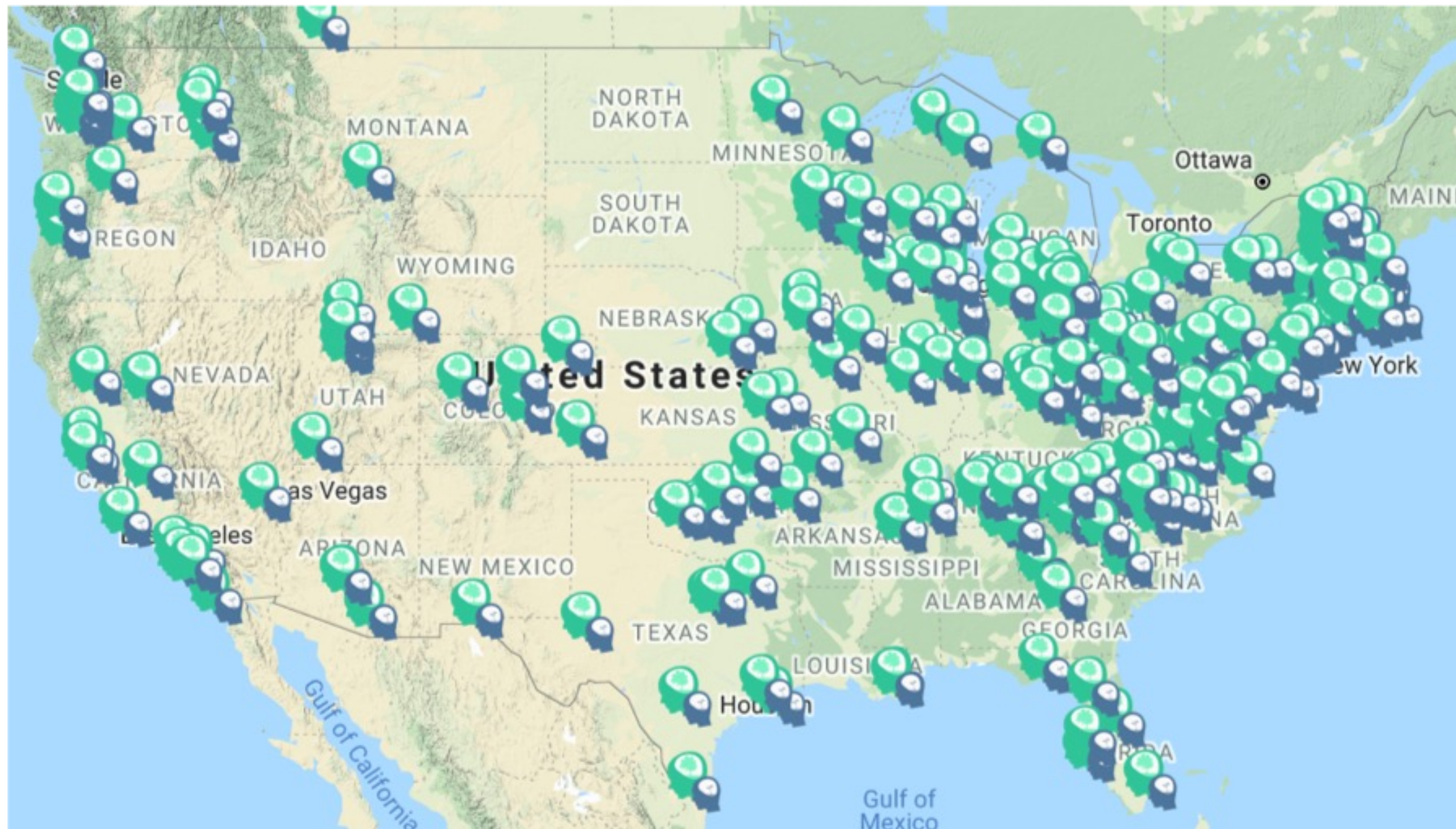# *Bringing Together Student Success & Wellbeing:*

