

Mental Health America of Texas 2015 Legislative Platform

Top Priority: Invest in Accessible, Effective Services for the Prevention and Treatment of Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder

- Promote funding for prevention and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders.
- Support the Texas Department of State Health Services Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) Exceptional Items beneficial to people living with mental health and substance use disorders.
- Expand health care coverage to persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorder who are not otherwise eligible for coverage.

Improve the Local Public Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Systems

- Increase transparency, stakeholder input, equitable funding, and local control in the delivery of mental health and substance use disorder services with the objective of improving communities, lowering costs, and serving eligible individuals effectively and efficiently.

Prevent Suicide

- Eliminate the option for insurance plans to exclude self-harm from coverage.
- Promote funding and best-practice programs for suicide prevention through the lifespan.
- Improve school-related suicide prevention and related programs requirements.

Improve Texas Driver's License Process

- Advocate for improvements in the Texas driver's license process related to mental illness.

Address Co-Occurring Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder

- Promote the improvement in the diversion, treatment, and continuity of care for persons with mental health and/or substance use disorders who become involved in the criminal justice system.

Expand Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Workforce

- Support initiatives to increase the mental health and substance use disorder workforce in underserved areas, populations, and settings in Texas.
- Support initiatives that foster practice settings in which providers practice at the top of their license in a continuum of care appropriate to each client.

Other Priorities

- Improve the prevention and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorder through the Texas Health and Human Service Agencies Sunset Review process and resulting legislation and appropriations.
- Support key legislation and funding related to mental health and substance use disorders such as: prevention and early intervention including home visitation; developing and supporting systems that are recovery-oriented; increasing access to a continuum of housing options for persons with mental health and substance use disorders; addressing the special needs of veterans and their families; integrated health care; special needs for children with serious emotional disturbance and/or substance use disorder and their families; and promoting treatment over justice system involvement for persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorder.
- Oppose legislation that would be poor policy and/or practice in relation to the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses and substance use disorders in Texas.