

Identifying mental health professional shortage areas

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Identifying MHPsAs: HRSA designates MH shortage areas

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- ▣ HRSA is the federal agency tasked with identifying national health care workforce problems
- ▣ Methods used to measure shortages (primary care, dental) were updated
- ▣ Federal MHPSA designation method needs updating



Identifying MHPSAs: HRSA designates MH shortage areas

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- Number of mental health professionals required to “eliminate a shortage”
- Primary focus: geographic
- Theory and methods for MHPSA designation based on primary care methodology
 - ▣ No use of epidemiology of mental illness
 - ▣ Fails to assess the complex needs and utilization patterns of SMI population



Identifying MHPSAs: HRSA designates MH shortage areas

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- Current method:
 - ▣ *Crude*: population-to-provider ratios
 - ▣ *Insensitive*: Special needs of SMI population not measured
 - ▣ *Not Comprehensive*: New professions online now providing MH services, e.g., licensed professional counselors
 - ▣ *Outdated*: New improved geographic analysis and workforce planning techniques are available



Identifying MHPSAs: UNC Sheps Center project goal

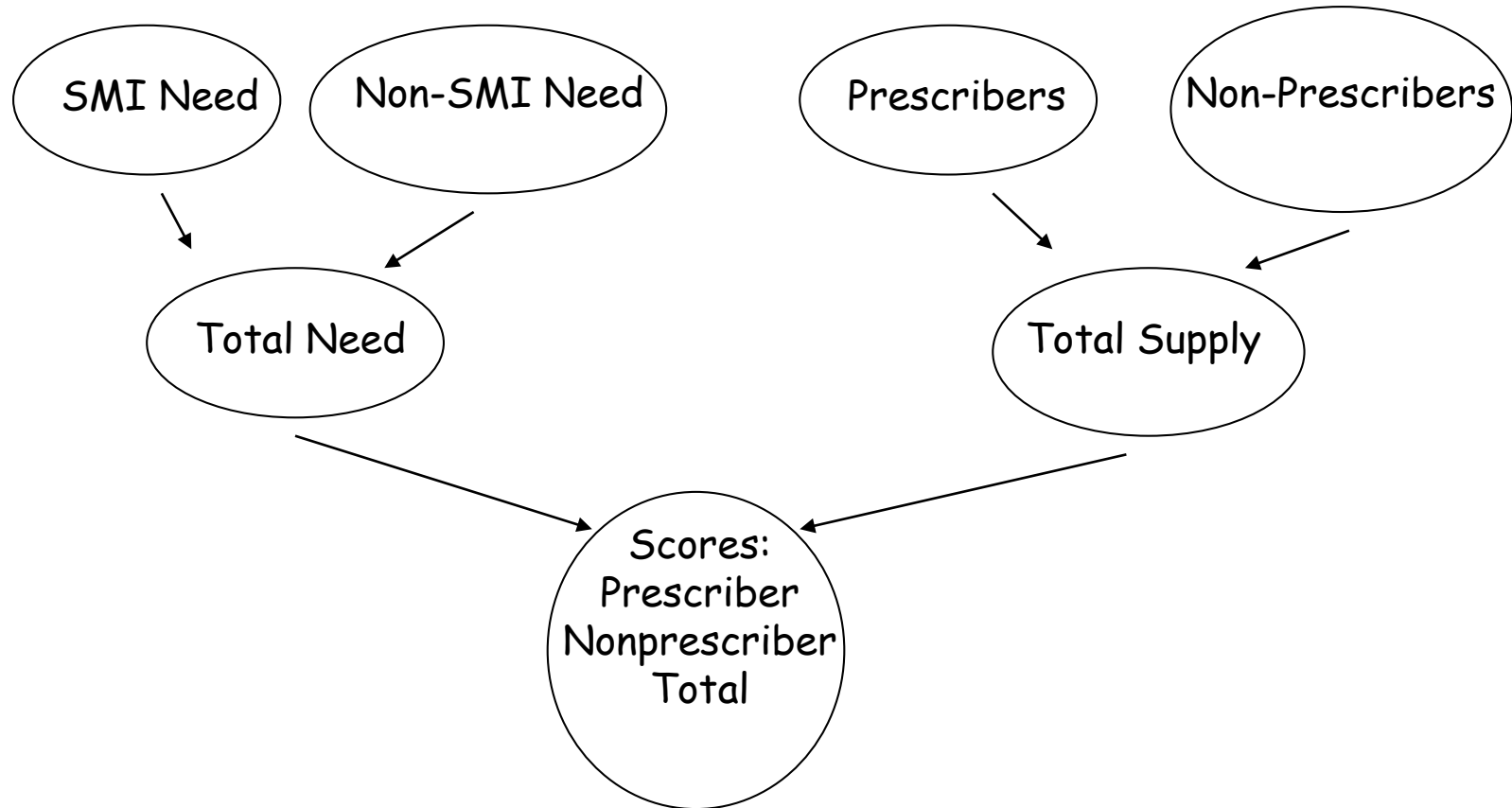
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- Develop a method to identify mental health professional shortage areas
 - ▣ Using available data
 - ▣ Feasible to update periodically
- Quantifies shortage observed by the Annapolis Coalition report
- Helps set the stage for subsequent discussion of mental health workforce issues



