

Texas Council Legislative Priorities: 88th Session

1. Maintain Essential Community Mental Health Services
 - a. Invest funds to address severe workforce shortages and operational cost increases.
 - i. An investment that allows for flexibility to address increased operational costs and workforce recruitment and retention challenges in Adult and Children’s Mental Health services.
PLACEHOLDER for HHSC Exceptional Items related to workforce
 - b. Strategies that incentivize service in the public system of care:
 - i. Financial assistance or loan repayments for college students who commit to behavioral health careers in the public sector.
 - ii. Paid internships for students who serve with community-based public sector employers.
 - iii. Innovative ways to provide necessary clinical “supervision” hours for the licensure of counselors and therapists.
 - iv. Direct and streamlined licensure for various types of mental health professionals, including investigating ways to encourage veterans and other professionals who previously worked in mental health to become licensed mental health professionals in Texas.
 - v. Expanding the TCMHCC’s Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowships through “multi boarding” of physicians.
 - vi. Adjusting state salary schedules to account for varying costs of living across the state and for rural areas with difficulty sustaining a workforce.
 - c. Invest funds to address increased demand on the crisis response system associated with implementation of 988
2. Mental Health Services for Children and Youth
 - a. Increase service capacity of core mental health services
 - b. Promote increased access to specialized interventions:
 - i. Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC)
 - ii. Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)
 - c. Youth crisis respite services and other alternatives to inpatient care
3. Continuum of Services to address the Criminal Justice / Mental Health Interface
 - a. Diversion Centers
 - b. Regional Jail-Based Competency Restoration
 - c. Outpatient Competency Restoration
 - d. Increase investments in the SB 292 Grant Program with a focus on:
 - i. Co-responder models that partner law enforcement and mental health professionals
 - ii. Collocation with and/or training for 911 operators on what to do when a call involves mental health needs

- iii. Allow for more rural counties to come into the SB 292 program
 - e. Monitor and engage in proposals identified by the Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH)
- 4. Access to Inpatient Care
 - a. Increase investment in locally purchased Private Psychiatric Bed (PPB) Capacity for Adults and Children
 - b. Promote smaller inpatient facilities such as the Sunrise Canyon and public private partnership models in strategic locations that provide regional solutions for people with mental illness in need of hospitalization, their families, and local law enforcement
- 5. IDD Services
 - a. Invest funds to address increased operational costs and severe workforce shortages in community-based IDD services
 - i. increase compensation for direct care workers
 - ii. adjust provider rates to support the actual cost of service delivery in ICF and HCS and TxHmL Waiver Programs
 - b. Increase rates to effectively support the needs of individuals with IDD and high behavioral, medical, or physical support needs
 - i. Adjust the process to accurately identify Level of Need (LON)
 - c. Increase funding for services that address the needs of individuals with IDD and co-occurring mental health conditions
 - d. Expand capacity in the IDD Waiver programs (reduce interest lists) and address increased demands on LIDDA intake/eligibility, enrollment, and other service coordination activities
 - e. Increase funding to address compliance with the HCBS Settings Rule including implementation of Individualized Skills and Socialization Services

Policy-focused Recommendations

Children and Youth

1. HB 19 streamlining requirements for LMHA non-physician mental health professionals working in Regional Education Service Centers
2. Comprehensive plan for children's mental health as part of the statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan
3. Monitor and engage in opportunities to expand partnerships between LMHAs and local schools

IDD Services

1. Monitor and engage in strategies that emerge regarding Interest List reduction strategies