

85TH LEGISLATURE PRIORITY

Access to Care: Healthcare Workforce

The Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds' priority for the 85th Legislature is Access to Care including to **expanding the mental health and substance use disorder workforce** for the following reasons:

- An insufficient workforce creates barriers to care for all Texans, regardless of payer source.
- Strategies to address workforce shortages are well researched and best practices to grow the workforce have been developed in Texas and other states.
- Investments in mental health and substance use disorder such as those made by the Legislature and the 1115 Waiver projects require an adequate workforce to be fully realized.

Recommended Providers

The following recommendations pertain to a wide spectrum of licensed or certified providers.

- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Primary care physicians
- Advanced practice registered nurses
- Psychiatric nurses
- Licensed clinical social workers
- Licensed professional counselors
- Licensed marriage and family therapists
- Licensed chemical dependency counselors
- Certified recovery coaches
- Certified peer specialists
- Certified family partners

The Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds includes organizations with a primary or otherwise important focus on mental health and/or substance use disorder.

The Coalition endorses the **Person-Centered Recovery Model** of treatment and support in the training of licensed/certified providers. Recovery-oriented and person-centered care incorporates a philosophy of care that makes individuals responsible for their own recovery with the needed support of healthcare providers, peers, family, and friends.

coalitionhealthyminds.org

WORKFORCE FACT

In 2016, more than 17 percent of the Texas population lived in 166 counties with mental health workforce shortages. Underserved areas, populations, and settings exist in every county in Texas.

Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds Member Organizations

American Foundation for
Suicide Prevention
Association of Substance Abuse Programs
Austin Clubhouse
Behavioral Health Advocates of Texas
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Clarity Child Guidance Center
Communities for Recovery
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Texas G.O.
Easter Seals Central Texas
Federation of Texas Psychiatry
Mental Health America of Texas
Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South
Texas, Inc.
National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin
National Alliance on Mental Illness Dallas
National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas
National Association of Social Workers,
Texas Chapter
Texas Association of Marriage
and Family Therapy
Texans Care for Children
Texas Catalyst for Empowerment
Texas Council of Community Centers
Texas Counseling Association
Texas Family Voice Network
Texas Hospital Association
Texas Impact
Texas Medical Association
Texas Nurses Association
Texas Pediatric Society
Texas Psychological Association
Texas Suicide Prevention Council
Upbring

Gyl Switzer, Coalition Facilitator
Mental Health America of Texas
gyl@mhatexas.org

Recommendations

1. Expand the opportunities initiated by the 84th Legislature through SB 239 (Schwertner), which incentivizes careers in mental health and substance use disorder services for people who commit to working with populations in underserved areas through student loan reimbursement by:
 - Transitioning the program to the Health and Human Services Commission.
 - Adding flexibility to more effectively allocate funds to otherwise eligible applicants.
 - Increasing investment in the program.
2. Incentivize careers such as Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors for people who commit to working with populations in underserved areas.
3. Expand opportunities for internship, residency, and supervisory opportunities for providers, as required by licensing or certification standards.
4. Remove barriers to effective use of telehealth such as licensing/credential reciprocity, increased reimbursement rates and appropriate technology with HIPAA protections.
5. Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for all providers. Direct state agencies to remove barriers to care that result from Medicaid policies and procedures.
6. Expand opportunities for peer support services/recovery coach services including but not limited to making peer support services a Medicaid –reimbursable service in all appropriate settings.
7. Direct the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to authorize Licensed Professional Counselor – Interns and Licensed Master Social Workers working towards their Clinical Social Worker License to bill for services provided under supervision by Medicaid providers to expand the pool of providers.
8. Direct HHSC to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for developing, increasing, and improving the Texas mental health/substance use workforce. The comprehensive plan must include an analysis of existing studies, reports and recommendations, as well as implementation strategies, monitoring processes, and outcome evaluations methods. Timelines should be developed in conjunction with the comprehensive plan outlining short, mid, and long-term quantifiable goals and objectives to ensure a framework for accountability.