Behavioral Health, Engagement & Retention

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The Healthy Minds Study (HMS):
national mental health survey of college student populations
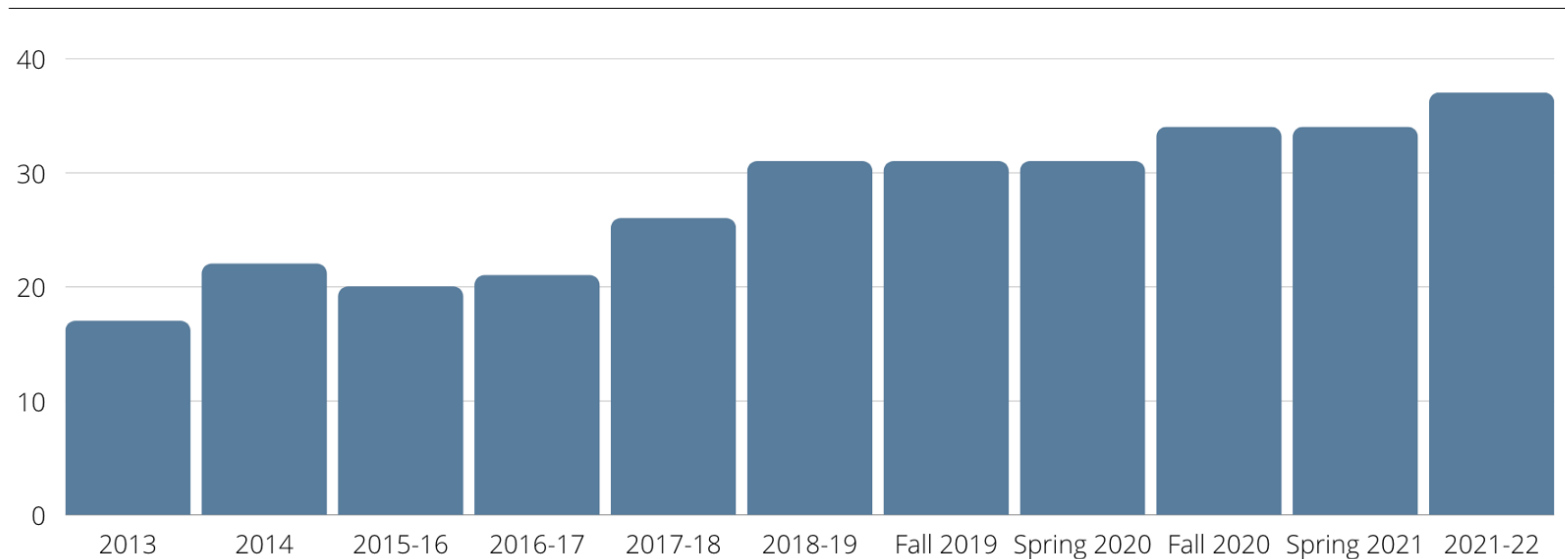

