

Measuring Housing Status Within Existing EHR Data In Alignment with California State Policy

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Who is CalMHSA?

- California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is a Joint Powers Authority supporting California's Public Behavioral Health system
- We administer a Semi-Statewide Electronic Health Record (EHR)
 - Supports County Behavioral Health Plans (BHPs), which function as both specialty treatment providers and managed care plans
- Population served:
 - Medicaid recipients receiving behavioral health services
 - Includes specialty mental health & substance-use disorder (SUD) services

California's Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)

- Passed in 2024
- Broadening of county BHP responsibilities to include housing interventions
 - Allocating 30% of BHSA funds to **housing interventions**
 - 50% of which must go towards individuals who are **chronically homeless**, with a focus on those in **encampments**
- County BHPs will need to use individual client-level data to measure performance

Department of Health Care Services' Vision:

All Californians have access to behavioral health services leading to longer, healthier, and happier lives, as well as improved outcomes and reduction in disparities.



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Exploratory Questions

- What current features can be used?
- How aligned are they with BHSA status definitions?
- What are the gaps?
- What are the current practices already used by providers?

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Challenges

- Varying definitions of housing statuses
- Frequent changes in individual housing status
- Inconsistent documentation practices among providers
- EHRs are not designed to track complex demographic metrics

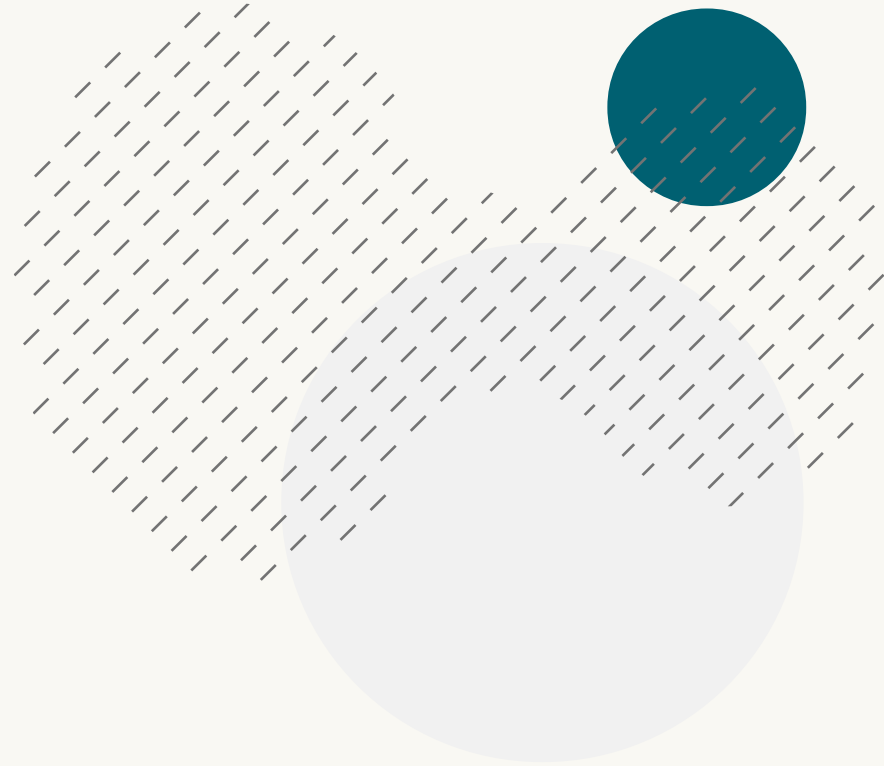
BHSA Housing Status Definitions

Experiencing Homelessness

At-Risk of Homelessness

Chronically Homeless

Living in an Encampment



EHR Housing Status Data Sources

Problem List

- tracks all on-going diagnoses and psychosocial issues affecting clients across programs

Service Diagnosis Document

- a program-specific record of the main clinical reasons for treatment used for billing purposes

