

## Texas Council Public Policy Principles

**The following principles guide the Texas Council in establishing public policy positions regarding the future roles of Community Centers across Texas:**

**Strong Communities:** Community Centers support essential networks of private and public providers that offer choice for people accessing services while addressing basic health and safety needs within Texas communities. Local government entities, community organizations and the business sector collaborate and blend resources to create enduring investments in strong communities.

**Local Control:** Local officials and locally governed organizations are in the best position to understand and effectively address unique community needs. Broad geographic, economic, and cultural factors across Texas – recognized as critical influences in local health and human service delivery – preclude top down, one-size-fits-all delivery models.

**Public Accountability:** Public health and human services are provided by entities whose performance and resource management is transparent and subject to stringent standards. Involvement of stakeholders at the community level is a vital consideration in best use of limited public resources to meet increasing, changing service demands. Advocates and other community stakeholders have a formal role in monitoring and evaluating the success of public service outcomes to achieve effective use of taxpayer dollars.

**Proven Performance:** Community Centers are a force for change that strengthens outcome-based delivery through innovative approaches to treatment, support and use of technology, as well as other strategies to maximize capacity and leverage our experience. Building on established local networks and collaboration conserves limited resources and promotes rapid adjustment to change. People are able to access timely, effective services that improve quality of life and prevent the need for expensive alternatives, such as hospitalization and institutional care.

**Personal Independence:** Most people – including individuals with mental illness or intellectual and developmental disabilities – want to be as productive and independent as possible. Families, friends, faith-based and community organizations always have been and will be their greatest sources of support. Individuals access the public system when their personal support systems are not adequate to meet their most essential needs. As an important part of the local safety net, Community Centers bolster family and personal strengths to focus services – limited, specialized or intensive – so people can direct their own lives and make the most of their abilities.

