

# Psychologist Workforce Projections: Preparing for the Future

Karen Stamm, PhD

Director, Center for Workforce Studies

Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers  
(APAHC) Conference

February 8, 2019



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

The opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not constitute official policy of the American Psychological Association.

Coauthors: Peggy Christidis, Luona Lin, & Jessica Conroy

Slides are available at the APA Center for Workforce Studies website under Presentations  
<http://www.apa.org/workforce/presentations/index.aspx>

# Learning Objectives

- Describe trends in psychologist supply and demand from 2015 to 2030
- Discuss areas where demand for psychologists is projected to grow and associated considerations of psychologist diversity and cultural competency

# APA Center for Workforce Studies

The mission of the Center for Workforce Studies is to *collect, analyze, and disseminate information on the psychology workforce and education pipeline.*

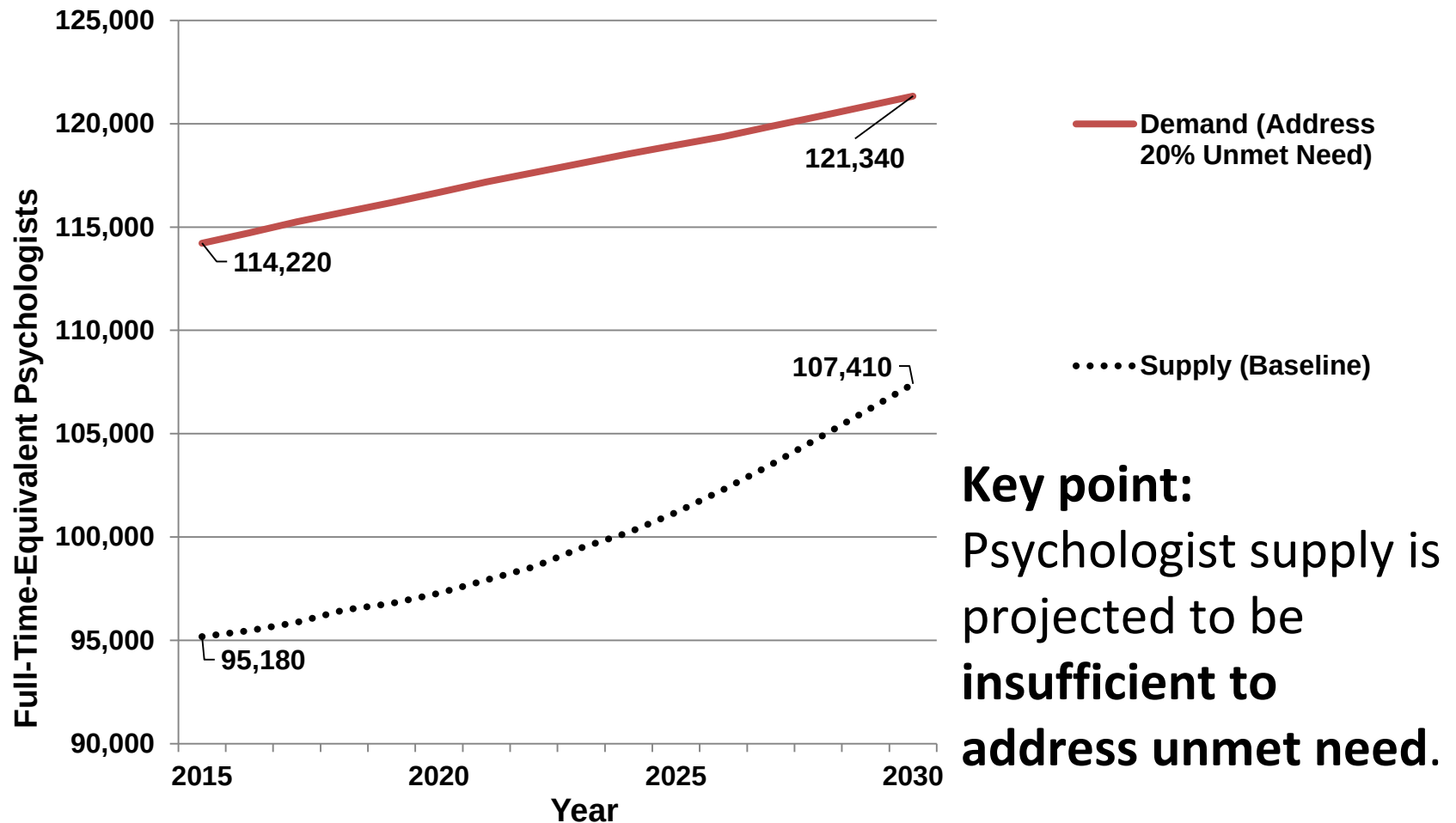
Reports

Fact Sheets

Datapoints in *The Monitor*

Interactive Data Tools

# Psychologist Workforce Projections 2015-2030



# Psychologist Workforce Projections Overview

- Projections address supply and demand for **licensed doctoral-level psychologists** (practitioners) from 2015-2030
- APA commissioned IHS Markit to conduct the projections
  - IHS Markit also produces HRSA's projections
- Full-time equivalent (FTE) psychologist = person who works an average of 39 hours per week
- Starting point is ~95,000 licensed doctoral-level psychologists who are active in the workforce
- Assumption - Supply and demand are in balance nationwide in 2015

# Psychologist Supply

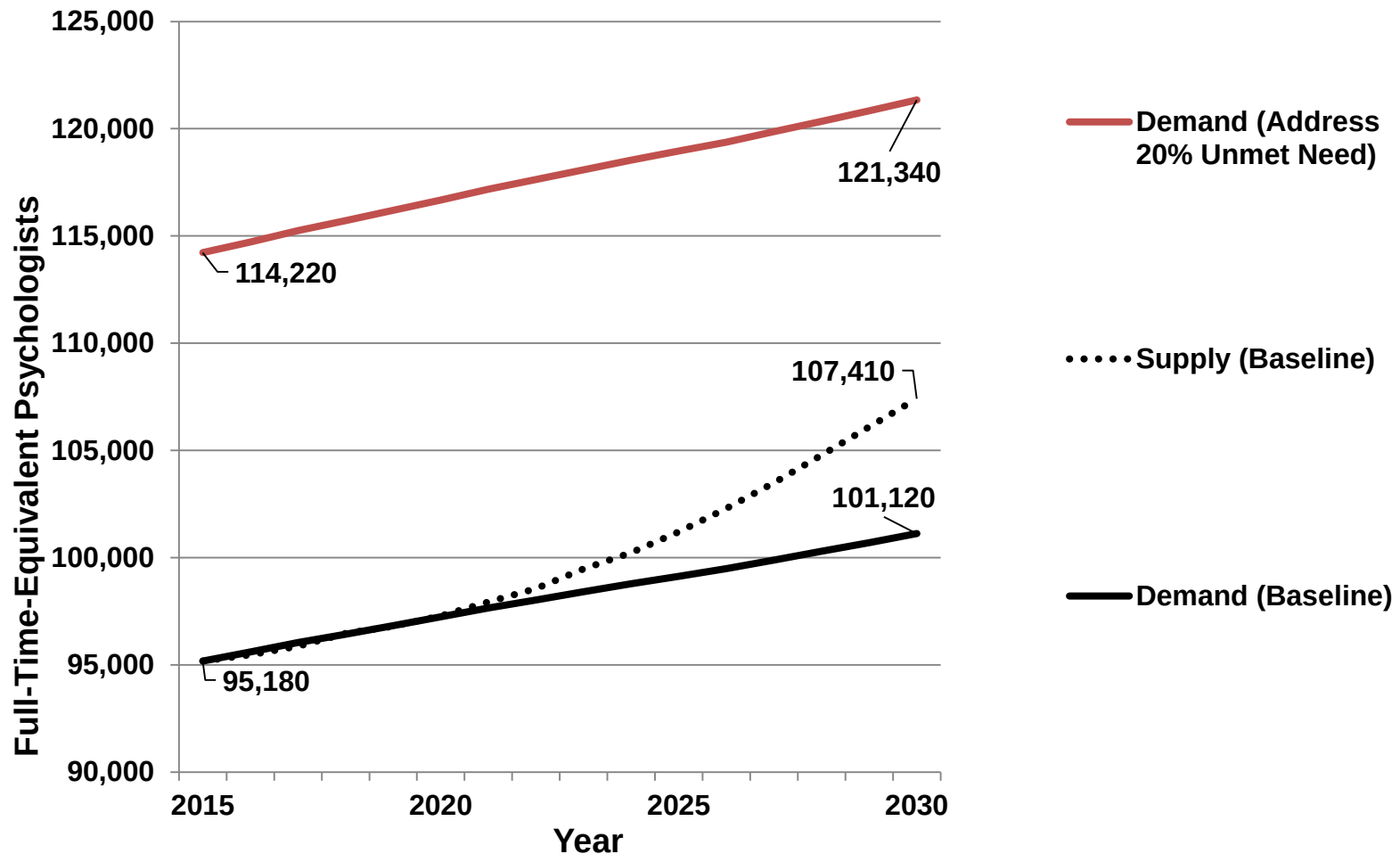
- Supply Inputs
  - Licensed psychologists active in the workforce
  - New entrants
  - Workforce patterns
  - Migration across states
- Supply Scenarios
  - Baseline
    - Assumes current patterns continue in the future
  - Increase/decrease # graduates by 10%
  - Retire 2 years earlier/later

