco Use

Moraine Township is mixed when it comes to indicators relating to alcohol and tobacco use among adults.

Binge drinking, at 17.2%, is lower in Moraine Township than in the state of Illinois (19.2%) but higher than in the nation (16.6%). This is true of both Highland Park, where 17.2% of adults have engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days, and Highwood, where 18.1% of adults have done so. Binge drinking is defined as males having five or more drinks on one occasion or females having four or more drinks on one occasion.

Alcohol expenditures as a proportion of household expenditures are also higher than both the state and nation. Please note that an extrapolation of this indicator by zip code is not available in SparkMap.

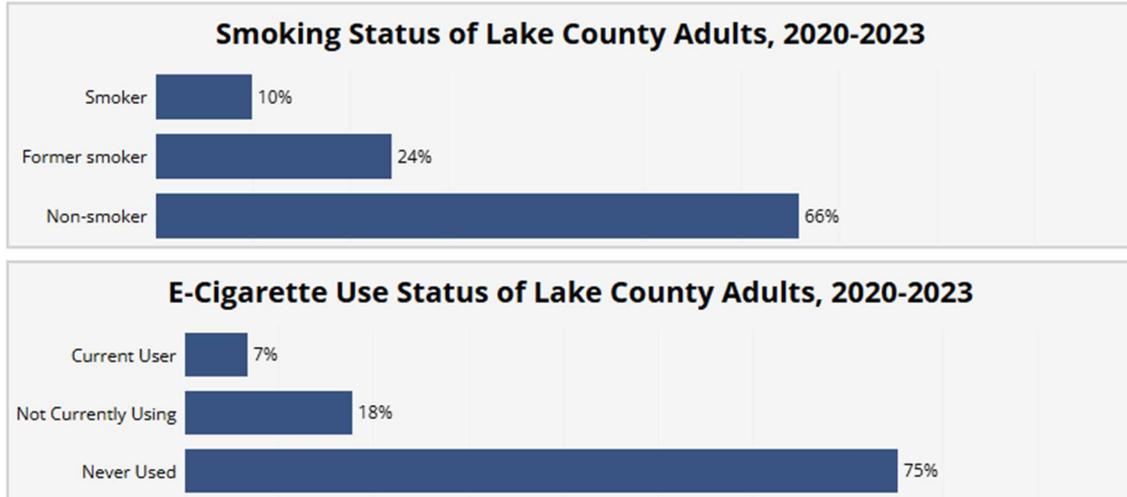
For tobacco usage, the proportion of current smokers is much lower than the state or nation in Moraine Township as a whole, with only 8.5% of adults being current smokers compared to 13.3% in Illinois and 12.9% in the nation. However, in Highwood, more than 13% of adults are current smokers, which is almost double that of Highland Park, and slightly above the state and national averages. Tobacco expenditures as a percent of household expenditures are quite low in the township.

Health Indicator	MTCMHB Total Service Area	60035 (Highland Park)	60040 (Highwood)	State	Nation
Alcohol - Binge Drinking	17.5%	17.2%	18.1%	19.2%	16.6%
Alcohol - Expenditures	15.9%			14.0%	14.3%
Tobacco Usage - Current Smokers	8.5%	7.7%	13.4%	13.3%	12.9%
Tobacco Expenditures	0.8%			1.5%	1.6%

Source: For alcohol binge drinking and tobacco usage: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2022, as provided by SparkMap via the PLACES Data Portal. For tobacco expenditures: Nielsen Demographic Update, Nielsen Cartographics, 2014, as provided by SparkMap.

