

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
Association for Family and Community Integrity, Inc.
Behavioral Health Alliance of Texas
Bering Omega Community Services
Care for Elders
Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
CHILDREN AT RISK
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris Co., Inc.
Coalition of Behavioral Health Services
Collaborative for Children
Communities In Schools
Community Family Centers
Community Health Choice, Inc.
Covenant House of Texas
DePelchin Children's Center
Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston (DBSA)
Easter Seals of Greater Houston, Inc.
Family Services of Greater Houston
Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.
Good Neighbor Healthcare Center
Greater Houston Healthconnect
Harris County Healthcare Alliance
Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston
Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children
Houston Area Community Services
Houston Area Women's Center
Houston Food Bank
Houston Methodist Hospital
IntraCare Behavioral Health
Jewish Family Service
League of Women Voters Houston
Legacy Community Health, Services Inc.
Lesbian Health Initiative
March of Dimes
Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM)
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
NAMI Greater Houston
National Association of Social Workers-Houston
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
New Hope Housing, Inc.
Northwest Assistance Ministries
Phoenix Houses of Texas, Inc.
Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast
Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.
SEARCH Homeless Services
Spaulding for Children
Spring Branch Community Health Center
Springfield College School of Human Services
St. Joseph House
Texas Children's Hospital
Texas Health Institute
Texas Hunger Initiative
The Arc of Greater Houston
The Council on Alcohol & Drugs Houston
The Immunization Partnership
The Living Bank
The Network of Behavioral Health Providers
The Rose
The Walk for Mental Health Awareness-Houston
The Women's Home
United Way of Greater Houston
Vita-Living, Inc.
Wesley Community Center
Worklife Institute
YMCA of Greater Houston

One Voice Texas

A Collaborative for Health & Human Services



Behavioral Health

Increase Access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) for Certain Persons With Serious Mental Illness Most at Risk of (Re-) Institutionalization

Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: December 10, 2014

Issue/Concern:

While the 83rd Texas Legislature added a significant amount of funding to the public behavioral health care system, it was not enough to change the fact that many individuals with serious mental illness who could be successfully treated and housed in their communities instead end up cycling in and out of the criminal justice system, emergency services, and the state hospital system - at a higher cost to taxpayers. This is due in large part to the fact that Texas currently lacks an intermediate level of care for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness that could keep them stable in their communities and identify and obtain appropriate services to those who are transitioning back to their communities from some kind of institutional care, such as a state hospital or jail/prison.

The Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) benefit is a state option that provides a flexible bundle of services to those who meet a functional needs test and who are at high risk of institutionalization or re-institutionalization. Eligibility for this benefit is limited to individuals who are enrolled in Medicaid and:

- Have a serious and persistent mental illness;
- Are members of the target population; and
- Meet the functional impairment test.

Passed by the 82nd Texas Legislature, HB 2725 by Hartnett required the Texas Department of State Health Services to study the feasibility of providing home and community-based services to those with a history of multiple forensic commitments. The study was favorable and suggested that the benefit may also be feasible for additional populations affected by mental illness.

The 83rd Texas Legislature provided \$7.9 million for FY 2014-15 for home and community-based services and directed the Texas Department of State Health Services to seek federal approval to add the benefit to the state Medicaid plan. This has yet to happen, while the funding provided for home and community-based services has instead been used for services provided to individuals still in institutional care.

Specific Policy Recommendations:

Require the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to establish a home and community-based services Medicaid benefit targeting persons with serious and persistent mental illness whom the department determines to be the most at-risk for institutionalization or re-institutionalization, including the following populations:

- Persons who have been found incompetent to stand trial and are transitioning or have transitioned from a psychiatric facility to the community;
- Persons who have been found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) and are transitioning or have transitioned from a psychiatric facility to the community;
- Persons who have been involuntarily civilly committed 3 or more times in a 2-year period; and
- Youth or adults who are experiencing a first-episode psychosis.

What Can Be Accomplished?

Providing an intermediate level of care for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness can provide this population with the services they need to become and remain stable and healthy in their communities, improve their quality of life, and become less reliant on more expensive and publicly funded safety net programs such as local law enforcement, emergency rooms, state hospitals, and jails/prisons.

Money would be saved at both the local and state levels given that providing the appropriate level of care in the community is significantly less expensive than providing institutional care in a state hospital, emergency room, or jail/prison setting. In addition, financing this home and community-based benefit through the state Medicaid plan would maximize federal funding.

Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

- ✓ Journal of the American Society on Aging, 2012. *Money Follows the Whole Person In Texas*. Available at: [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/cap/april2012/Money-Follows-the-Person--Texas-Pilot-\(Journal-of-the-American-Society-on-Aging.-Winter-2012\).doc](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/cap/april2012/Money-Follows-the-Person--Texas-Pilot-(Journal-of-the-American-Society-on-Aging.-Winter-2012).doc)

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