Everything’s Bigger but not Necessarily Better in Texas:
Advocating for Transformational School Mental Health Public Policy

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Roadmap

Overview of the Center for School Behavioral Health
Children’s mental health and Texas
Legislative and Policy Engagement 2012-2017
Questions
To improve the

✓ Prevention
✓ Early identification and intervention
✓ Treatment

of behavioral health issues among students.
Center for School Behavioral Health
Mental Health America of Greater Houston

PROMOTING CHILDREN’S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH THROUGH SYSTEMS CHANGE

- School Behavioral Health Collaborative
- School District Learning Community
- Best Practices Incubator
- Stigma Reduction Initiative
- Annual Conference
- Advocacy & Policy Analysis
Texas, our Texas

- Texas is home to more than 7 million children live in Texas, representing nearly 1 in 10 children living in the U.S.
- Fifty percent of Texas kids are Hispanic/ Latino, 33 percent White, 11 percent Black, and 6 percent Asian, multiracial or some other race.
Texas, our Texas

- Texas ranks 41st in child well-being
- Texas ranks 49th in per capita spending for mental health.
- In 2011, the state legislature cut public education funding by 5.3 billion dollars
Texas, our Texas

• In Texas, 600,000 children, youth, and their families experience behavioral health needs before the age of 18.
• Only 26% receive treatment.
• The largest provider of mental health services for youth in the greater Houston area is Juvenile Probation. Fully 71% of all youth referred to the system have an identifiable mental health diagnosis.
• Between 1999 and 2009, 9 out of 10 students classified as having an emotional disturbance in a Texas public school were suspended or expelled from school for discretionary reasons.
Texas, our Texas

- In the Houston Independent School District, where almost 90% of the students are minority and 75% economically disadvantaged, there are 1,175 students for every counselor.

- Meanwhile, the Texas district has one security staffer for every 785 students.
A recent investigative report by the Houston Chronicle (October, 2016) determined that in 2004, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) instituted an artificial 8.5% cap for special education identification, resulting in the denial of services to thousands of students experiencing mental health concerns over the past 12 years.
There is good news, too!

Senate Bill 460

SB 460 (Sen. Deuell/Rep. Coleman) requires that:

- Individuals in educator preparation programs receive training in the detection of students with mental or emotional disorders in order to receive their teaching certificate.

- School districts to provide mental health training for current junior high & high school teachers, counselors, principals & other appropriate administrators; to the extent funds and programs are available, requires school districts to provide mental health training to elementary school teachers, counselors, principals & other appropriate administrators.

- Local school health advisory committees make recommendations regarding policies, procedures, strategies, & curriculum to prevent mental health concerns among students.
Previous Legislative Sessions

83rd Legislative Session: January 8, 2013 - May 27, 2013

84th Legislative Session: January 13, 2015 - June 1, 2015

Source: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/whatsNew/client/index.cfm/Legislative-process
January 10, 2017 - May 29, 2017

Leadership:
Governor: Greg Abbott (R)
Lieutenant Governor: Dan Patrick (R)
Speaker of the House: Joe Straus (R – San Antonio)

Bill Statistics for the 85th Legislature

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18.26% of all bills filed were related to mental health

Source: http://www.lrl.texas.gov/sessions/sessionSnapshot.cfm?legSession=85-0
SB 1 includes:

- **2018-2019: $217 billion**
  - Total General Revenue spending: **$107.8 billion** — approximately the same amount as the 2016-2017 budget ($108 billion). This fell within the parameters of the Controller’s BRE.
  - The final deal:
    - Defers $1.8 billion of Prop 7 funds until FY 2020 — **allowing $1.8 billion to be counted as General Revenue available in 2018-2019**.
    - Draws down less than $1 billion from the $10 billion Rainy Day Fund to be used almost entirely for state facilities repairs, construction and equipment purchases.

- Behavioral Health Funding:
  - $160 million added for various community-based services and projects
  - $35 million increase approved for state hospital operations, and
  - $300 million from the Rainy Day Fund to be used for state hospital repairs and construction — “HHSC shall develop a comprehensive inpatient mental health plan for the replacement or significant repair of state hospitals or other state-funded inpatient mental health facilities to expand inpatient mental health capacity over the next three biennia.”
Local Burden of Unmet Mental Health Needs on Texas Counties

30,000

Texas children are at risk for entry into the “school to prison pipeline”

300,000

Texans in need receive no treatment at all

THE COST of UNMET MENTAL HEALTH NEED

$2.2 billion
total cost to local Texas governments

$1.4 billion
in emergency room costs

$700 million
in local justice system costs

$100 million
other

“SUPER UTILIZATION”

92%
do not receive care adequate to break the cycle of “super utilization”

6 in 7
who need ACT do not receive it

9 in 10
who need FACT do not receive it

Jail Costs for Individuals with Mental Illness: $461 million
Juvenile Justice Costs for Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbances: $236 million
Psychiatric Emergency Department Costs: $965 million
Alcohol and Substance Abuse Emergency Department Costs: $457 million
Other Costs (e.g. shelter services to homeless individuals and school district costs): $100 million
Total Costs to Local Governments: $2.2 billion