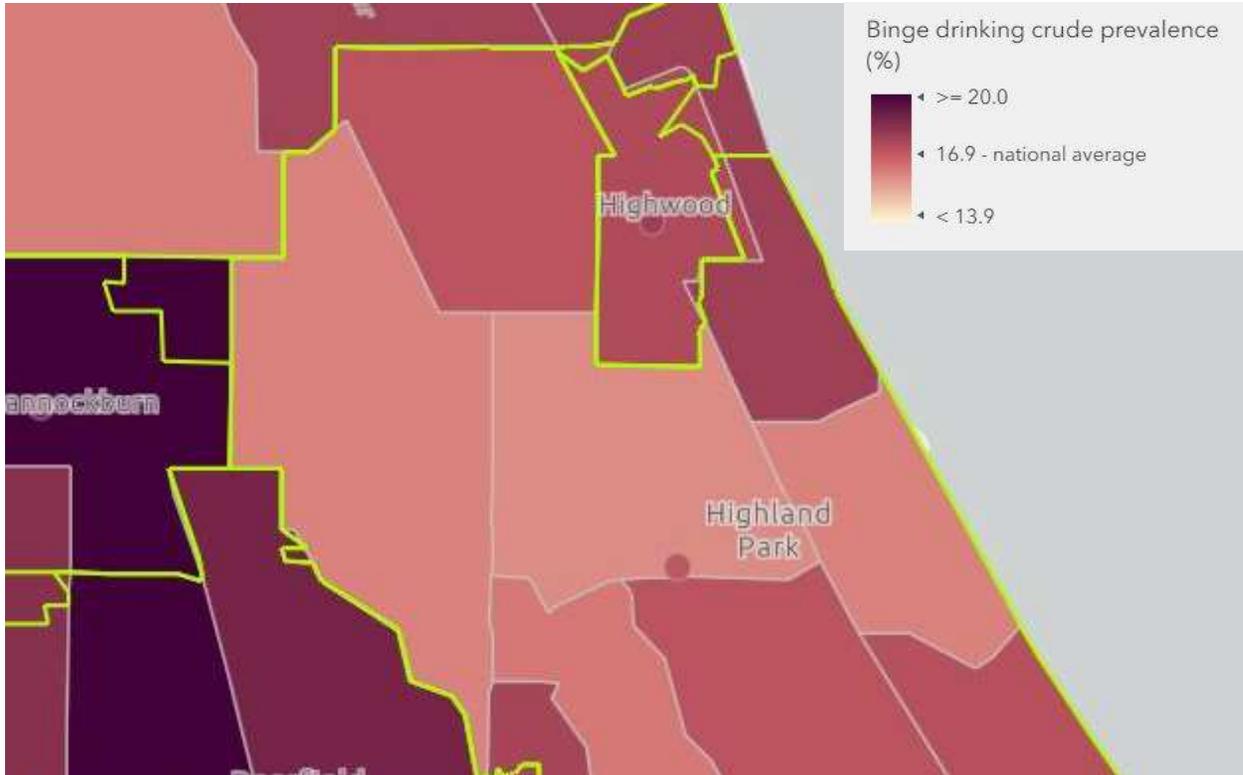
The lower tobacco use in Moraine Township is consistent with overall lower rates of tobacco use in Lake County, where only 10% of adults are current smokers and 7% are current e-cigarette users. Another 24% are former smokers and 18% are not currently using e-cigarettes.

Tobacco Use Among Lake County Residents



Source: Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2020-2023, as visualized by the [Lake County Health Department's tableau dashboard](#).

This CDC PLACES map below shows the binge drinking crude prevalence rates by census tract. It shows that that Highwood as well as a few Highland Park census tracts have somewhat elevated binge drinking rates, albeit not as high as some of the surrounding municipalities to the west.



Binge drinking crude prevalence by census tract. Darker colors denote a higher proportion of the population that engages in binge drinking, defined in BRFSS as males having five or more drinks on one occasion or females having four or more drinks on one occasion. Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2022 or 2023, extrapolated based on Census 2020 and ACS five-year estimates 2019-2023 by CDC PLACES.

B. Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Mortality

According to the Lake County Coroner's office dashboard, there have been 15 suicide deaths in the main two municipalities that comprise Moraine Township during the six-year period of 2020 through 2025 (14 in Highland Park and 1 in Highwood).

