Availability of Asian Language Substance Abuse Treatment Counselors Varies by Region

Each year, an estimated one half million Asian American adults need treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol problem.\(^1\) Some of these Asian American adults do not speak English as their first language and need to receive substance abuse treatment services that are culturally sensitive and tailored to their specific linguistic needs. In the United States, demand for substance abuse treatment services that are tailored to various Asian cultures and languages may be greatest in the geographic area with the highest concentration of Asian or Asian American individuals—the Western region.\(^2\) This Data Spotlight presents data on the percentage of substance abuse treatment facilities located in different geographical regions that deliver services in one or more of the following Asian languages: Chinese (any), Hmong, Korean, Tagalog, or Vietnamese.

Among substance abuse treatment facilities included in the 2009 National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS), 291 (2 percent) provided services in Chinese (any), Hmong, Korean, Tagalog, or Vietnamese through staff counselors. The proportion of facilities offering Asian language counselors varied by region of the United States, ranging from 4 percent of facilities located in the West (162 facilities) to 1 percent of facilities in the South (22 facilities; Figure). Tagalog was the most commonly provided Asian language service among facilities in the West (63 facilities), and Chinese (any) was the most commonly provided Asian language service among facilities in the Northeast (25 facilities), Midwest (17 facilities), and South (9 facilities; Table).

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Source: 2009 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS). N-SSATS is an annual survey of all substance abuse treatment facilities in the United States, both public and private, that are known to SAMHSA. N-SSATS is one component of the Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS), an integrated data system maintained by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, SAMHSA. Information and data for this report are based on data reported to N-SSATS for the survey reference date March 31, 2009.

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