House Select Committee on Mental Health

Speaker Joe Straus appointed the Select Committee in November 2015

Members:
- Representative Four Price (R-Amarillo), Committee Chair
- Representative Joe Moody (D-El Paso), Vice Chair
- Representative Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood)
- Representative Garnet Coleman (D-Houston)
- Representative Sarah Davis (R-Houston)
- Representative Rick Galindo (R-San Antonio)
- Representative Sergio Munoz (D-Palmview)
- Representative Andy Murr (R-Junction)
- Representative Toni Rose (D-Dallas)
- Representative Kenneth Sheets (R-Dallas)
- Representative Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston)
- Representative Chris Turner (D-Grand Prairie)
- Representative James White (R-Hillister)

The Select Committee led 8 public hearings:
- Mental Health Overview (1)
- Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Treatments For Children (2)
- Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Treatment Access, Continuity of Care, Coordination, and Workforce (3,4)
- Insurance Coverage and Parity and Law Enforcement (5)
- Substance Abuse, Homelessness, and Veterans (6)
- Public Testimony (7)
- State Hospitals, Options for Addressing Needs, and Mental Health Care on Campuses of Higher Education (8)

Link to the Report

Source: www.house.state.tx.us/_media/pdf/committees/reports/84interim/Mental-Health-Select-Committee-Interim-Report-2016.pdf
House Select Committee on Mental Health: Opportunities to Solve Existing Service Gaps

- Prioritizing early intervention and prevention measures – especially among school age children
- Expanding innovative public school-based programs
- Sustainability of the 1115 Transformation Waiver / DSRIP funded programs
- Expanding bed capacity by expanding step-down beds to provide a continuum of care
  - Part of this is expanding jail diversion programs for nonviolent offenders
- Continuing to address mental health workforce shortages through educational incentives and by expanding the availability and utilization of technology, such as telemedicine
  - Truly integrating healthcare to treat the whole person - physically & mentally
    - Rep. Four Price (R- Amarillo) understands issues related to IHC. Questions remain among the committee surrounding the implementation.

Source: www.house.state.tx.us/_media/pdf/committees/reports/84interim/Mental-Health-Select-Committee-Interim-Report-2016.pdf
- Increased focus on a prevention model of care

- A more strategic and holistic approach to Mental Health and Behavioral Health funding

- Engaged group of advocates with the House, increasing Mental Health and Behavioral Health focused bills filed

Mental Health & Substance Abuse (I0019)

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Source: [http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Home.aspx](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Home.aspx)
CSBH: Legislative Priorities

• Amend SB 460 to:
  • Provide accountability measures to reinforce the training mandate through reporting through TEA
  • Require all school personnel to receive training in how to recognize and appropriately respond to signs of trauma

• Make available at least one licensed behavioral health professional on each campus, as funding allows

• Require a transition plan for students returning from prolonged placement in out-of-school facilities, including disciplinary programs and residential treatment facilities
Legislative Outreach:
• 19 emails to Advocacy Task Forces
• 6 grassroots advocacy trainings
• Pizza & Politics: 325+ calls made in 2 hours
House Bill 3853

- Author: Coleman
- Relating to the availability of certain behavioral health professionals at certain public schools.

Support list:
House Bill 3887

– Author: Coleman
– Sponsor: Zaffirini
– Relating to trauma training for public school personnel.

Support list:
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Texas Counseling Association, Texas PTA, Texas Counseling Association, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter, NATIONAL Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas, Association of Substance Abuse Programs, Mayor's Office, City of Houston, American Federation of Teachers, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Texans Care for Children, Texas Suicide Prevention Council, United Ways of Texas

House Local, Consent, and Resolutions Third Reading Vote:
– Biedermann, Leach, Phillips, Rinaldi, Schaefer, Tinderholt, and Zedler

Senate Education Committee Vote:
– Bettencourt, Campbell, Huffines, Hughes
Center for School Behavioral Health Legislation

House Bill 2623

- Author: Allen | Thompson, Senfronia
- Sponsor: Zaffirini
- Relating to requiring school districts and certain facilities to assist students in making the transition back to school after certain prolonged placements outside of school.

Support list:
Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, Disability Rights Texas, Texas NAACP, One Voice Texas, Texas State Teachers Association, Texas Appleseed, Texas CASA, Coalition of Human Rights Policy Advocates, Texas Counseling Association, Texas Association of School Boards, Houston ISD, Association of Substance Abuse Programs, Mayor's Office, City of Houston, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Children at Risk, Texans Care for Children, ACLU of Texas, Communities for Recovery, United Ways of Texas, Texas PTA, Association of Texas Professional Educators.

House Local, Consent, and Resolutions Third Reading Vote:
- Biedermann, G. Bonnen, Burrows, Fallon, Goldman, Parker Simmons, Springer, Swanson and Tinderholt

Senate Education Committee Vote:
- Bettencourt, Campbell, Huffines, Hughes
Lessons Learned: Avoiding Pitfalls

- Direct engagement of the State House of Representatives regarding MH / BH landscape
- Strategic messaging and funding solutions to securing and maintaining funding during an economic downturn
- Recognition of the dynamic of House versus Senate
- Ongoing efforts to combat existing Senate views on Mental Health legislation as an unfunded mandate
Your thoughts:
What would it take to get our legislative priorities passed in 2019?