In addition, there were 13 homicide deaths during this same six-year period, all in Highland Park. Just over half of these are attributed to the 2022 Highland Park 4th of July Parade mass shooting, which continues to have a lasting impact on residents' mental health.

During this same six-year period, there have also been eight drug overdose deaths in Highland Park and four in Highwood.

To understand mortality data in context and compare Moraine Township to Illinois and the United States as a whole, extrapolations from national data can be used. Compared to the state and nation, the Moraine Township area has much lower rates of mortality for several conditions, including lower drug overdose mortality per 100,000, lower opioid overdose mortality per 100,000, and lower suicide mortality per 100,000. Moraine Township also fares better than the state or nation for "deaths of despair" which is a composite indicator combining suicide and drug/alcohol poisoning. In addition to being rates per 100,000, the township-level data shown here is also extrapolated from county-level data by SparkMap so it may have some margin of error.

Health Indicator	MTCMHB Total Service Area	60035 (Highland Park)	60040 (Highwood)	State	Nation
Mortality - Deaths of Despair (Suicide + Drug/Alcohol Poisoning)	38.4			51.8	58.5
Mortality - Drug Overdose	9.8	10	9	22.8	26.3
Mortality - Opioid Overdose	14.1			22.9	22.0
Mortality - Suicide	11.1			11.7	14.5

Source: CDC Wonder, five-year period 2019-2023, as provided by SparkMap.