# Psychologist Demand

- Demand Inputs
  - Current service utilization patterns
  - Projected population demographic changes
- Demand Scenarios
  - Baseline
    - Assumes current patterns continue in the future
  - Affordable Care Act
    - Continued ACA expansion
  - Unmet need
    - Address estimated 20% unmet need for mental health services
  - Geographic equivalence
    - Uninsured people in rural areas had same utilization patterns as insured people in metropolitan areas
  - Racial/ethnic equivalence
    - Entire U.S. population had same utilization patterns as non-Hispanic white populations

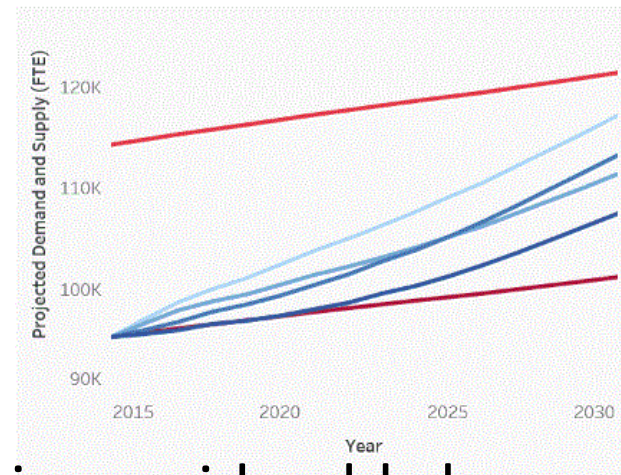
Hypothetical

# Psychologist Workforce Projections 2015-2030



# Workforce Projections Key Points

- **Psychologist supply is projected to be insufficient to address unmet need**
- Increasing supply by increasing the number of graduates and delaying retirement narrows but does not eliminate this gap
- Demand (service utilization) is considerably lower than unmet need
- Addressing supply alone may not address unmet need
  - Complex financial, social, cultural, and geographic factors represent barriers to care



# Top Reasons for Unmet Need

1. Could not afford the cost of treatment (38%)
2. Thought could handle the problem without treatment (28%)
3. Did not know where to go for services (21%)
4. Did not have time (20%)
5. Health insurance does not pay enough for mental health services (13%)
6. Concerns about being committed or having to take medicine (12%)
7. Might cause neighbors or community to have negative opinion (11%)

# Workforce Projections Limitations

- Projections may underestimate demand
  - Projections use traditional definitions of mental health services
  - May not capture psychologists' role in health services (obesity, smoking, pain management, chronic illnesses) or certain venues (primary care, integrated care)
- Lack of specialty data
- Terms are not consistent with those used in psychology
  - Ex. Employment settings
    - Offices of health practitioners vs. Psychologists in private practice
- Demand is based on service utilization, not need
- Projections  $\neq$  predictions



# Workforce Projections Implications

- Do we have enough psychologists?
- Better question: Do we have the right psychologist workforce?
  - Do we have psychologists with the right training to work in the right employment settings in the right geographic areas to serve diverse population health needs?
- Areas where demand is projected to grow
  - Age groups - Older adults
  - Race/ethnicity – Hispanic populations
  - Employment settings – Hospitals
  - Geographic location - South

