

# International Comparisons & Behavioral Health

Presentation to National Academies Committee on a Blueprint for a National Prevention Infrastructure for Behavioral Health

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The  
Commonwealth  
Fund

# The Commonwealth Fund: *A Brief Introduction*

Established in 1918 by Anna Harkness, the Fund's mission is to promote a high-performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality, and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, and people of color

## Coverage and Access



## Payment and Delivery System Reform



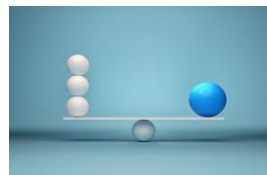
***International Health  
Policy and Practice  
Innovations***



## Cost Containment



## Health Equity



## Medicare & Medicaid



# The Commonwealth Fund's International Program

We seek to improve people's lives by being **the trusted source** for international insights that **spur change** to the US health care system



We seek to mirror areas of focus across the Fund



We identify and prioritize topics that can be informed by international learnings

- Comparative data
- Policy and practice models
- Experts from our network

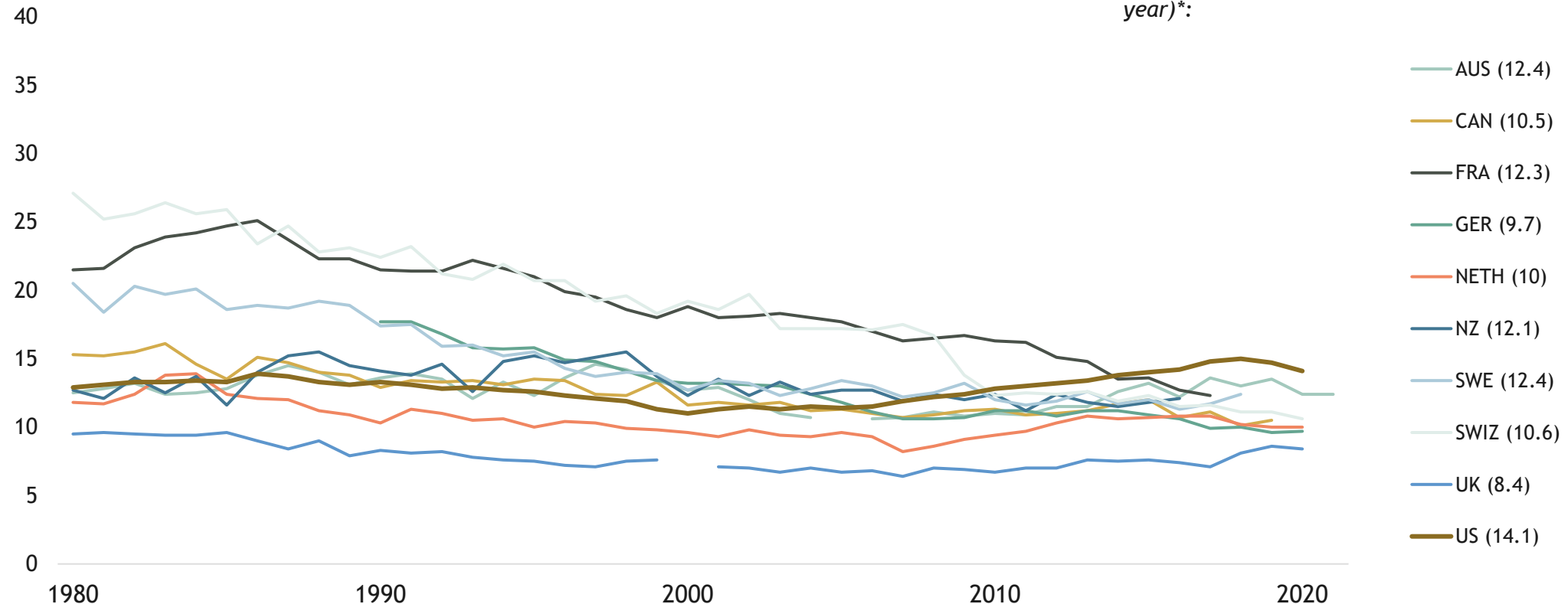


We translate international developments to inspire our U.S. audience

# Compared To 9 Other High-income Countries, The U.S. Has The Highest Suicide Rate

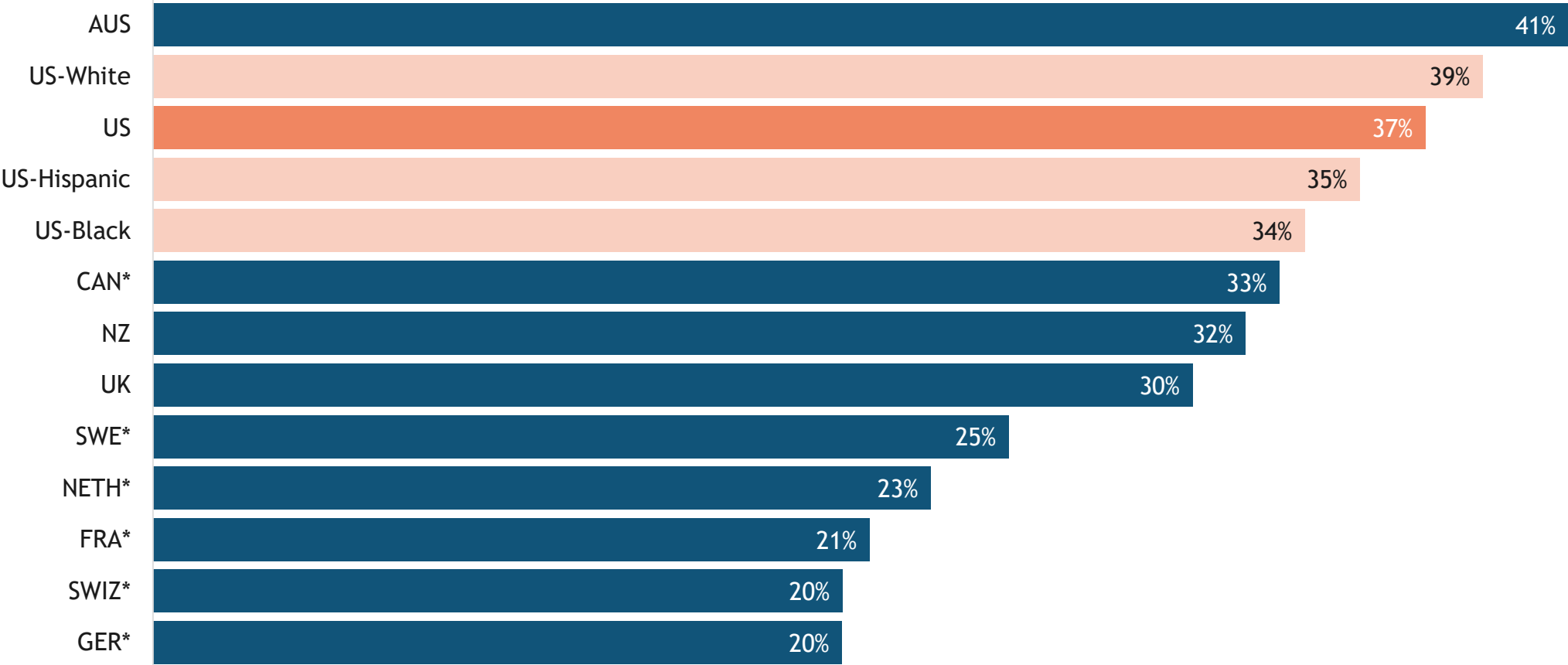
Intentional self-harm, Deaths per 100,000 population

2021 data (or latest available year)\*:



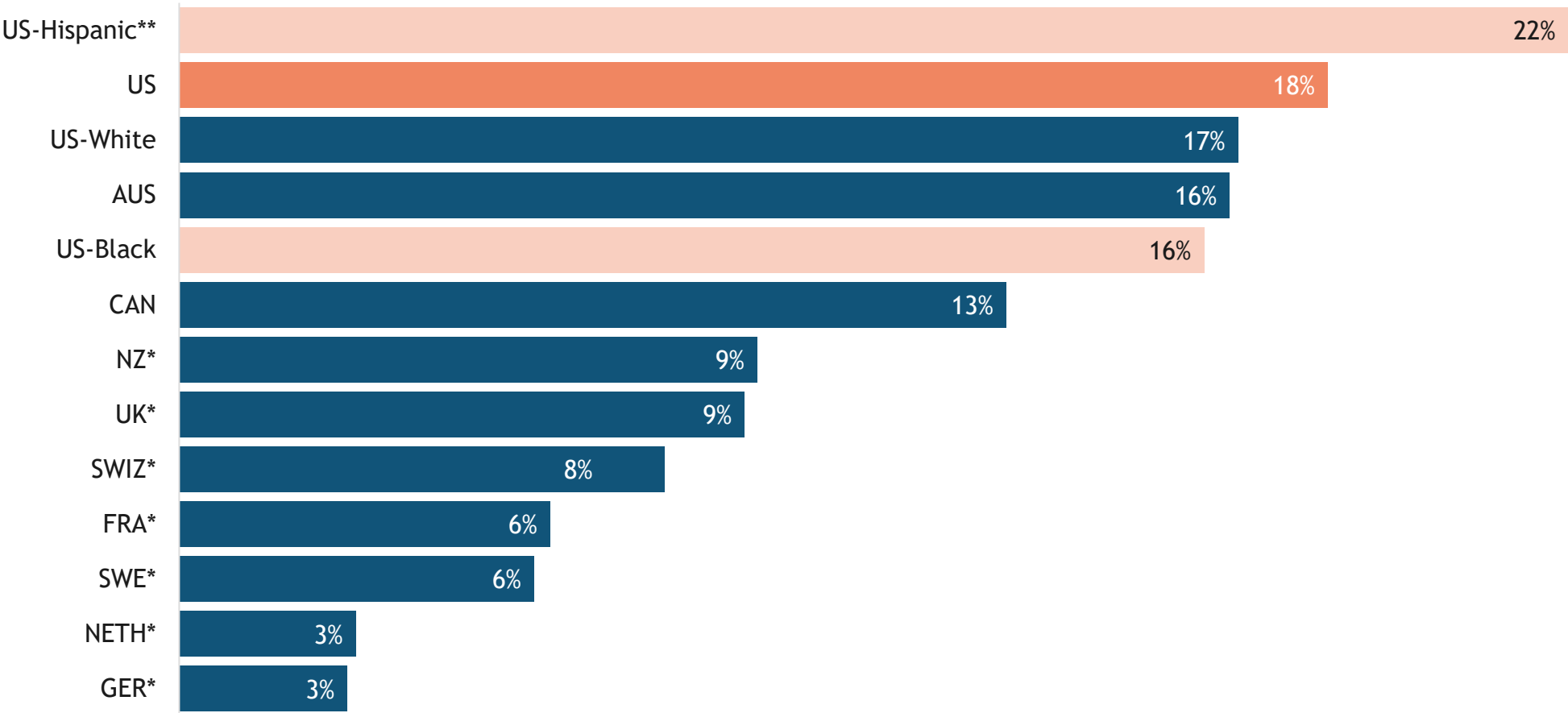
# Adults In The US And Australia Most Likely To Report Mental Health Needs