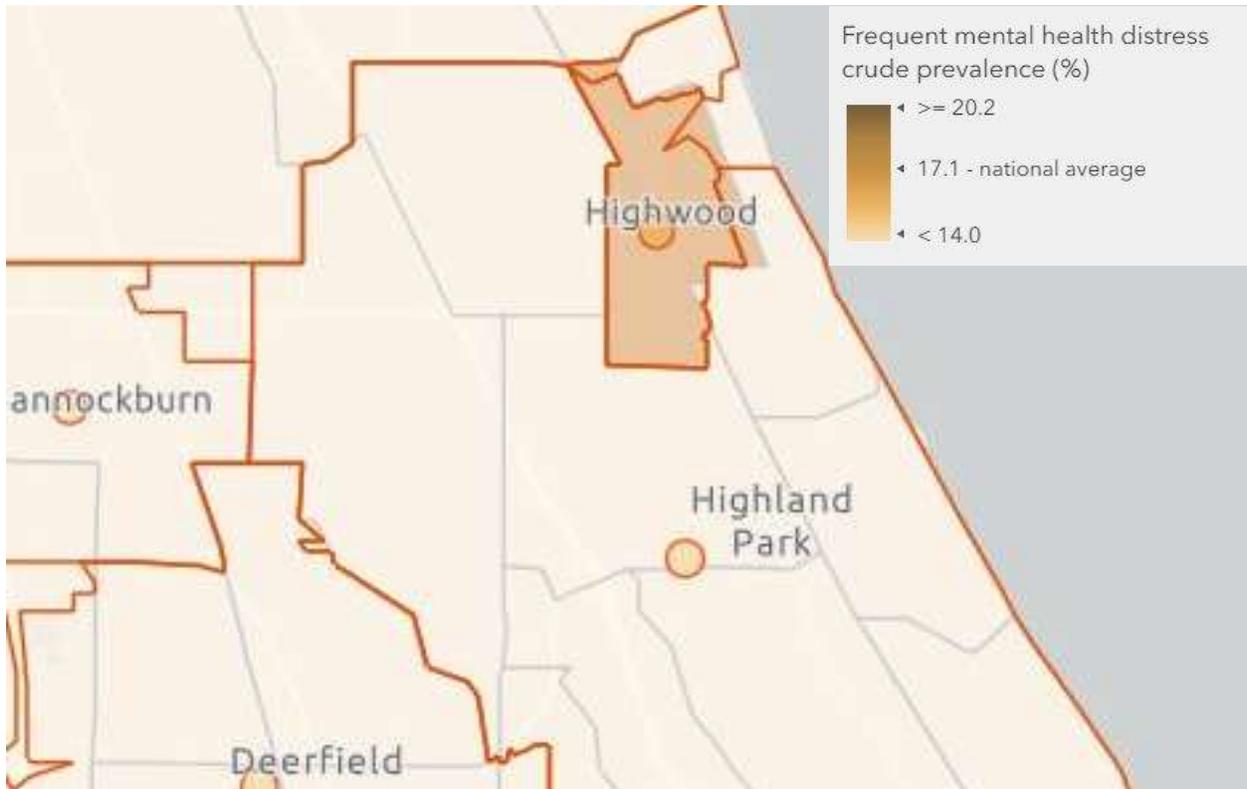
C. Adult Mental Health

Indicators of mental health are overall better in Moraine Township than in the state or nation, but somewhat worse in Highwood. Moraine Township has lower rate of diagnosed depression as well as poor mental health, which is defined as adults age 18 and older who report 14 or more days during the past 30 days during which their mental health was not good. For both indicators, the township is well below both the state and nation, but Highwood is slightly above the state average and approaching the national average.

Health Indicator	MTCMHB Total Service Area	60035 (Highland Park)	60040 (Highwood)	State	Nation
Chronic Conditions - Depression (Adult)	17.8%	17.4%	19.2%	19.0%	20.7%
Poor Mental Health	11.9%	11.1%	15.7%	15.4%	15.8%

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2022, as provided by SparkMap.

The CDC PLACES map below shows frequent mental health distress by census tract, which is the same indicator as poor mental health in the table above. Although Moraine Township has generally low rates of adults who report 14 or more days during the past 30 in which their mental health was not good, Highwood is much worse for this indicator, with more adults reporting 14 or more days in the past month where their mental health was not good.