# Older Adults: Projected Growth

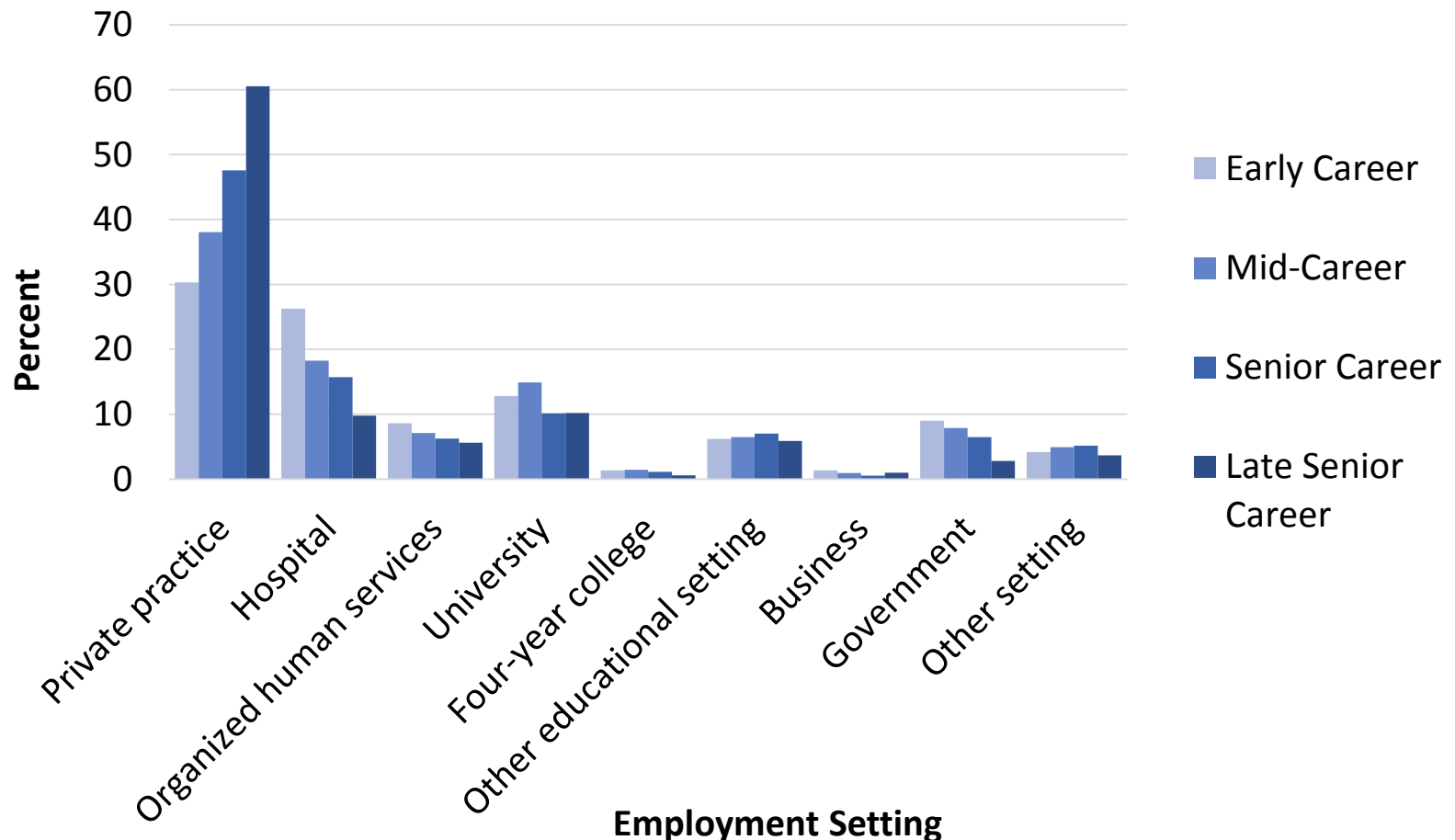
- Demand from older adults will account for nearly all of the growth in demand by 2030 (+5,790 FTEs) (APA, 2018)
- Council of Professional Geropsychology Training Programs
  - 16 doctoral programs
  - 20 internship programs
  - 17 postdoctoral programs
- 2% of psychologists reported their primary or secondary area of specialty was professional geropsychology (2015 APA Survey of Psychology Health Service Providers)