Address Field

- located on the client profile

Living Arrangement Field

- located on the client profile

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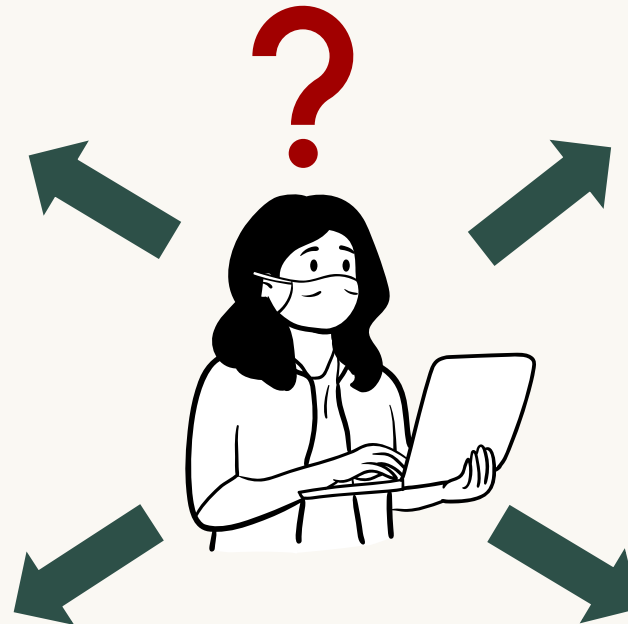
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EHR Housing Status Data Sources

	Problem List	Service Diagnosis Document	Address Field	Living Arrangement Field
Status Captured				
Experiencing Homelessness	X	X	X	X
At-Risk of Homelessness	X	X		
Chronically Homeless				
Living in an Encampment				
Data Entered	Z Codes	Z Codes	Text	Text
Updated Overtime	X	X	X	X
Shared Across Programs	X		X	X

Analysis

Population: all county behavioral health clients actively enrolled in programs or who have received 1+ services in 26 California counties

Year: 2024

Analyses:

- 1) Median county housing status prevalences by EHR data source
 - Overall prevalence = status documented in at least one of the data sources
- 2) Correlation between EHR prevalences & external sources by Continuum of Care (CoC)

