

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



Children and Youth
Protecting the Mental and Physical Health Needs of Youth

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

Issue/Concern:

Youth in juvenile justice facilities have higher physical and mental health needs than their counterparts in the general population with the latter being a main driver of initial entry and recidivism. In Texas, 34% of youth reported by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department had a suspected or confirmed substance abuse issue and 34% had mental health needs. While in detention, these needs are addressed by county juvenile detention facilities because Medicaid will not reimburse claims while an individual is incarcerated. Unfortunately, because Texas terminates rather than suspends Medicaid benefits, 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 medical care, including critical treatment and needed medications. Although the Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice have worked hard to address delayed Medicaid re-enrollment, Juvenile Probation chiefs from around Texas have reported that there are still challenges with re-enrollment and youth can go up to a month without Medicaid benefits. The legislature has an opportunity to act to ensure that these children get the healthcare they need and do not return to the juvenile justice system.

Specific Policy Recommendations:

- Include juveniles who are released from detention under the category of presumptive eligibility (PE);
- Require those who qualify as presumptive eligibility providers to accept juvenile detention discharge papers as qualification;
- At a minimum, presumptive eligibility services should include prescriptions, therapy and primary care physician visits. HHSC should determine any other eligible services through rule.

What Can Be Accomplished?

This legislation will ensure that youth who are released from juvenile facilities will be able to immediately access physical and mental healthcare while still ensuring the state is properly investing funding in eligible clients as the PE process still requires a review of the client's eligibility.

How Will This Impact State Funding?

Youth with uninsured medical and mental health needs will have to access preventative and/or urgent care through emergency rooms, which is more costly to the patient and the taxpayers.

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. PE provides temporary Medicaid coverage to eligible participants. The intent of PE is to provide the earliest possible access to care. Clients with PE receive immediate, short-term Medicaid eligibility while their formal Medicaid application is processed.

Contact:

Katherine Barillas, Ph.D.
 Director of Child Welfare Policy
 One Voice Texas
 (713) 480-3937 / kbarillas@onevoicetexas.org