# Hispanic Populations: Projected Growth

- Demand from Hispanic populations is projected to grow 30% by 2030 (+4,120 FTEs) (APA, 2018)
- Yet only 5.5% of psychologists can provide services in Spanish and 4.4% of psychologists are Hispanic (2015 APA Survey of Psychology Health Service Providers)
- Hypothetical racial/ethnic equivalence scenario (APA, 2018)
  - Demand could increase substantially
  - If Hispanic populations had the same service utilization patterns as non-Hispanic White populations, demand from Hispanic populations would increase 106% by 2030

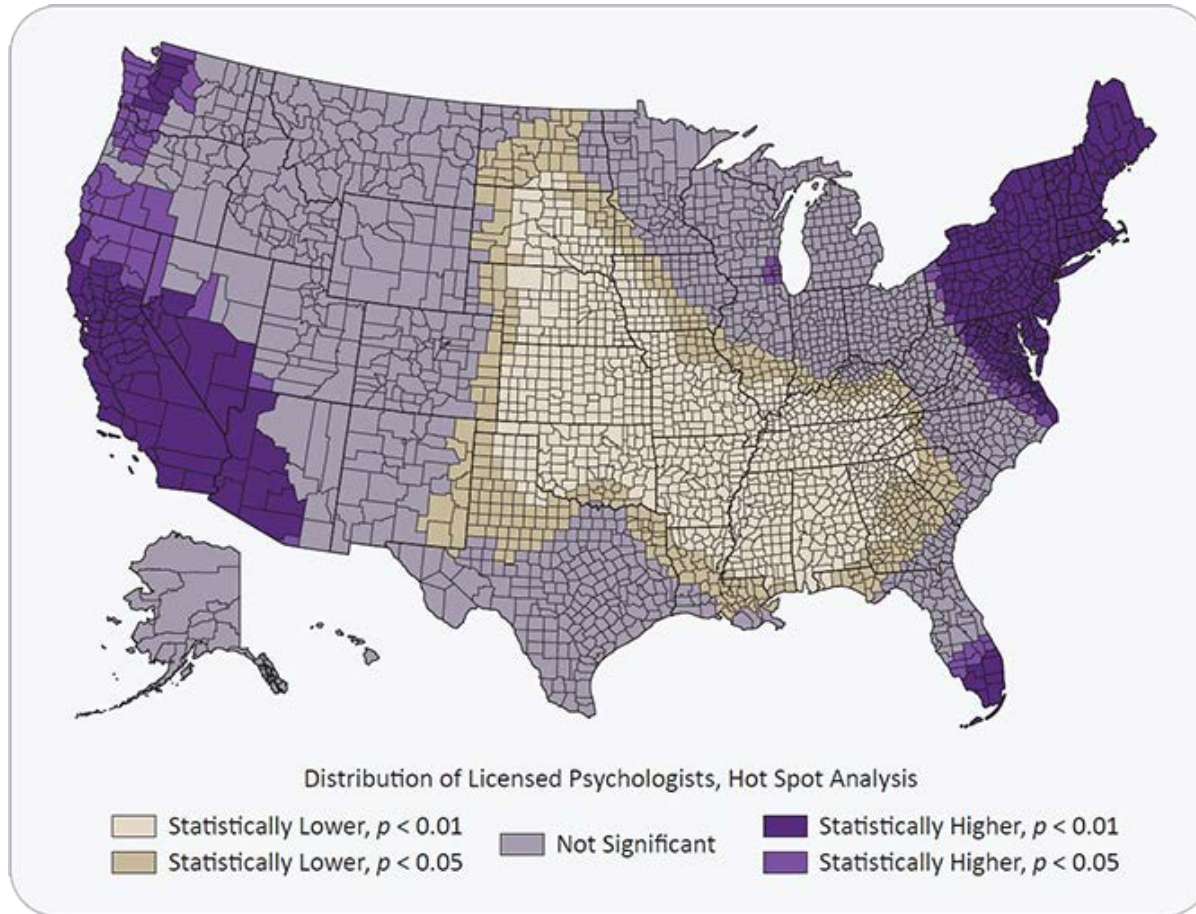
# Hospitals: Projected Growth

- Hospitals – projections show 26% growth in demand by 2030 (+3,060 FTEs)