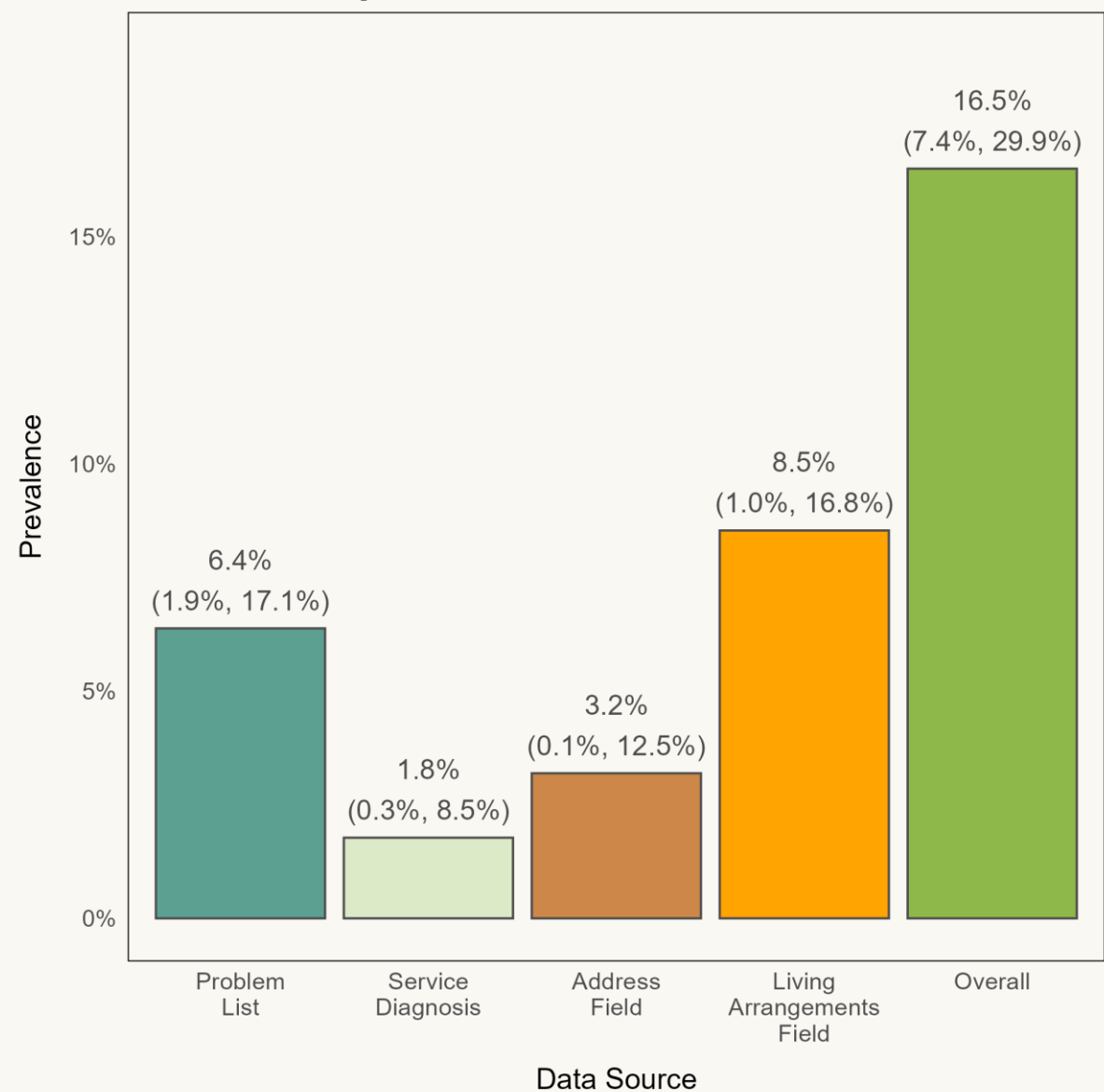
U.S. HUD PIT Counts

- Annual point-in-time count
- Counts those experiencing homelessness on a single night
- Year: 2024