Percentage of adults 18+ who reported a mental health need



# Adults In The U.S. Are The Most Likely To Skip Needed Mental Health Services Because Of Cost

Percentage of adults 18+ who did not get mental health services in the past 12 months when they needed them because of the cost



Mental health need: Respondent reported they had ever been told they had depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions, or said in the past 12 months, they received counselling or treatment for their mental health. \* Indicates the difference between comparator country and the US is statistically significant at p<.05 level; \*\*Indicates the difference between US-Blacks/US-Hispanics and US-whites is significantly significant at p<.05 level; \*\*\*Indicates the difference between US-Blacks and US-Hispanics is significantly different at p<.05 level.  
Data: 2023 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey.

# Many Countries Have Managed to Expand Access

- Some have developed national strategies to promote well-being and prevent mental health needs often prompted by evidence that untreated conditions sap economic productivity
- Many have launched public health campaigns to raise awareness of mental health problems, encouraging people struggling with common conditions like anxiety or depression to seek help
- Several have made it easier to find and access treatment, leveraging peer and community health workers and technology to bring services to more people

# Examples of National Approaches to Expanding Access





**France:** In 2022, launched a national initiative focused on offering **fully-reimbursed** services when referred by a primary care physician to emphasize the importance of mental health with low barriers

**Singapore:** In 2023, launched a National Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy aimed at improving the mental health ecosystem and includes improving early identification and intervention capabilities of **service providers** (physicians as well as a very broad definition of frontline professionals)

**Netherlands:** “Wellbeing at school” is a national program that provides **primary and secondary schools** interventions teachers can use in the classroom, advice for schools to improve mental health policies, tools teachers can use to better identify mental health issues, and information for schools to share parents and the greater community



# Countries Prioritize a Wide Variety of Approaches

	 Treating mild-to-moderate symptoms	 Integrating physical and mental health care	 Using digital technology to make care convenient	 Addressing the social determinants of mental health problems
Australia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Canada			✓	
New Zealand	✓			✓
Netherlands		✓	✓	
Norway	✓			
Pakistan		✓		✓
Uganda				✓
United Kingdom	✓	✓		
Zimbabwe			✓	

# Addressing the Whole Person: Social, Emotional, Physical



Peer support and resources for young adults at Headspace AU

Peer Support And Resources For Young Adults At Headspace Australia



Integrated Behavioral Health, Primary Healthcare and Social Services at “the 502” in New Zealand

# Key Takeaways

- Our international peers have set a national strategies, devoted a dedicated budget and committed to transparency around effectiveness of interventions and outcomes as part of their mental health efforts
- Successful care models are ones that are convenient, customizable and scalable to meet the need of the patient and the community
- A rethinking of the workforce will be critical to achieving goals of delivering effective mental health treatments
- The recognition that untreated mental health conditions contribute to higher health care costs and lower productivity present a policy window to think big on improving access to mental health services
- Interventions should be assessed by whether they reduce inequities in access and outcomes or exacerbate them. Especially true for digital tools and applications



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