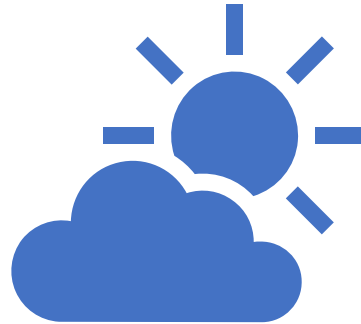
# The South: Projected Growth

- Demand in the South is projected to increase by 3,900 FTEs by 2030
- Relatively fewer psychologists in the South and middle of the country than in the Northeast and CA
- Relationships between the distribution of psychologists and health indicators
  - More psychologists = healthier populations
  - Fewer psychologists = less healthy populations



# Diversity & Cultural Competency

- What is the gender and racial/ethnic composition of the psychologist training pipeline and workforce?
- How knowledgeable are psychologists in working with diverse populations?

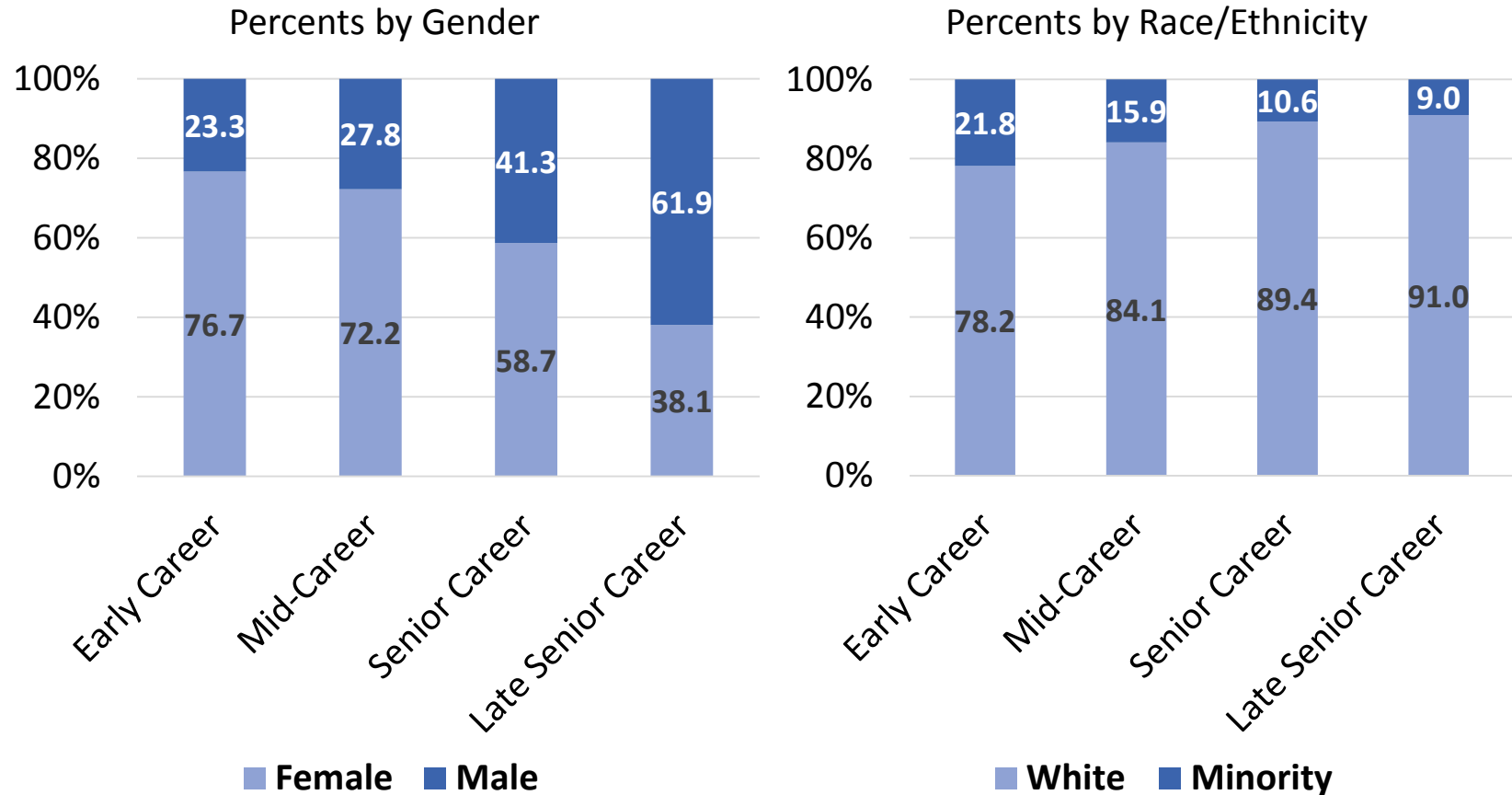


# Training Pipeline:

## Diversity of Doctoral Students in Health Service Psychology Programs

|             | %<br>Female | %<br>White | %<br>Racial/<br>Ethnic Minority<br>(Black,<br>Hispanic, or<br>Asian) | %<br>Other<br>race |