- >700 colleges and universities
- Based at BUSPH, UM, UCLA
- Random student samples recruited from participating schools
- Online survey (Qualtrics)
- Validated screening tools/measures
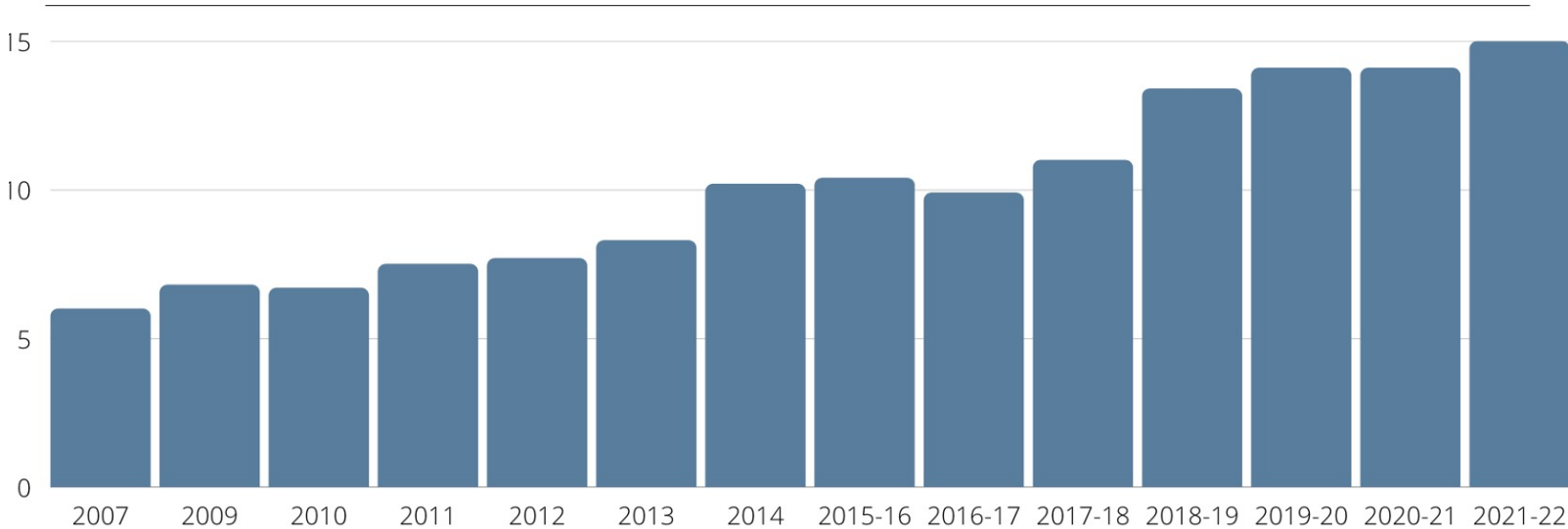
Overview: trends in student mental health

Increasing rates of depressive symptoms
2013 (22%) - 2022 (44%)
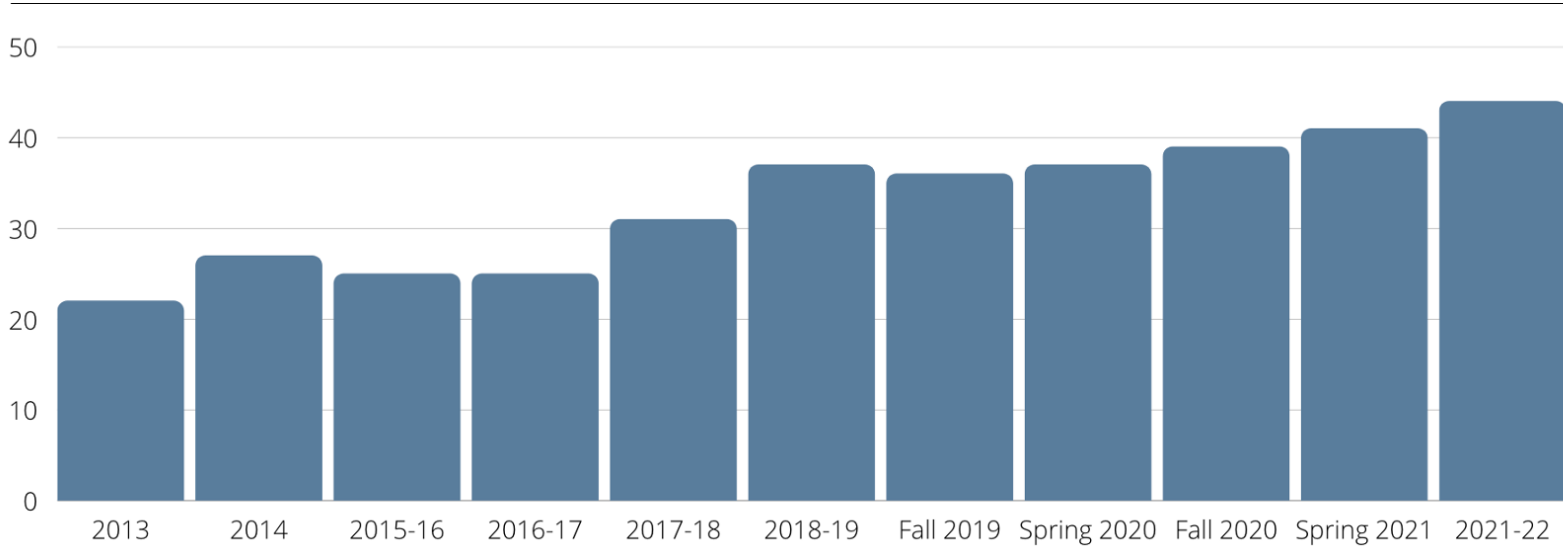
Increasing rates of anxiety symptoms
2013 (17%) - 2022 (37%)

