

This study was conducted by the American College Health Association Data Strategy and Research Task Force to determine what health services are offered across U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs).

Background

The ACHA Data Strategy and Research Task Force (DSRTF) was appointed in 2023 to provide an assessment of current ACHA research and data collection efforts and to make recommendations to the ACHA Board of Directors.

The American College Health Association has 725 institutional members, most of whom offer some level of health services to students. There are however, almost 3,900 degree-granting IHEs in the United States. No documented single source of truth for information about the health services provided on campus, whether for ACHA members or non-members, exists. ACHA research and data collection efforts are confined to a small portion of these institutions. Understanding the scope of campus health services nationally can support both ACHA advocacy and outreach and the understanding of the generalizability of ACHA research and data collection efforts.

Research Goal

To determine what health services (medical services, mental health services, health promotion services, and Student Health Insurance Benefits Plan(SHIBPs)), are offered at degree-granting U.S. IHEs. To examine if there is a relationship between institutions that offer different services and other institutional characteristics publicly available through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Methods

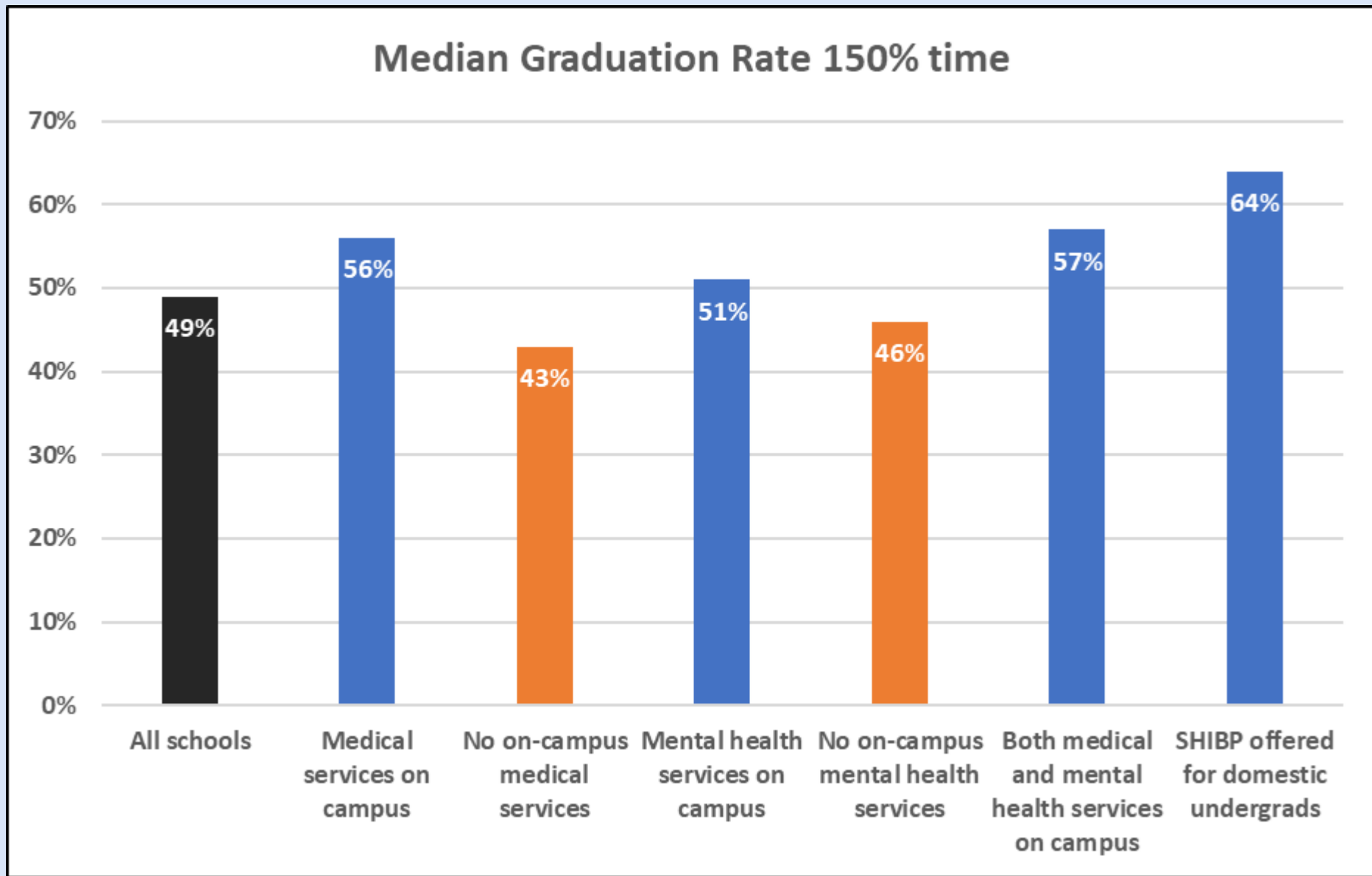
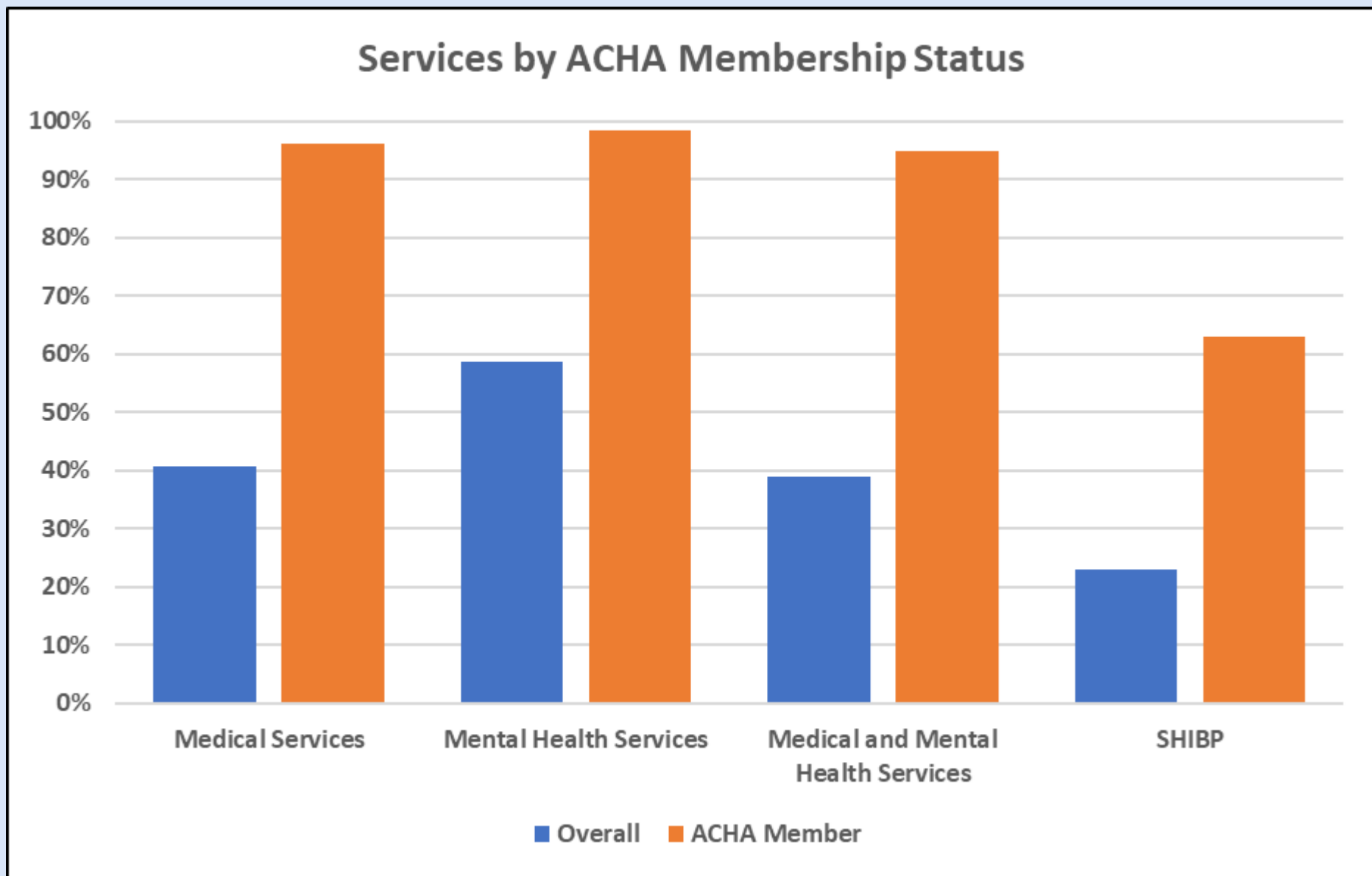
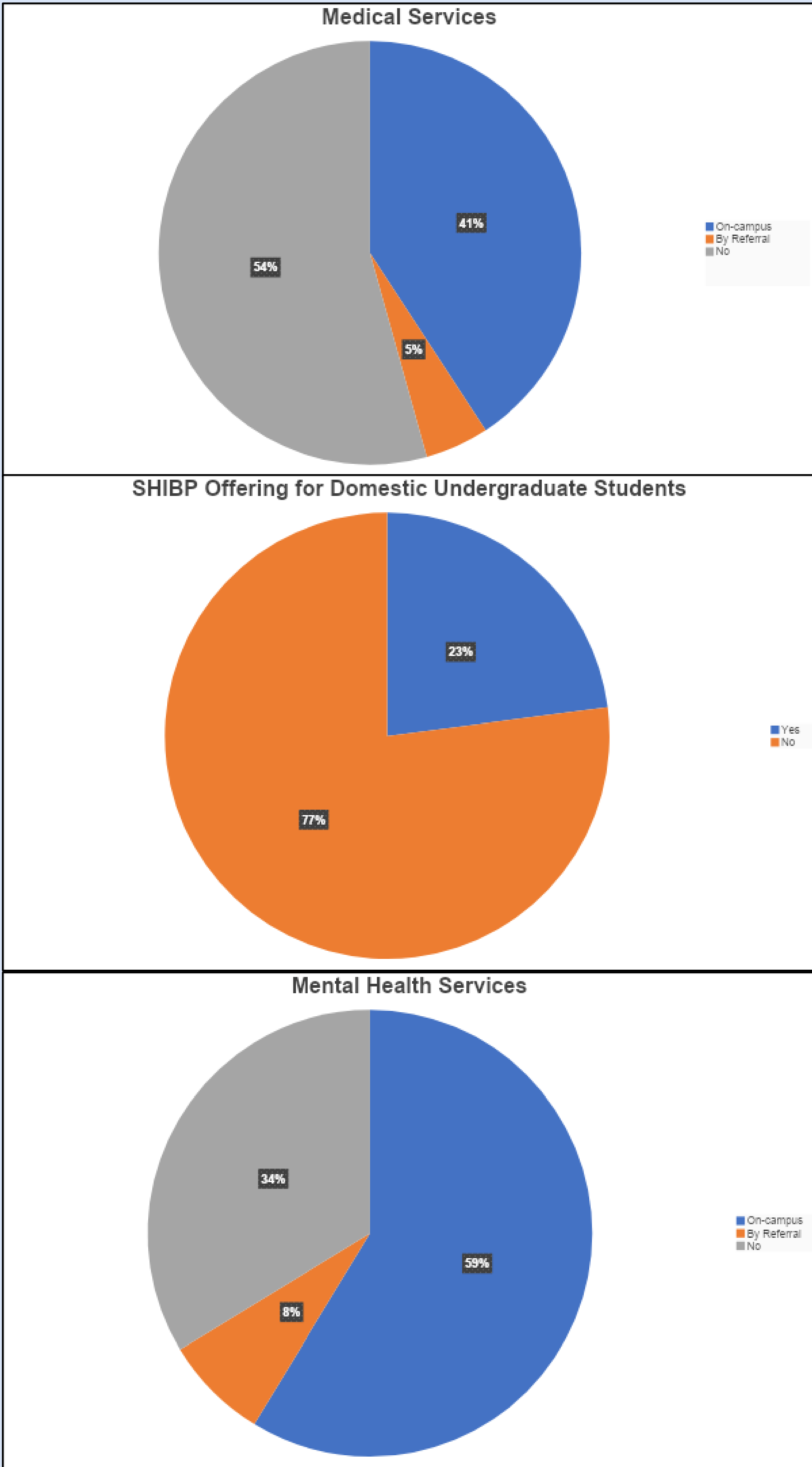
A total of 6,272 institutions from the 2021-2022 academic year were extracted from the IPEDS system on May 24, 2023. After omitting institutions that were not degree granting, exclusively administrative units or only offered online education, 4,005 institutions were identified for review. In addition to institution name and website URL, demographic characteristics about each institution (e.g., public/private, 2yr/4yr, enrollment size, geographical area, on-campus housing availability, and 100%/150% time completion rates) were also downloaded.