Identifying MHPSAs: Building scores

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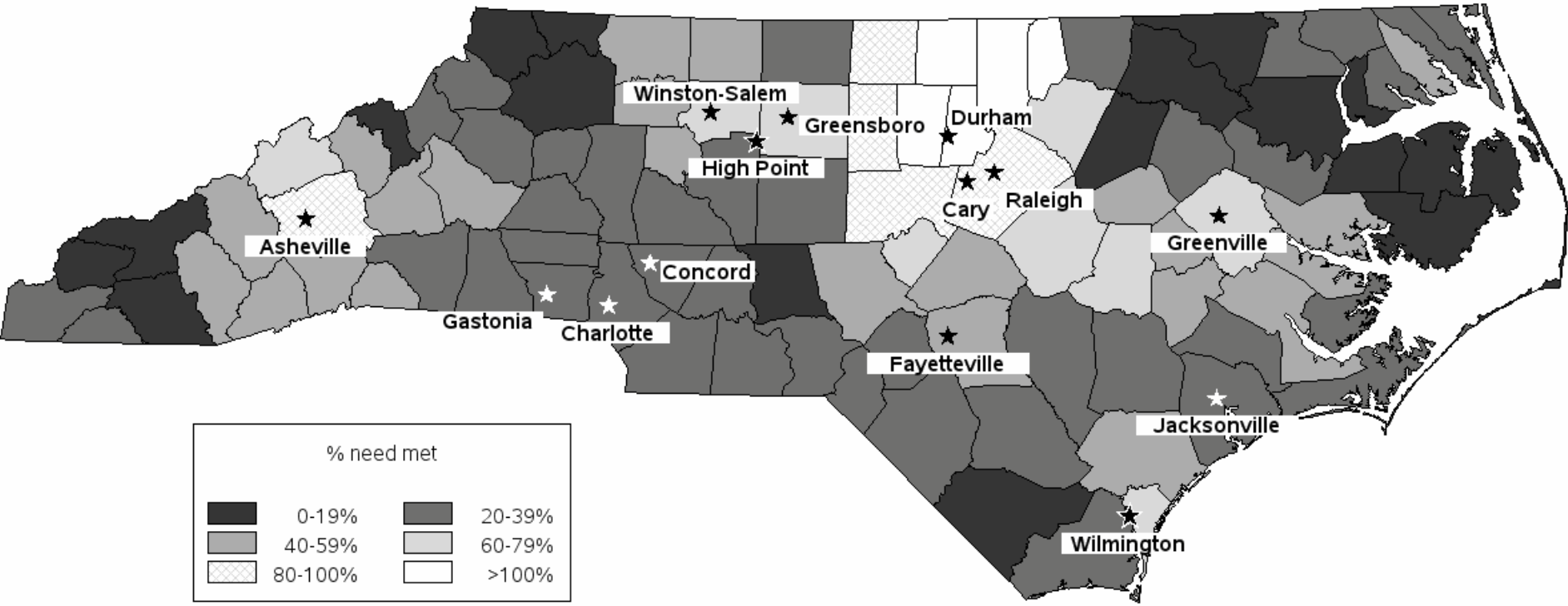
Compiling MHPSA scores: Adjusting and smoothing