Increasing rates of suicidal ideation
2007 (6%) - 2022 (15%)

	Since 2013
Flourishing	-33%
Suicidal ideation	+64%
Depression	+135%
Anxiety	+110%
Tx (w dep/anx/SI)	+26%

Financial stress is arguably the most significant risk factor for poor mental health.

Current frequency of financial stress

Never stressful: 6%

Rarely stressful: 18%

Sometimes stressful: 37%

Often stressful: 25%

Always stressful: 14%

Strong correlation with mental health

Never stressful: 29%
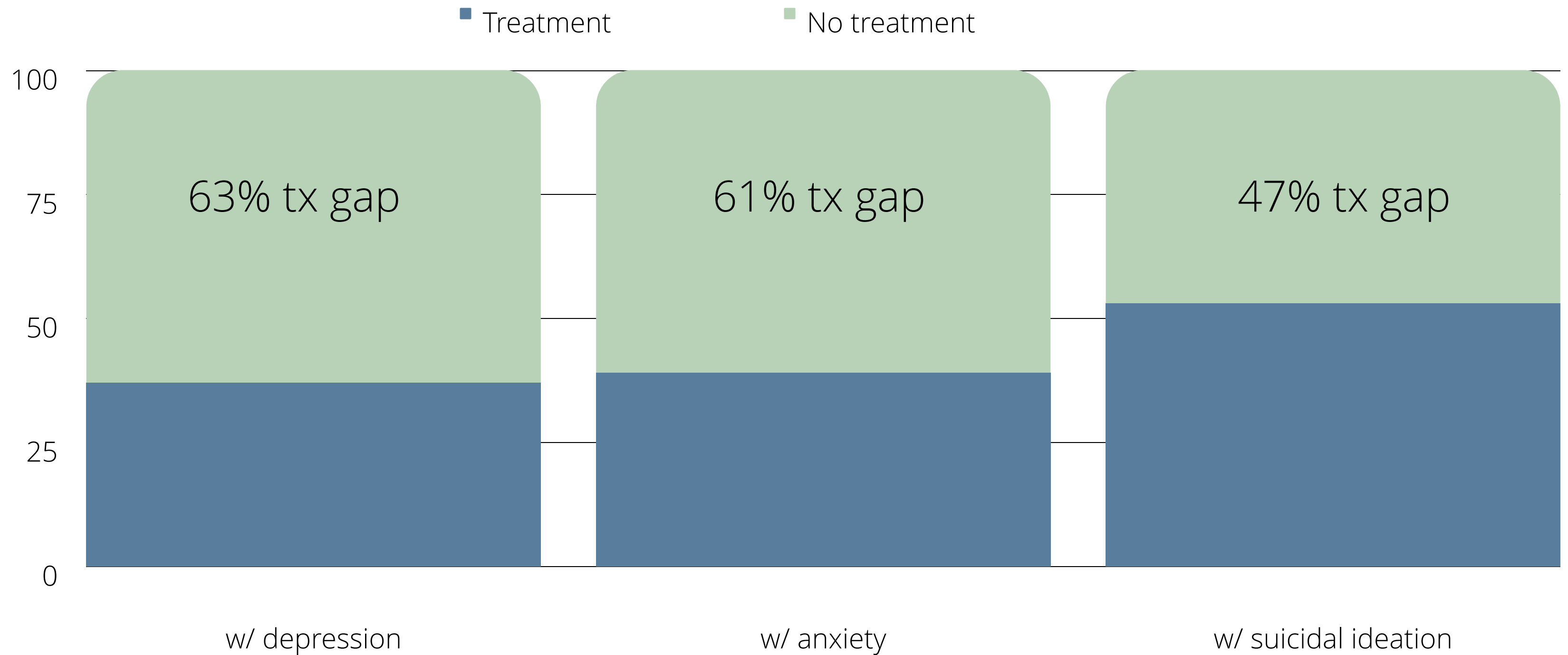
Rarely stressful: 30%