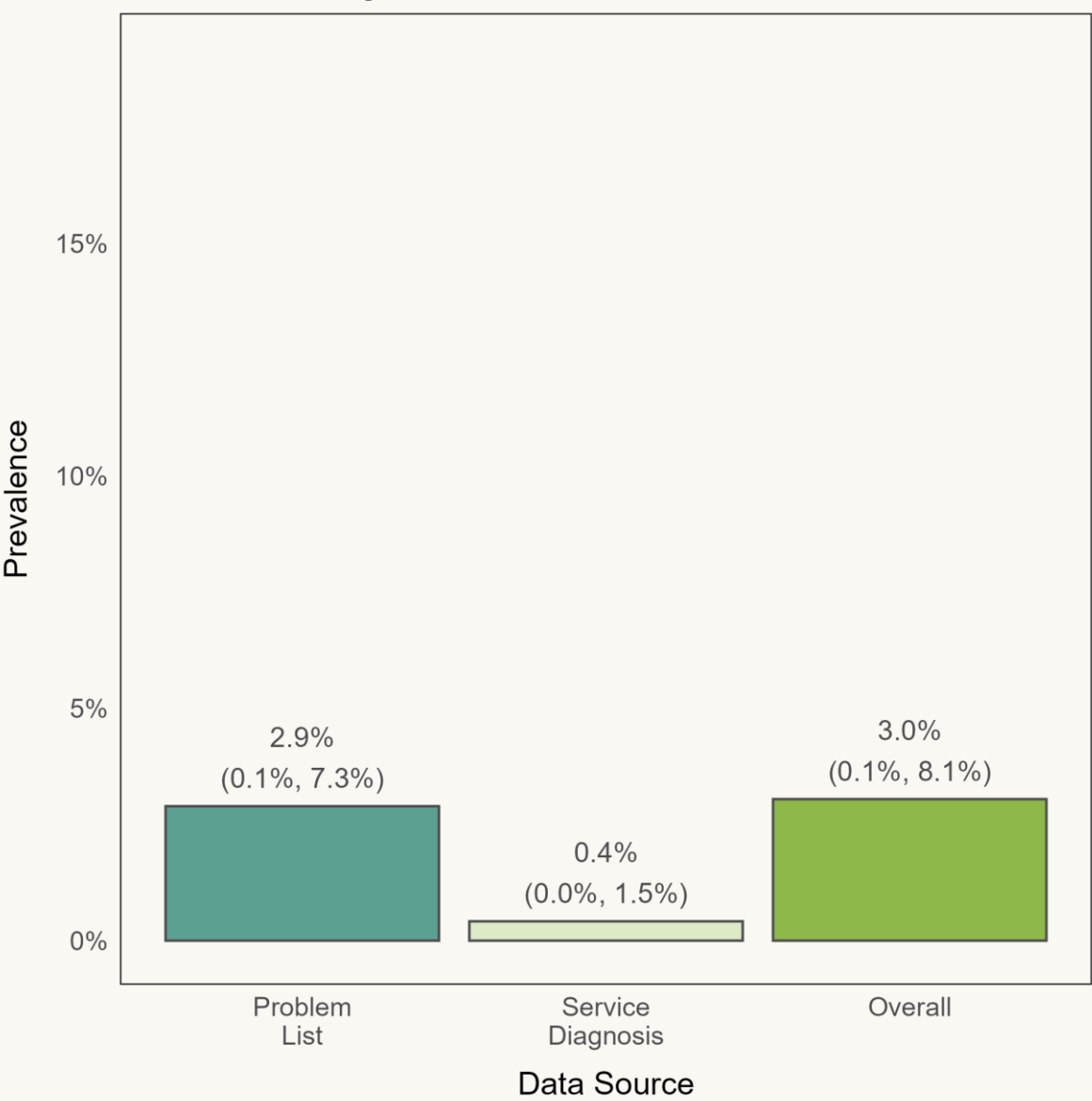
California's Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS)

- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data
- Counts those experiencing homelessness who accessed services in a Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Year: 2023

