

# Argentina

## WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health

### Situational Assessment

#### Overview

##### Strengths

- Political support for mental health, as evidenced by release of 2022 strategy and existing national plan 2013-2018, currently under review
- High number of psychologists and other human resources for mental health
- Community and provincial innovations in care

##### Challenges

- Federalist structure – hard to track multiple systems
- Poor integration of services
- Piecemeal system with different levels of accessibility and types of service by province

#### Context



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica. April 22, 2022.

- Population of 45-47 million, largely concentrated in urban areas (92%)
- 99% literacy, 95% of households have improved sanitation, 99% have clean water, and 100% have electricity
- Life expectancy: 77 years (80 females, 73 males), infant mortality rate: 8 per 1,000 live births, maternal mortality ratio 39 per 100,000 live births
- Leading causes of death are cardiovascular diseases (29%) and neoplasms (24%)
- Nearly 1 in 2 women report experience of intimate partner violence
- Low HIV prevalence (0.4%)
- Highly segmented health system with a wide range of stakeholders

#### Policies and Plans

Public spending on mental health (\$/capita): n/s

##### Policy

**Name:** Federal Strategy for a Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health

**Years:** 2022

**Progress:** Early stages; launched in April 2022

##### Plan

**Name:** National Mental Health Plan

**Years:** 2013-2018

**Progress:** Implementation in progress; plan in the process of being updated.

##### Legislation

The National Law on the Right to Mental Health Protection, No. 26.657, 2010

##### Key Informant:

*Mental health was never prioritized by governments. The [mental health] law put it at the top of the agenda.*

-MH Advocate

	Policy <sup>§</sup>	Plan <sup>§</sup>
Components	Primary health care (PHC) integration	
	Decentralization	
	Hospital integration	
	Maternal	n/s
	Child/ adolescent	n/s
	HIV	n/s
	Alcohol/ substance use	
	Epilepsy	n/s
	Dementia	n/s
	Promotion/ prevention	
Equity	Suicide	
	Gender	
	Age/life course	
	Rural/urban	n/s
	Socio-economic status	
	Vulnerable populations	

Addressed Partially addressed  
Not addressed

n/s Not specified -- Not assessed

§National Mental Health Plan 2013-2018  
‡Federal Strategy for a Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health (2022)

## Prevalence and Coverage

	Prevalence	Total**	Gender ratio		Treatment coverage
Major depressive disorder	2.04%	862,748	2.5% females	1.5% males	--
Bipolar disorder	1.17%	494,127	1.2% females	1.1% males	--
Schizophrenia	0.36%	151,086	0.3% females	0.4% males	--
** Alcohol use disorders	2.40%	1,016,016	1.3% females	3.6% males	--
Drug use disorders	0.76%	320,645	0.5% females	1.0% males	--
Epilepsy	0.28%	120,222	0.3% females	0.3% males	--
Suicide deaths	11.2*	5,029	0.6% females	2.2% males	--

\*rate per 100k; \*\*GBD 2019 ± Ministry of Internal report

## Services

### Human resources

	#	Rate per 100,000
<b>Generalist</b>		
Doctor*	182,189	405
Nurse* (*REFEP 2019)	192,829	429
Pharmacist	n/s	
Neurologist	n/s	
<b>Specialist</b>		
Psychiatrist	6,500	15
Psychologist	128,221	286
Psychiatric nurse	n/s	
MH social worker	n/s	

### Health care facilities

	Total Facilities	Facilities/100,000
<b>Inpatient</b>		
Mental hospital	162	26.0
General hospital psychiatric unit	--	--
Forensic Hospital	--	--
<b>Outpatient</b>		
Hospital mental health	--	--
Community-based/non-hospital mental health	--	--

Source: Mental Health Atlas Argentina 2020

**Key Informant:** Despite the fragmentation... we see ever growing awareness of the need to integrate mental health into the larger health system... Everything is developing, sometimes with challenges, with twists and turns, we move forward.  
-MH Policy maker

MH training	140 mental health professionals trained in mhGAP and 717 health care professionals trained as mhGAP trainers (2018-2019). Additional training began in August 2022. 12 new interdisciplinary mental health residencies and the creation of the Diploma in Community MH
PHC integration	Integration described in the MH Plan 2013-2018
Psychosocial interventions	Problem-solving therapy, behavioral activation, supportive counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, alcohol interventions, positive psychotherapy, and motivational enhancement therapy are available in some health centers and hospitals
Medication summary	Argentina has a list of essential medications (2019) for its Remediar program which offers free medication to uninsured people through primary care services. Remediar includes antiepileptic and antiparkinsonian medications and, in 2022, 6 psychotropic medicines were incorporated into the list as well.
MH promotion	Proyecto Suma campaign "we are all at risk", UNICEF's Hablemos de todo, activities for the national day for suicide prevention; annual World Mental Health Day activities through the Directorate of Mental Health

## Community and Other Sectors

Community	Housing support for people with mental health conditions is planned in the new Strategy
Education	Emphasis on social inclusion and mainstreaming for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems or mild developmental disability. Screening for suicidal ideation in adolescents under development
Social welfare	1000 Days law provides health services and social protection for women and children.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

**National health information system:** Yes. A national health surveillance system (SNVS) which collects data for various surveillance strategies. Since 2018, SNVS also includes clinic-level data electronically. **Mental health indicators in HMIS:** Yes. Data include the number of people hospitalized for mental health reasons, sociodemographic information, conditions of hospitalization, and their judicial, social and family situation.