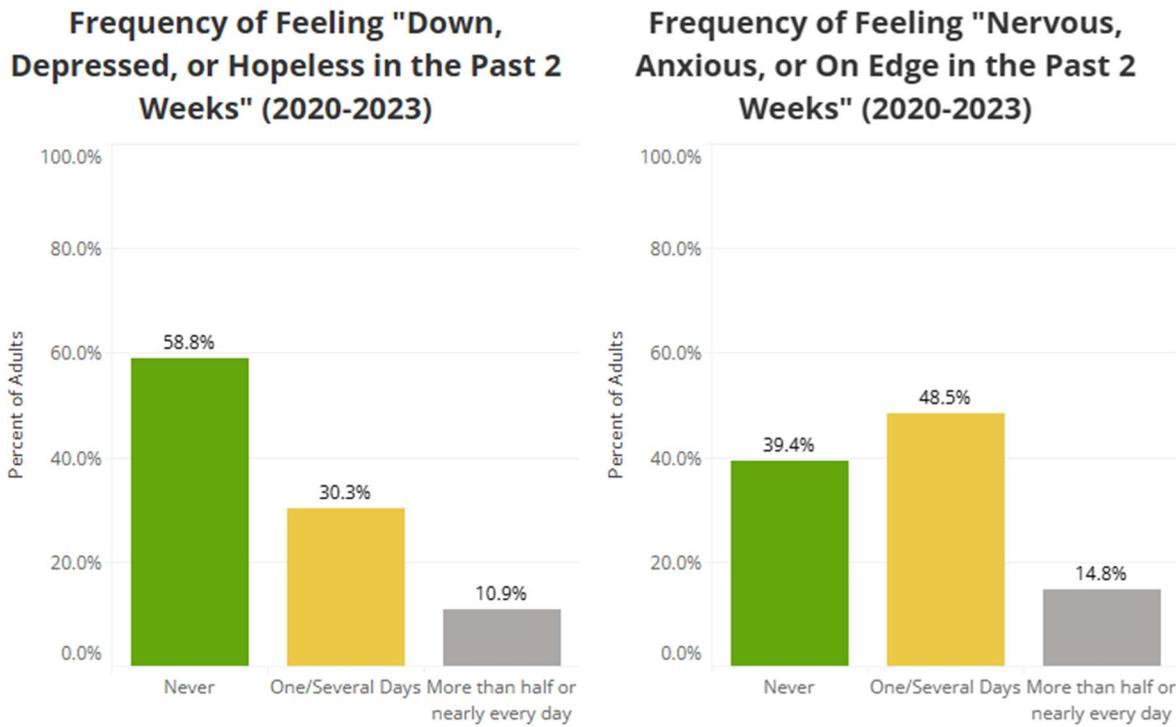


Frequent mental health distress crude prevalence by census tract. Darker colors denote a higher percent of adults who report 14 or more days during the past 30 in which their mental health was not good. Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2022 or 2023, extrapolated based

on Census 2020 and ACS five-year estimates 2019-2023 by CDC PLACES.

When asked how often they felt “down, depressed, or hopeless in the past two weeks,” 30.3% of Lake County adults reported feeling this way one or several days and 10.9% reported feeling this way more than half the time or nearly every day.

This was even higher when asking about anxiety; a full 48.5% of Lake County adults reported feeling “nervous, anxious, or on edge” one or several days of the past two weeks, and 14.8% reported feeling this way more than half the time or every day. Overall, fewer than 40% of Lake County adults reported that they never felt nervous, anxious, or on edge during the past two weeks.



Source: Illinois Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2020-2023, as visualized by the [Lake County Health Department's tableau dashboard](#).

Mental health issues are also among the top reasons that Lake County residents have had an inpatient hospital stay. According to Illinois Department of Public Health hospital data available through the Lake County Health Department's tableau dashboard, two of the top 15 primary diagnoses for inpatient hospital visits in the county in each of the years 2020, 2021, and 2022 were “mood [affective] disorders” and “schizophrenia, schizotypal, delusional, and other non-mood psychotic disorders.” Also in the top 15 primary diagnoses for each of those three years was “mental and behavioral disorders due to psychoactive substance use.”