Student interns, overseen by ACHA staff and DSRTF members, reviewed each institution’s website to determine available health services. The review was limited to the presence of services and did not include an assessment of the scope or quality of services. DSRTF members conducted a secondary review when interns were unable to determine information.

Health Services offered at U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

Results

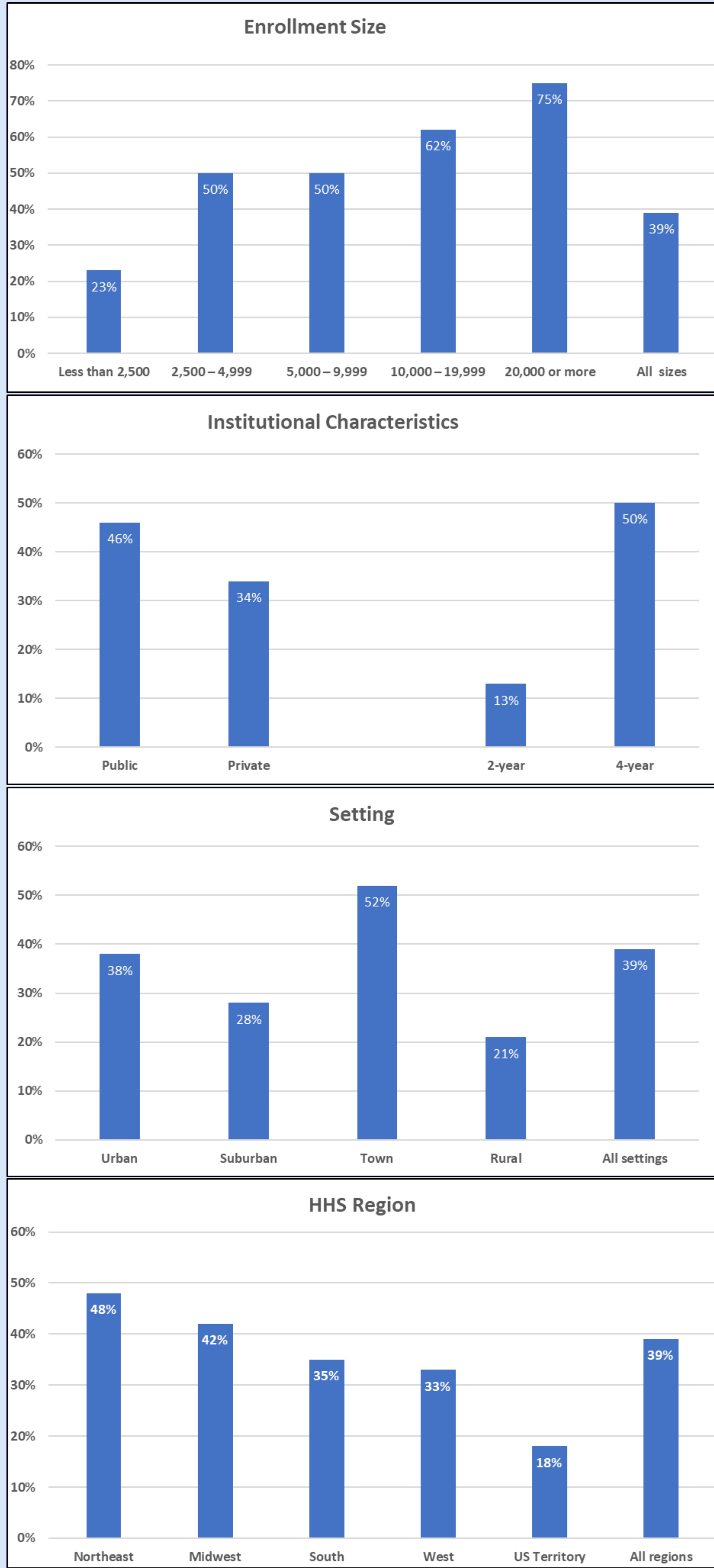
A final sample of 3878 degree-granting institutions were reviewed after omitting 91 institutions closed or merged since the 2021-2022 academic year and 36 institutions missing enrollment numbers in IPEDS. The study team was unable to adequately assess the provision of health promotion services through website review. IHEs were more likely to provide on-campus mental health care, 59%, than medical care, 41%. 23% of IHEs offered a SHIBP to domestic undergraduate students. Nearly all ACHA member institutions provided on-campus medical and mental health services. Four-year status, larger enrollment, public, location in a town versus urban, suburban or rural, and location in the Northeast are more commonly associated with offering on-campus services. Institutions which provided either on campus medical or mental health care report a higher graduation rate.



On-campus care: A facility or office on campus with licensed providers(s) employed by the IHE or third party to provide direct care, regardless of scope, to students attending the IHE. Excludes physical activity center, physical education classes, personal health courses, recreational sports, EMS services, disability services, care provided to the general public through an academic training program, peer, religious, spiritual, academic, career, financial counseling which is not provided by licensed mental health professionals or care provided by a 3rd party virtual telehealth service only.

By Referral: Care is not available on campus, however the IHE facilitates access to off-campus or virtual care. Excludes simple listings of off-campus medical resources without an established relationship to the IHE or services provided through the local public health authority.

On Campus Medical and Mental Health Services based on Institutional Characteristics



Conclusions

Many students attend IHEs without any campus health services. IHEs with on-campus services are noted to have a higher graduation rate. This study was unable to determine provision of health promotion services due to the complexity and diversity of website information and this is a direction for future study. While most ACHA member institutions provide on campus services, only 44% of institutions with on-campus medical services and 31% of institutions with on-campus mental health services are ACHA members. Understanding services at non-member institutions is critical for future ACHA growth. Understanding the relationships between campus health services and graduation is another direction for future analysis.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the ACHA Data Strategy and Research Task Force: Christine Kukich, Jessica Higgs, Mary Hoban, Susan Hochman, Alyssa Lederer, Sarah Van Orman, Monica Webb, Kawai Tanabe and three Student Interns: Erin Camelon (The University of Texas at Austin), Amber Jenkins (University of Florida), and Sabuhee Zafar (The University of Texas at Austin) as well as the ACHA Board of Directors for their support of this project.