|-------------|-------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>2012</b> | 78.0        | 65.7       | 25.6                                                                 | 8.6                |
| <b>2013</b> | 77.8        | 65.5       | 25.8                                                                 | 8.7                |
| <b>2014</b> | 77.6        | 64.9       | 26.2                                                                 | 8.9                |
| <b>2015</b> | 77.3        | 64.5       | 26.5                                                                 | 9.1                |

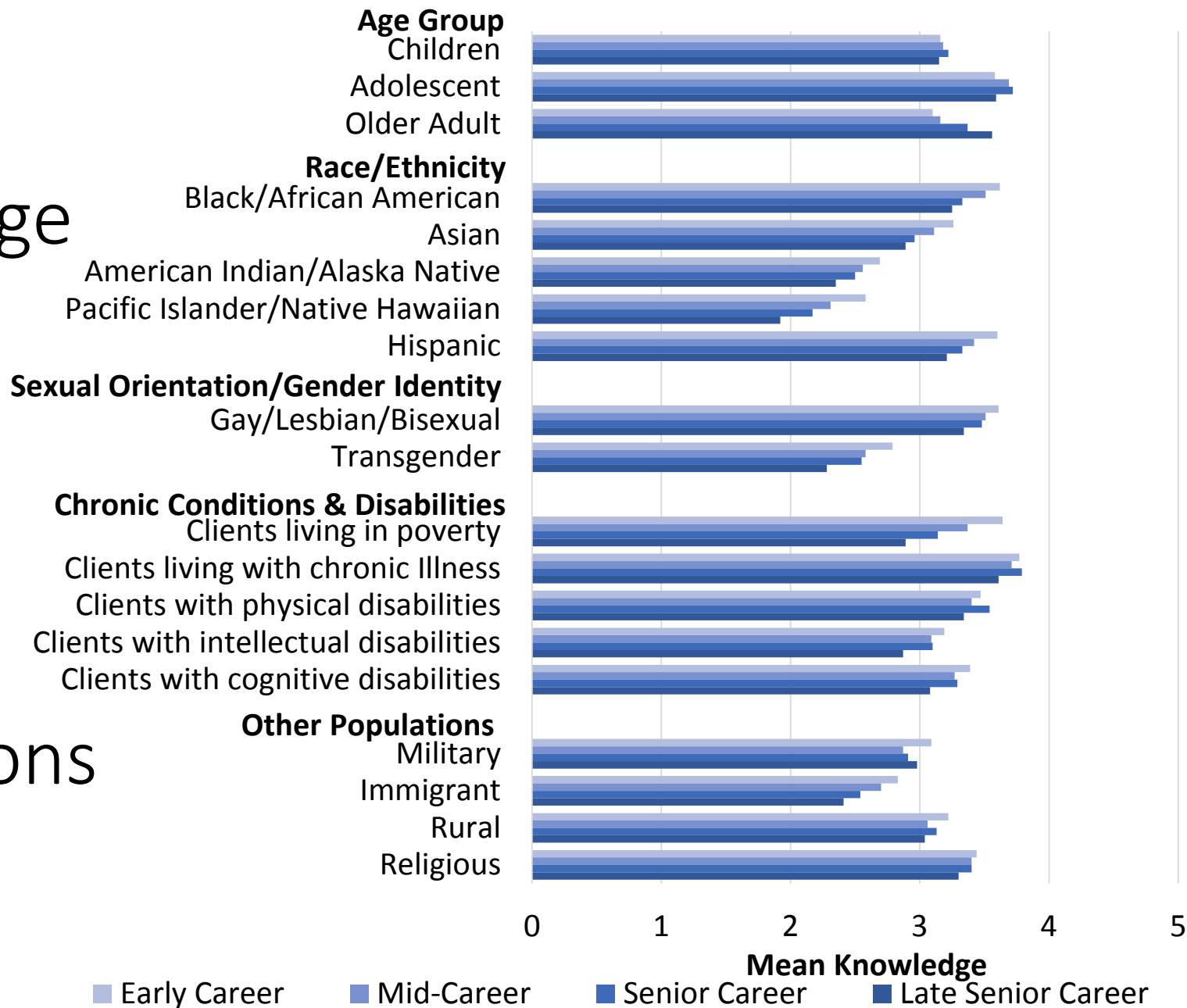
# Psychologist Workforce Diversity by Career Stage: Gender & Race/Ethnicity