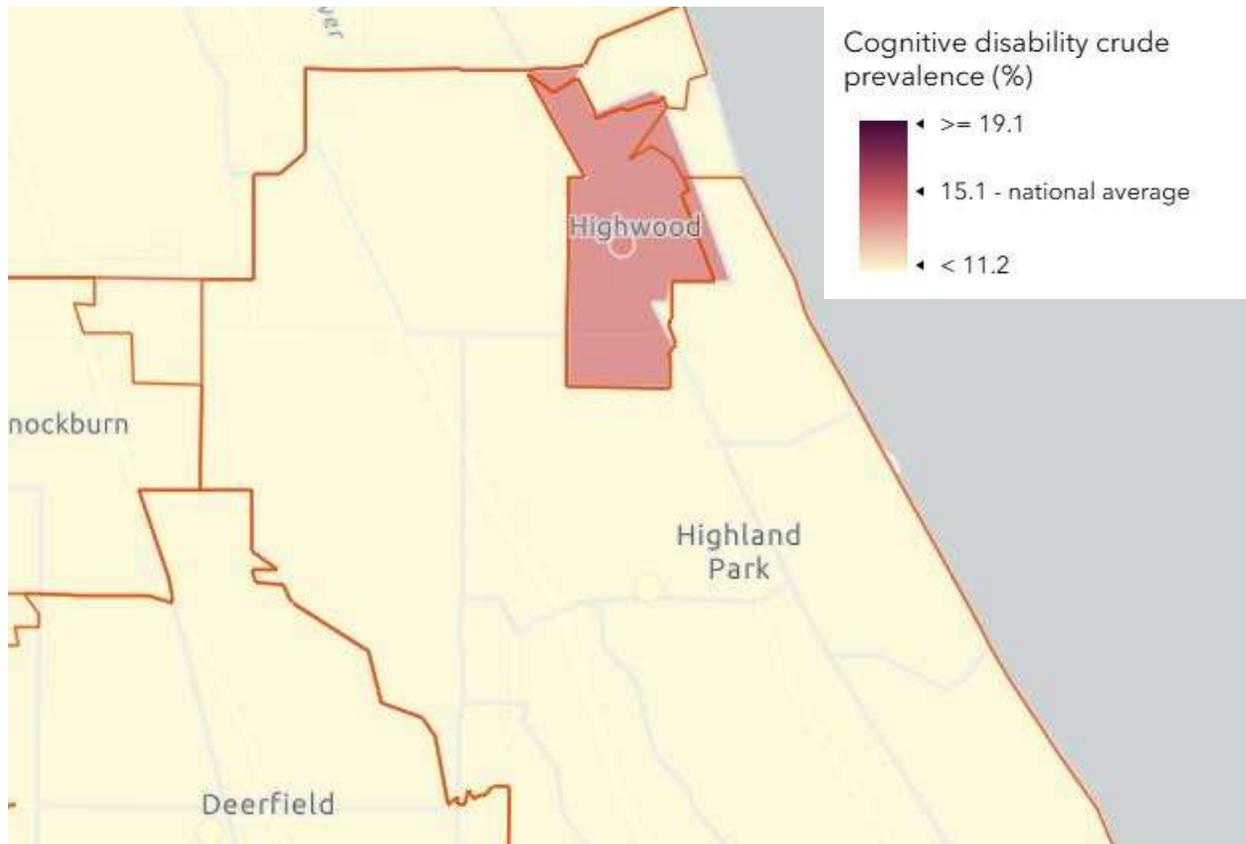
D. Cognitive Disability

Compared to the state or nation, Moraine Township has a lower proportion of the population ages 5 and older (adults and youth) with cognitive disability, defined as serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition (please note this is distinct from measures for the proportion of the population with diagnosed Alzheimer's disease). However, Highwood, at 6%, has more than twice as high a proportion of cognitive disability compared to Highland Park's less than 3%. Although the percentages are small, this corresponds to one in every 32 Moraine Township residents over age 5 that has a cognitive disability.

Health Indicator	MTCMHB Total Service Area	60035 (Highland Park)	60040 (Highwood)	State	Nation
Population with a cognitive disability	3.2%	2.7%	6.0%	4.64%	5.44%

Source: ACS 2019-2023 five-year estimates, as provided by SparkMap.

The CDC PLACES map below shows cognitive disability crude prevalence among adults by census tract, with generally low rates compared to the national average, but with Highwood having a higher prevalence of cognitive disability.



Cognitive disability crude prevalence by census tract. Darker colors denote a higher percent of adults with a cognitive disability. Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2022 or 2023, extrapolated based on Census 2020 and ACS five-year estimates 2019-2023 by CDC PLACES.

VI. ACCESS TO CARE

A. Provider Ratios

Access to providers of mental health and substance use disorder services is mixed in Moraine Township. Based on Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) data, for every 100,000 residents there are more than 580 mental health providers, much above the state or national provider to population ratio. However, Highwood's number of mental health providers per 100,000 residents is much lower – just half the state and national averages, and a quarter of that of Highland Park.

