

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



Children and Youth

HB 839 (Naishtat) - Protecting the Mental and Physical Health Needs of Youth

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

Issue/Concern:

Youth in juvenile justice facilities have greater physical and mental health needs than their counterparts in the general population and in fact it is the unmet mental health needs of this population that are a principle driver of initial entry and recidivism. In Texas, 34% of youth reported to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department had a suspected or confirmed substance abuse issue and 34% had mental health needs. Unfortunately, because Texas terminates rather than suspends Medicaid benefits (for those incarcerated for more than 30 days), there is often a delay in the reinstatement of benefits after youth are released from detention, resulting in a delay in their ability to obtain necessary health care. The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJJ) worked hard to address delayed health insurance re-enrollment; however, many Texas juvenile probation chiefs report that youth can go up to a month or more without health benefits. Presumptive eligibility can resolve this problem by providing temporary coverage to those who qualify.

Specific Policy Recommendations:

- Use presumptive eligibility, for those youth already eligible for Medicaid, to close the gap in coverage between release from a juvenile detention center and final approval of a Medicaid/CHIP application;
- Require HHSC to submit an amendment to the state Medicaid plan;
- Ensure that this amendment **only** covers youth leaving juvenile detention facilities by:
 - Juvenile probation departments already have a Juvenile Medicaid Tracking System and a screening worksheet to review if the youth is still eligible for Medicaid.
 - The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) have indicated they would approve this amendment.

HB 837 IS NOT:

- covering all children;
- making it easier for children to qualify for Medicaid/CHIP;
- increasing Medicaid/CHIP rolls;
- related to hospital presumptive eligibility associated with the Affordable Care Act;
- a financial burden for the state, counties or medical providers:
 - no fiscal note due to existing infrastructure;
 - regular reimbursement to state and providers;
 - only basic Medicaid and CHIP services provided during PE period.

Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

- ✓ Disability Rights Texas, Texas Appleseed & the National Center for Youth Law. 2011. Thinking Outside the Cell: Alternatives to Incarceration for Youth with Mental Illness. Available at: http://www.texasappleseed.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=32&Itemid=107;
- ✓ National Council of State Legislatures. 2011. Mental Health Needs of Juvenile Offenders. www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/juvenile-justice-guidebook-for-legislators.aspx.
- ✓ Seigle, E., Walsh, N. & Weker, J. 2014. Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System. Available at: www.ncjrs.gov/app/topics/Topic.aspx?topicid=146.
- ✓ 2013 data reported by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department
- ✓ Presumptive Eligibility is short-term Medicaid for certain populations who are otherwise eligible for Medicaid.

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