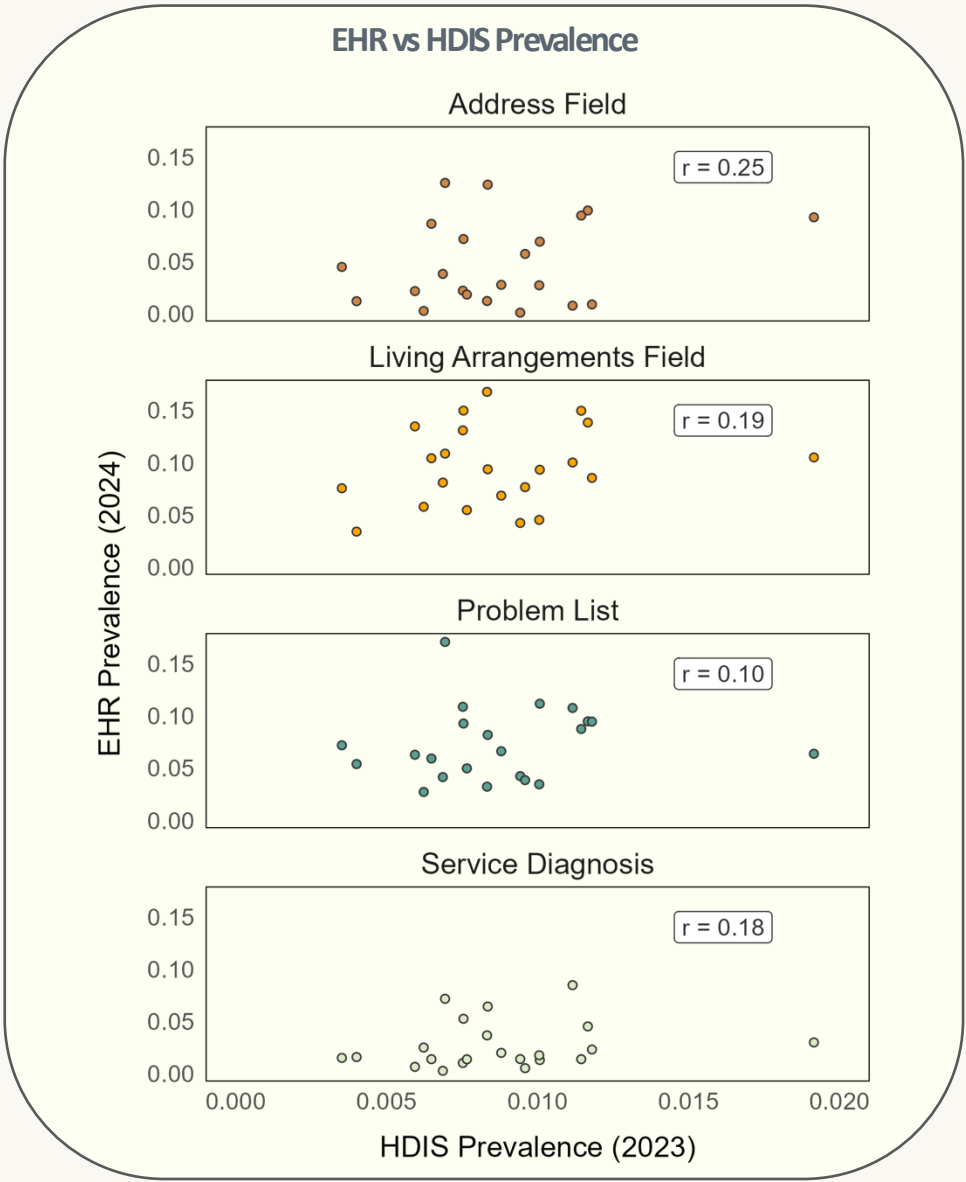
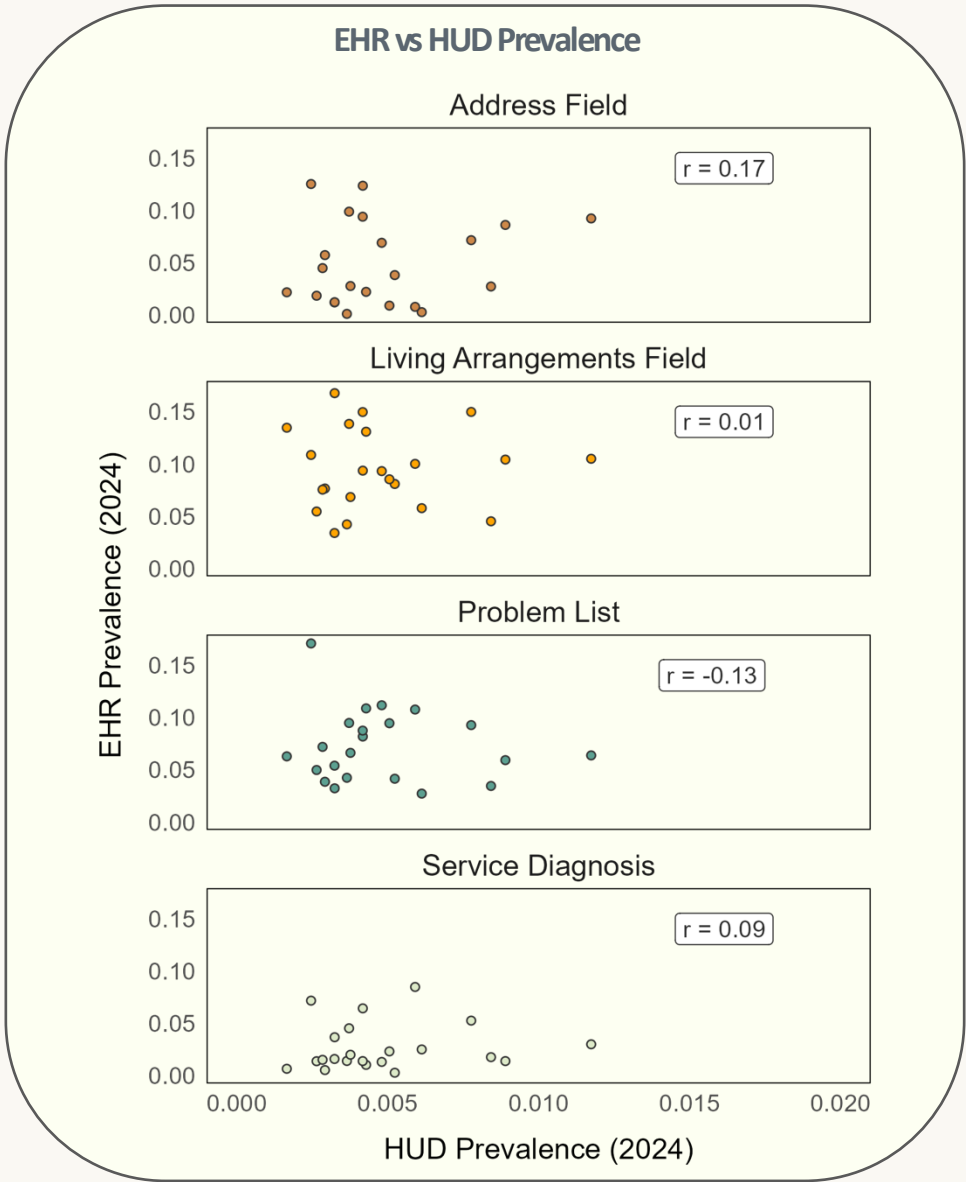
Median County Prevalence of Experiencing Homelessness
by EHR Data Source, 2024