# Diversity Implications

- The health service psychology training pipeline and early career psychologists are predominantly White and female
- Slow change is occurring toward greater racial/ethnic diversity
- Comparison to U.S. population
  - 51% women, 35% racial/ethnic minorities (U.S. Census, 2015)

# Knowledge Ratings about Working with Diverse Populations



# Knowledge Rating Highlights

- Psychologists in earlier career stages reported higher knowledge ratings for most population groups, especially for racial/ethnic minority, sexual orientation minority, and disability groups
- Exception – older adults had an opposite pattern where psychologists in later career stages reported higher knowledge ratings

# Characteristics of Psychologists Providing Services to Diverse Populations

- Are psychologists more likely to treat patients who match their own characteristics? **Generally yes.**
  - A larger proportion of psychologists of color treated **racial/ethnic minority patients** frequently/very frequently
    - 48% of psychologists of color vs. 32% White psychologists frequently/very frequently provided services to **Hispanic patients**
  - A larger proportion of older psychologists treated **older adults** frequently/very frequently
    - 48% psychologists age 65 or older vs. 37% of psychologists overall frequently/very frequently provided services to **older adults**

# Cultural Competency Implications

- A more culturally competent psychologist workforce is emerging
- Yet competency self-ratings may not improve patient outcomes (APA Handbook of Multicultural Psychology, 2014)
- Why is cultural competency higher in earlier career stages?
  - Proximity to graduate training?
  - Knowledge fading over time?
  - Changing interests?
  - Changing workforce demographics?

# References: Center for Workforce Studies

- American Psychological Association. (2016). *2015 APA Survey of Psychology Health Service Providers*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/15-health-service-providers/index.aspx>
- American Psychological Association. (2016). *County-level analysis of U.S. licensed psychologists and health indicators*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/15-county-analysis/index.aspx>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Career stages of health service psychologists: Special analyses of the 2015 APA Survey of Psychology Health Service Providers*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/15-health-service-career/index.aspx>
- American Psychological Association. (2018). Psychologist workforce projections 2015-30. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/supply-demand/default.aspx>

## References: Other Sources

- Moye, J., Karel, M. J., Stamm, K. E., Qualls, S. H., Segal, D. L., Tazeau, Y. N., & DiGilio, D. A. (in press). Workforce analysis of psychological practice with older adults. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*. doi: 10.1037/tep0000206
- Page, C., Buche, J., Stamm, K., Lin, L., Christidis, P., & Beck, A. (2017). *Understanding the Diversity of Students and Faculty in Health Service Psychology Doctoral Programs*. Retrieved from <http://www.behavioralhealthworkforce.org/project/recruitment-and-retention-of-a-diverse-health-service-psychology-workforce/>

For more information, please visit the  
APA Center for Workforce Studies website:  
[www.apa.org/workforce](http://www.apa.org/workforce)

Questions? Contact [kstamm@apa.org](mailto:kstamm@apa.org)

Thank you!