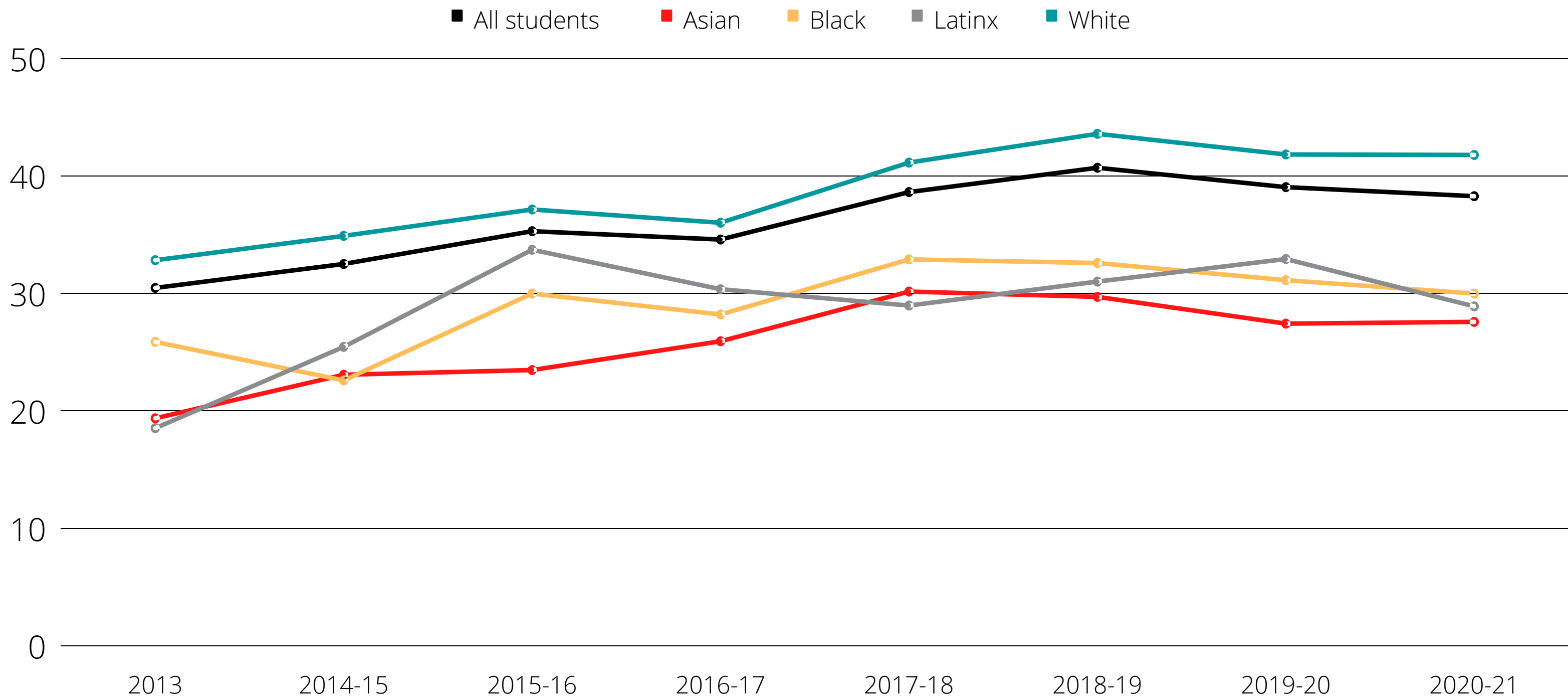Sometimes stressful: 32%

Often stressful: 45%

Always stressful: 60%

Debt is a significant predictor of stress and depressive symptoms as well as academic performance and retention.

Mental health 'treatment gap' is disproportionately wide for BIPOC students.

