

SAVING MINDS, SAVING MONEY MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

THE COSTS OF UNTREATED MENTAL ILLNESS

“Cuts to the mental health systems do not and will not lead to cost savings. Inadequate state funding puts the burden on local taxpayers, and leads to increased rates of incarceration and higher use of public hospital emergency rooms, homeless shelters, and the foster care system.”

Les Secrest, MD, Chairman, Federation of Texas Psychiatry

Untreated Texans with serious mental illness get caught in an expensive revolving door of crisis, emergency rooms, hospitalization, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

- Cost of community-based mental health treatment: \$12 per day
- Cost of care for a person with mental illness who is incarcerated: \$137 per day
- Cost for a visit to the emergency room: \$1265
- Cost for state mental health facility hospitalization: \$400 per day

In a 2009 report, Texas economist Ray Perryman stated the following regarding investing in mental health services:

“Even beyond the often devastating consequences for the individuals involved, severe mental health and substance abuse disorders cost the Texas economy some \$269 billion in total spending each year and 1.7 million permanent jobs. Finding ways to reduce these negative effects is clearly a worthy goal.”

Texas ranks 49th in per capita mental health funding at \$34.57--well below the national average of \$103.53.

THE PICTURE—MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN TEXAS

- 4.3 million Texans have a diagnosable mental health disorder including 1.2 million children. Of these Texans, 1.5 million are not able to function at work, school or in the community due to their illnesses.
- More than 6.1 million Texans are uninsured.
- Most Texas counties are federally designated mental health professional shortage areas as of March 2010.
- The Texas Department of State Health Services estimates that in the last quarter of 2010, almost 10,000 people were on waiting lists for services at community mental health centers.
- Texans in the public mental health system live on average 29.3 years less than the general population.
- 42% of youth in Texas Youth Commission residential settings have “high or moderate need for mental health treatment.”
- A child living in Texas has less of a chance to receive necessary mental health treatment than children living in any other state.

INVESTMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE SAVES MONEY

In 2007 and 2009 the Texas Legislature wisely invested in a crisis mental health system to help address mental health issues upstream where the biggest savings can be realized—in community mental health services instead of prisons, juvenile detention facilities, emergency rooms, and state hospitals.

The 80th Legislature (2007)

\$82 million was appropriated for improving the response to mental health crises. This funding supported rapid community responses to offset utilization of emergency rooms or more

restrictive settings. Communities received funding for crisis hotline services and mobile outreach teams. Through competitive grants with local matching, many communities received funding for crisis stabilization units, extended observation units, crisis residential services, crisis respite services, crisis step-down stabilization in hospital settings, and/or outpatient competency restoration services.

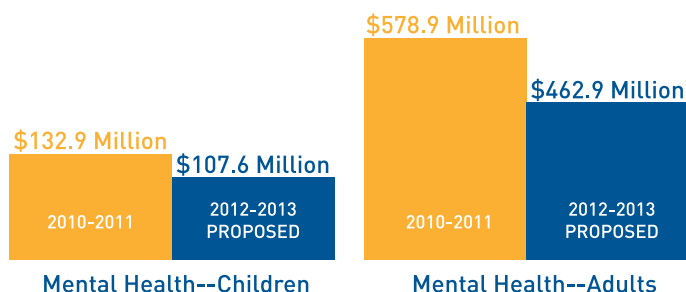
The 81st Legislature (2009)

\$53 million was appropriated for the FY 2010-2011 biennium for transitional and intensive ongoing services in the crisis system to reduce recidivism.

PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS

82ND LEGISLATURE (2011)

The proposed House and Senate budgets for the 82nd Legislature reverse four years of mental health care investment. The proposed budgets call for significant cuts to mental health care throughout the budget and across several state agencies. Particularly troubling are key cuts to Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) strategies for children's mental health services (20%) and adult mental health services (20%).



Note: Mental health services in Texas are funded mainly with general revenue.

Other proposed cuts to DSHS mental health care strategies include: community mental health crisis services (\$8.9 million, 5%), NorthSTAR Behavioral Health Waiver (\$20.1 million, 10%), mental health state hospitals (\$32.1 million, 4%), mental health community hospitals (\$1.8 million, 3%), and repair and renovation of mental health facilities (\$43.8 million, 86%).

"Proposed funding cuts to public mental health care erase recent progress, will cause incredible suffering for children and adults who need the services, and hurt communities. Persons with mental illness who receive appropriate care are contributors to communities and tax rolls."

Lynn Lasky Clark,

President & CEO, Mental Health America of Texas

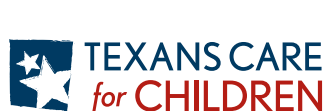
"Studies show that nearly 8 times more Texans with serious mental illness are in jails and prisons than hospitals. Nationally those odds are 3 to 1. Failure to provide treatment for people who are seriously mentally ill leads to criminalization of mental illness, destroys lives, and breaks up families."

Robin Peyson

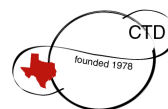
Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Texas

A March 2010 study by Texas A&M University found that the crisis services found direct and measurable reductions in cost of services associated with crisis that more than cover the cost of the program, even while supporting a 24% increase in crisis episodes from 2007 to 2008. Providing funding for appropriate community mental health services saves money.

Sources: for source information please refer to the Mental Health America of Texas website: mhatexas.org



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