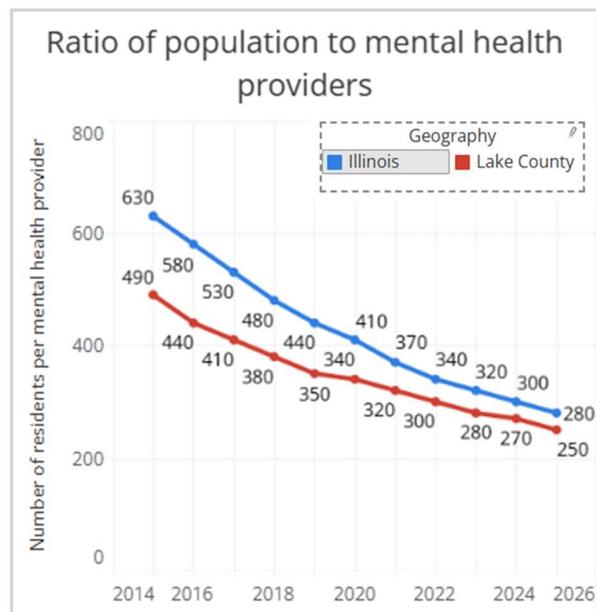
Provider to population ratios are much worse for addiction or substance use providers. Moraine Township has fewer than three addiction or substance use providers per 100,000 residents, less than a third of the state rate and just 10% of the national rate. Highwood has no addiction or substance use providers. The township also has eight buprenorphine providers per 100,000 residents, also somewhat below the state and national averages.

Health Indicator	MTCMHB Total Service Area	60035 (Highland Park)	60040 (Highwood)	State	Nation
Access to Care - Addiction/Substance Abuse Providers	2.87	1.98	0	10.40	29.72
Access to Care - Buprenorphine Providers	8.21			12.02	14.52
Access to Care - Mental Health Providers	580.36	658.36	169.36	344.25	332.23

Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS - National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES). May 2025, as provided by SparkMap.

One important data limitation is that these ratios only consider the population and providers within the census tracts. This means it does not factor in the availability of providers located outside Moraine Township that residents might use, nor does it consider that people residing outside Moraine Township may use Moraine Township providers for their care.

Looking at population to provider ratios (the inverse indicator), in 2025, there were 280 residents per mental health provider in Illinois and 250 residents per mental health provider in Lake County. The lower number indicates better access in Lake County than in the state. This has been trending down over time, which indicates improving access to care.



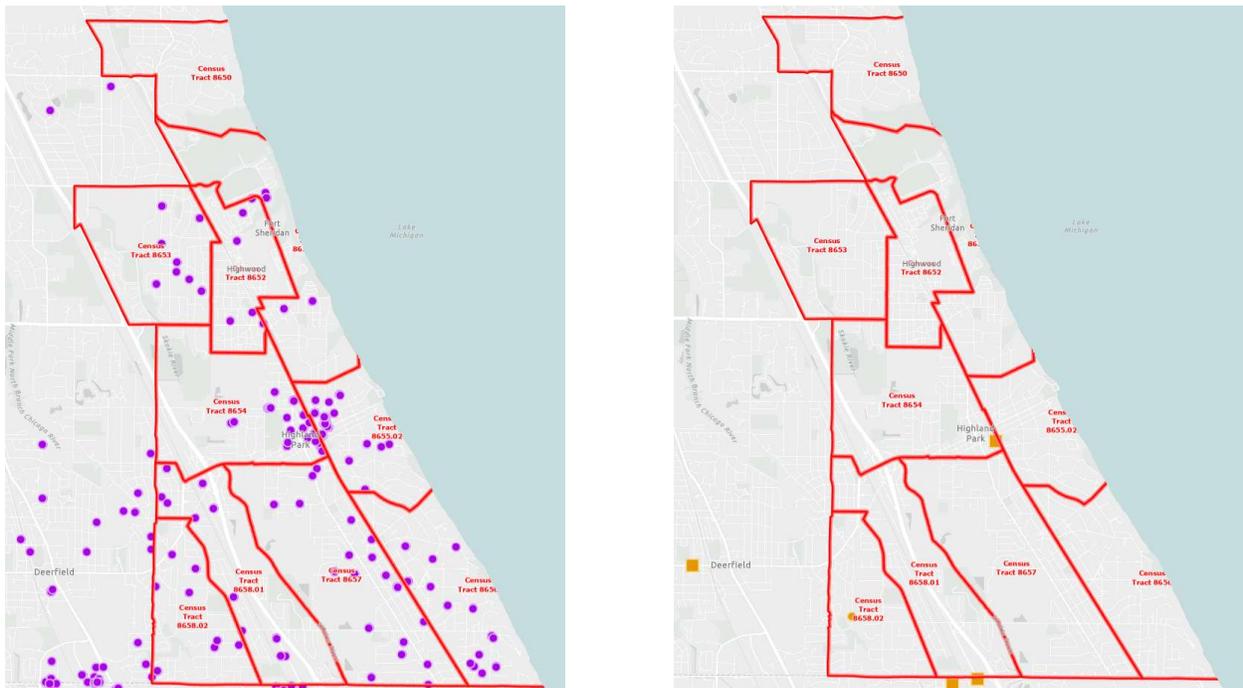
Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2015-2025, as visualized by the [Lake County Health Department's tableau dashboard](#).

