

88th

TEXAS LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION WRAP UP



Leading up to the 88th Legislative Session, policymakers shared a strong resolve to do more for mental health in Texas, and state leadership made it a session priority. In the wake of Uvalde and the ongoing, long-term impacts due to COVID-19, there was a clear and growing need to expand effective programs, address workforce shortages, and build additional capacity for care. Hospital emergency rooms were reporting children in crisis at skyrocketing levels, depression and anxiety rates were soaring, and hundreds of state psychiatric hospital beds were offline due to staffing issues.

By the end of the session, the 88th Legislature had delivered a record **\$11.68 billion for behavioral health**, an increase of more than 30% from the previous session. **HB 1 (Bonnen)**, the 2024-25 General Appropriations Act, includes nearly **\$9.37 billion for behavioral health funding across 28 state agencies**. **SB 30 (Huffman)**, the supplemental budget, includes an additional **\$2.31 billion to expand mental health capacity**. Senator Joan Huffman, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, called it the **single largest increase in behavioral health funding by any state legislature in U.S. history**.

Helping Uvalde Heal and Build Mental Health Infrastructure for the Future

- \$33.6 million to construct the new **Uvalde Behavioral Health Campus** with 16 crisis beds for adults and 16 crisis beds for children.
- \$24.5 million to provide **additional mental health services** to the Uvalde region.
- \$5 million to **operate** the Uvalde Behavioral Health Campus upon completion.

Addressing the Mental Health Workforce Crisis

- \$134.7 million to increase and maintain employee salaries to ensure adequate **staffing at state hospitals**, which will bring beds back online and help address the forensic waitlist.
- \$23.9 million for **salary increases at community centers** that serve as local mental health authorities.
- \$6 million to establish an **integrated care clinic** in Jefferson County utilizing the **Collaborative Care Model (CoCM)**.

- \$28 million for the **Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals**, a \$25.9 million increase.
- \$1.75 million to fund a regional mental health workforce expansion for the **Permian Basin** through **Midland College**.
- \$5 million to support the development and expansion of **forensic psychiatry fellowship programs**.
- **HB 400 (Klick)** creates a **psychiatric specialty innovation grant program** to increase the number of physicians who specialize in adult or pediatric psychiatry. The bill also establishes a **behavioral health innovation grant program** to award incentive payments to our higher education institutions to increase the number of mental health professionals.

Building Intensive, Community-Based Capacity for Children, Youth, and Young Adults

- \$14 million for **Youth Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams** to support youth in crisis and their families, which will reduce pressure on hospital emergency rooms and the foster care system.

- \$32.45 million to maintain and increase the number of **Multisystemic Therapy (MST)** teams to effectively treat youth who have committed violent offenses, have serious mental health or substance use concerns, are at risk of out-of-home placement, or who have experienced abuse and neglect.
- \$4.2 million to expand the state's investment in **Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC)** capacity, the gold standard of care for people experiencing a first episode of psychosis.

Developing Locally Driven Solutions through Grant Program Expansion

- \$90 million for the **Mental Health Grant Program for Justice-Involved Individuals** to reduce recidivism, arrest, and incarceration among people with mental illness, a \$30 million increase.
- \$55 million for the **Community Mental Health Grant Program** to support community mental health programs providing services and treatment to people experiencing mental illness, a \$15 million increase.
- \$20 million for the **Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program** to provide mental health services for veterans and their families. This program, which the Institute helped create in 2015, is now firmly established as **the blueprint for expanding community-based matching grant programs** across the state.
- **SB 26 (Kolkhorst)** establishes a new **Innovation Grant Program**, with \$30 million in funding, to support community-based initiatives that improve access to treatment for children and families. SB 26 will also help address the issue of long-term residents occupying state hospital beds by helping ensure patients are successfully transitioned to another care facility or back into the community.

Supporting Our Law Enforcement Officers

- \$2.4 million to fully fund the **Texas Law Enforcement Peer Network** and enable the Caruth Police Institute at UNT Dallas to provide peer support to any law enforcement officer in Texas.

Harnessing the Expertise of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium




- \$337.1 million to fully fund the request of the **Texas Child Mental Health Consortium**, including \$172.7 million to make the **Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHAT)** program available to any willing school district in the state.
- **SB 30 (Huffman)** authorizes the **Perinatal Psychiatric Access Network (PeriPAN)**, a hotline for clinician-to-clinician consultation for providers serving pregnant women and new mothers experiencing mental health distress, augmenting the **Child Psychiatry Access Network (CPAN)** and helping treat postpartum depression.

Solving the Forensic Waitlist and Caring for Those in Crisis

- \$2.26 billion to fund new mental health capacity, including **17 construction projects** to build and expand **inpatient capacity**; community grants to construct **jail diversion facilities, supportive housing, crisis units, and pediatric inpatient capacity**; and capital improvements for **existing state hospital facilities**. For full details, see the Meadows Institute brief, *State Hospital Redesign and Inpatient Capacity Expansion: 2017-2023*.
- \$333.9 million to increase bed rates and expand **civil and forensic bed capacity** in community settings.
- \$28 million for **crisis stabilization facilities**, including \$8 million to fund crisis services at the Gulf Coast Center in **Galveston County**.

Modernizing Foster Care Rates to Support Children and Families

- \$149.6 million to sustain a **foster care rate increase** and begin implementation of an **alternative rate methodology for our foster care system**.

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