■ All students   ■ Asian   ■ Black   ■ Latinx   ■ White

In 2021, >70% of Asian students with a positive screen for 1 or more mental health problems had not received therapy/counseling in the past year (vs. 58% of White students)

2013   2014-15   2015-16   2016-17   2017-18   2018-19   2019-20   2020-21

Low-income students are more likely to screen positive and first-generation students are less likely to access care.

- About 40% of college graduates are first-generation students, and approximately half of first-generation students are also low-income. This means there are roughly four million FGLI students in U.S. higher education.

2020-2021 HMS data:	FG	CG	LI	Non-LI
Mental health status				
Depression	45.1%	41.4%	**58.7%**	**32.3%**
Anxiety	37.4%	35.3%	**50.1%**	**26.7%**
Suicidal ideation	14.4%	14.5%	**20.4%**	**10.4%**
Service utilization				
Any treatment	**46.1%**	**56.9%**	52.6%	51.8%
Counseling/therapy	**32.8%**	**45.1%**	39.0%	40.5%

Highest rates of academic impairment due to mental health, AY 2021-2022

In the past 4 weeks, how many days have you felt that emotional or mental difficulties have hurt your academic performance?

17% None
29% 1 - 2 days
27% 3 - 5 days
27% 6 or more days
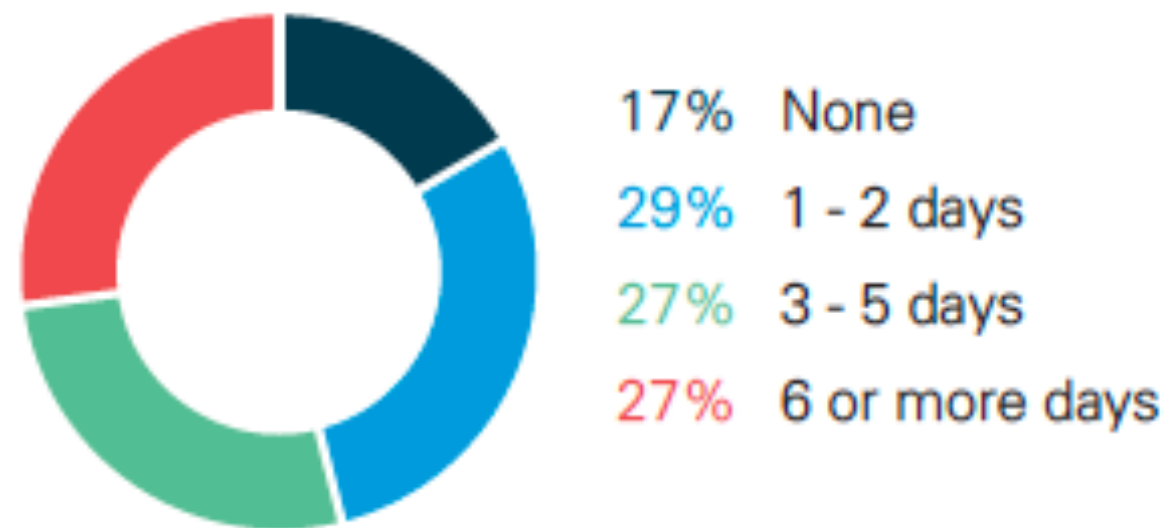
- Poor mental health may decrease one's interest in the future, which would reduce one's willingness to make long-term investments like schooling

- Symptoms may affect the productivity of time in academic activities and overall academic performance

  - Reduced interest or pleasure in usual activities, sleep disturbances, reduced energy, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, and suicidal thoughts (which may impair concentration or decrease interest in investing in future)

Mental health & academics: longitudinal HMS research

- Untreated depression associated with 2x increase in likelihood of stopping/dropping out

- Lack of pleasure and interest in usual activities is strongest negative predictor

- Negative affect ("feeling down, depressed, or hopeless") is not a significant predictor

  - This appears to highlight the fact that many students can feel severely depressed but still remain highly functional

  - Serious impairment in academic functioning appears to arrive only once someone loses interest or enjoyment in usual activities

- Remarkably similar patterns for untreated mental health problems and poor academic outcomes

  - Students of color, first-gen, low-income students, on average, less likely to seek treatment when symptomatic and more likely to drop out/stop out

Thank you!

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