Median County Prevalence of At-Risk of Homelessness
by EHR Data Source, 2024



External Source Correlations – Prevalence of Experiencing Homelessness by CoC



Conclusions

- The Problem List was commonly used by providers for recording client housing status
- There was little correlation between the EHR prevalences and either the HUD or HDIS prevalences

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Next Steps

- New recommendations were released to counties:
 - Formalized the use of the Problem List to record housing status
 - Created Special Population indicators for Chronic Homelessness & Encampment Status
- Subsequent analyses will assess how prevalence rates change as documentation procedures are standardized
- Exploring future opportunities to integrate HMIS data

Thank You!

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CalMHSA



Appendix Slides

EHR Housing Status Definitions

Problem List & Service Diagnosis Document

Client Situation	Z Code
<i>Experiencing Homelessness</i>	
Homelessness documented, shelter status unknown	Z59.00
Currently homeless, living in a shelter or transitional housing program	Z59.01
Currently homeless, living outdoors (street, encampment, vehicle, abandoned building)	Z59.02
<i>At-Risk of Homelessness</i>	
Housed but at imminent risk of homelessness (within 30 days)	Z59.811
Housed, but was homeless in the past 12 months	Z59.812
Housed, but housing situation unstable (details unclear)	Z59.819

Address & Living Arrangements Fields

- Presence of the word "Homeless" in the text field