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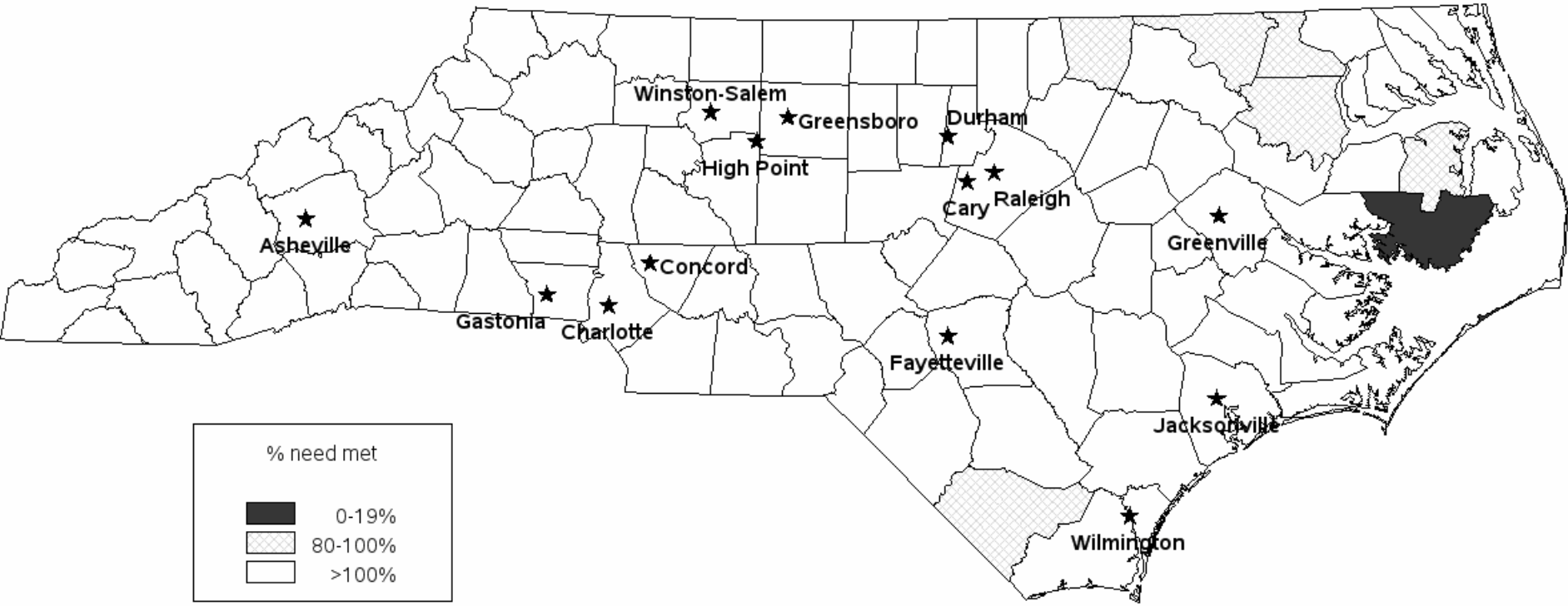
- Need estimates were deflated to adjust for mental health services provided by primary care providers
- Need estimates were smoothed to account for travel across county boundaries
 - Each county estimate is a weighted average of the index county and nearby counties



% Need for prescribers that is met across NC



% Need for non-prescribers that is met across NC



Identifying MHPSAs: Challenges for the future

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- Expand the scope on both need and supply sides
 - ▣ Assess needs of additional special populations
 - persons with co-occurring substance abuse
 - children, homeless adults, linguistically isolated, etc.
 - ▣ Assess the supply
 - Distinguish between public and private sectors
 - expanded practice scope (eg nurse and psychologist prescribers)
 - additional professions (eg pharmacists)
- Move beyond counting to address quality of care issues

