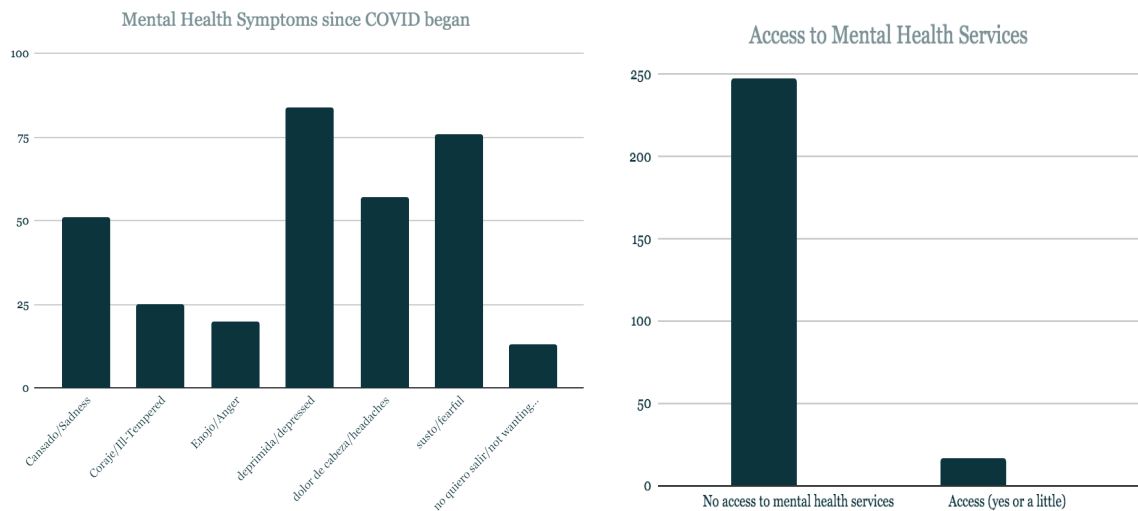




FARMWORKER STUDY

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. For the record, I am Professor Ron Mize of Oregon State University, and I am in support of HB 2361. I am speaking on behalf of the Oregon COVID-19 Farmworker Survey Research Team, a consortium of PSU, UO, and OSU faculty and 11 farmworker serving organizations. In response to COVID-19, we convened as a group to conduct a rapid response survey of 300 farmworkers across the state of Oregon, complemented by 900 surveys conducted in California and 300 in Washington, to ascertain the impact of COVID-19 on the health and well-being of the region's farmworkers. Approximately 70 respondents (23%) lived in the Morrow, Malheur, Hood River and Umatilla counties currently under consideration. We asked specifically about mental health symptoms experienced during COVID as well as access to mental health services.



The respondents experienced the following symptoms: 51 had been feeling sadness; 25 felt stressed; 20 felt anger; 57 had been experiencing headaches; 13 did not want to go out; 76 felt fearful; and 84 felt depressed. These symptoms of behavioral distress are worsened by the lack of access to behavioral health services. The above graph on the right shows the vast majority of farmworkers surveyed do not have any access to mental health services at all. 247 out of 300 farmworkers (82%) had *no* access to support for their mental health during these impressively challenging times.

With heightened symptoms of depression, headaches, and feelings of fear that have affected farmworkers since COVID-19, mental health access is essential. It has been shown that a lack of access, as farmworkers experience nationwide, is a key factor in the mental health crisis occurring across the United States (National Council for Behavioral Health, 2018).¹

HB2361 would address pre-existing inequities for Oregon's rural Latinx population, in terms of access to behavioral health access, only exacerbated during the current pandemic. The only suggestion by member organizations is the lack of access to bi-lingual/cultural mental health services is a statewide issue for Latina/os, so the hope would be this bill would eventually be expanded to include all Latina/os in Oregon. Thank you again. I am open for questions.

¹ National Council for Behavioral Health. "New study reveals lack of access as root cause for mental health crisis in America." (2018, October 10). <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/press-releases/new-study-reveals-lack-of-access-as-root-cause-for-mental-health-crisis-in-america/>