

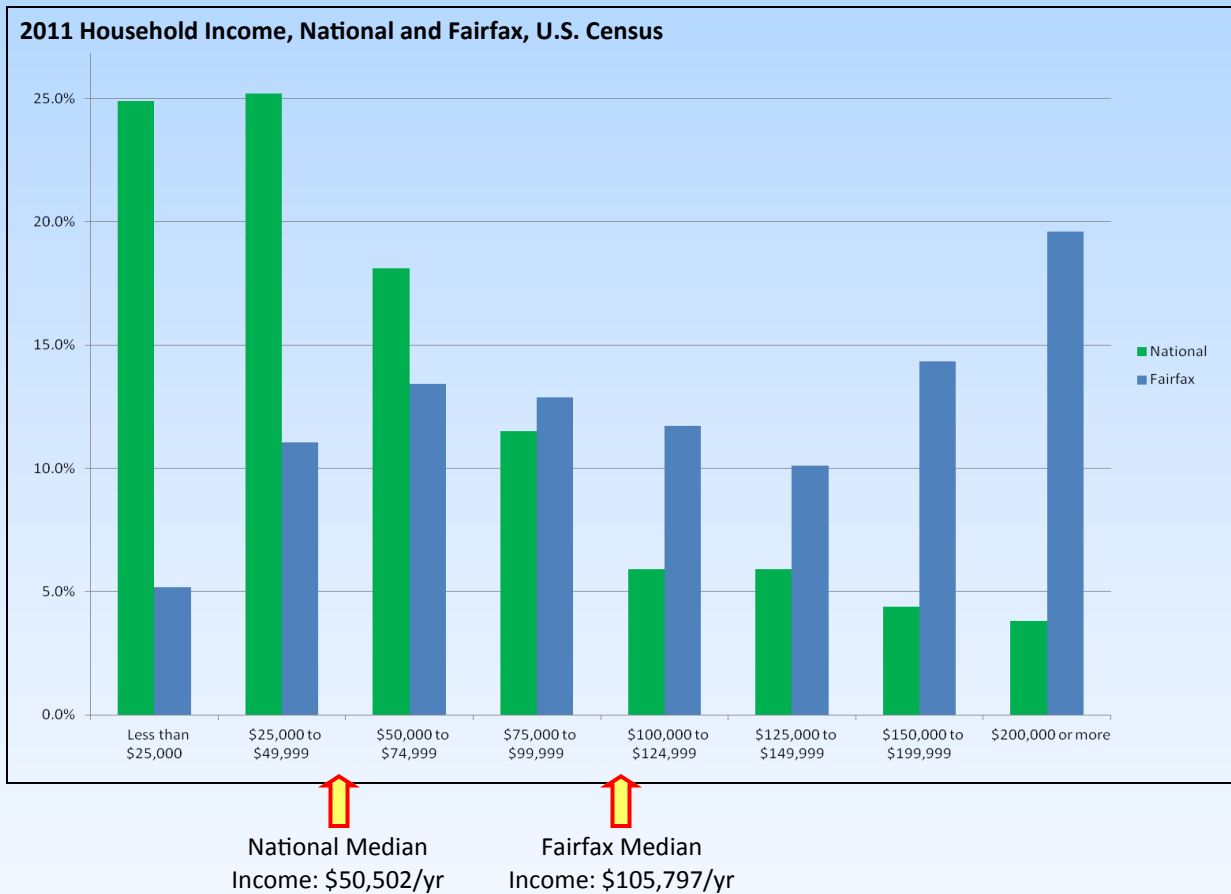


FPY Alert: Many Youth Are Not Getting the Therapy They Need

Fairfax County, VA — September, 2013

Fairfax County is known to be one of the wealthiest in the nation.

Closer analysis of cost of living and income distribution, however, shows some startling disparities that have unexpected consequences for access to mental and behavioral health services that affect our entire community.



What does this mean for mental and behavioral health treatment access? With such a high cost of living and operating expenses, Medicaid or insurance company reimbursements for a psychologist, psychiatrist, or behavioral health specialist do not go as far in Fairfax as they do elsewhere. Plus, there is a large population of wealthy clients who can afford to pay out-of-pocket. **For this reason, there is little incentive for a qualified provider to work with clients using Medicaid or insurance coverage to pay for services.**

"I can't afford to practice in Fairfax County if I bill through insurance or Medicaid."
 - A local psychologist

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Fairfax is experiencing a shortage of affordable, qualified mental and behavioral health providers.

This means we have thousands of adults, teens, and children in households with limited disposable income, who need the specialized care of a mental or behavioral health professional, and are not getting it. Not enough quality outpatient care for youth with:

- Suicidal thoughts, depression, and anxiety
- Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
- Conduct and behavior problems
- Substance Abuse Risk
- And more

2011 Fairfax Household Income by race, U.S. Census



Fairfax Median Income is \$105,797/yr and cost of living index is 140%

Over 1000 Fairfax 8th, 10th, and 12th graders surveyed reported that they made a suicide attempt in the past year. Minority students report higher rates of depression and suicidal thoughts.

-2011 Youth Survey, p.168
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/pdf/2011_youth_survey_report.pdf

We can't afford to skimp when it comes to youth mental health.

What can you do?

- Urge the Fairfax Board of Supervisors to fully fund the upcoming recommendations of the *Successful Children and Youth Policy Team* regarding mental and behavioral health services and disparate outcomes for minority youth
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/healthhuman/scypt/>
- Support *prevention* programs that bolster youth resilience and reduce subsequent crisis
- Share this alert and help raise awareness for youth mental/behavioral health therapy access
- Make a donation to keep FPY at work on this issue, at www.FairfaxYouth.org