B. Geographic Access

Providers of mental health and substance use disorder services are not evenly distributed across Moraine Township. The maps below from SparkMap plot the locations of mental health providers (map on the left with purple dots) and substance use providers (map on the right with yellow dots) within Moraine Township according to CMS as of May 2025.

As can be seen, there is a significant concentration of mental health providers in downtown Highland Park, but many fewer in Highwood and the northern half of the township. There are also some mental health providers outside the township that border the southern half of Moraine Township, especially to the west in Deerfield, that may be used by Moraine Township residents. There are very few additional providers in the communities that border the northern half of the township.

For substance use, there are only a few provider locations in and around the service area. The few that exist are in downtown Highland Park and along the south edge of Moraine Township. None are in Highwood or the northern portion of the township.



Mental health (left) and substance use (right) providers. Source: CMS, May 2025, as provided by SparkMap.

C. Other Barriers to Care

To understand other barriers to care, the Lake County Community Health Status Assessment Survey, conducted by the Lake County Health Department as part of their community needs assessment, asks several questions regarding barriers to medical care. Although not specific to mental health, substance use, or intellectual or developmental disability care, these barriers to care likely influence access to a range of services. (Please note: data are broken out by the township-based regions of the county, where the southwest region includes not only Moraine Township but also West Deerfield, Sheilds, Libertyville, and Vernon).

- **Provider cultural competence is one potential barrier.** When asked how important it is to them that their providers understand or share their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, beliefs, native language, nearly 60% of southwest region residents said it was very, somewhat, or slightly important.
- When asked **how often they were actually able to see health care providers who were similar to them** in any of these ways, 20% of southeast region residents said they were always able to and 27% were able to most of the time. Nearly 6% of southeast region residents reported not being able to see providers similar to them any of the time.
- **Transportation is another barrier** asked about in the survey. Among southeast region residents, more than 10% said that in the past 12 months, lack of transportation has kept them from medical appointments, meetings, work, or from getting things needed for daily living.

VII. CONCLUSION

MTCMHB is committed to promoting access to resources to address mental health challenges, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability services within the Moraine Township population. This supplemental assessment builds on the demographic analysis and community survey conducted in early 2025 to further illustrate that despite some generally favorable health indicators, residents of Moraine Township continue to face many challenges around mental health, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability.

This needs assessment highlights a few of these ongoing challenges, including:

- Youth and adult alcohol use, and youth perceptions of peer substance use;
- Disparities in indicators around mental health and cognitive disability between Highland Park and Highwood;
- Inadequate provider to population ratios for addiction/substance use providers;
- And other access barriers around cultural competency and the need for more services in the north half of the township.

MTCMHB is well-positioned to address these gaps through targeted outreach and awareness activities, community education, provider convenings, and investing in aligned programs through grantmaking. By continuously evaluating community needs, MTCMHB can help address gaps in the system, promote access to resources, and enhance the well-being of all residents of Moraine Township.