



The Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds includes organizations with a primary or otherwise important focus on mental health and/or substance use disorder.

**T**HE coalition's priority for the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature is to EXPAND THE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER WORKFORCE for the following reasons:

- ▶ An insufficient workforce creates barriers to care for all Texans, regardless of payer source.
- ▶ Strategies to address workforce shortages are well researched and best practices to grow the workforce have been developed in Texas and other states.
- ▶ Investments in mental health and substance use disorder such as those made by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature and the Transformation Waiver delivery system reform incentive payments (DSRIP) projects require an adequate provider network in order to be fully realized.

One important way of addressing the workforce shortage is by fostering practice settings in which providers practice at the top of their license in a continuum of care appropriate to each client. Therefore, the following recommendations pertain to a wide spectrum of licensed or certified providers.

- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Primary care physicians
- Advanced practice registered nurses
- Psychiatric nurses
- Licensed clinical social workers
- Licensed professional counselors
- Licensed marriage and family therapists
- Licensed chemical dependency counselors
- Certified recovery coaches
- Certified peer specialists
- Certified family partners

The Coalition endorses the PERSON-CENTERED RECOVERY MODEL of treatment and support in the training of licensed/certified providers. Recovery-oriented and person-centered care incorporates a philosophy of care that makes individuals responsible for their own recovery with the needed support of healthcare providers, peers, family, and friends.

## WORKFORCE FACT

IN 2013, MORE THAN 23 PERCENT OF THE TEXAS POPULATION LIVED IN 199 DIFFERENT COUNTIES WITH MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SHORTAGES. UNDERSERVED AREAS, POPULATIONS, AND SETTINGS EXIST IN EVERY COUNTY IN TEXAS.

## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE TEXAS COALITION FOR HEALTHY MINDS

Association of Substance Abuse  
Programs  
Austin Clubhouse  
Center for Public Policy Priorities  
Clarity Child Guidance Center  
Communities for Recovery  
Depression and Bipolar Support  
Alliance  
Easter Seals Central Texas  
Federation of Texas Psychiatry  
Mental Health America of Texas  
Methodist Healthcare Ministries of  
South Texas, Inc.  
National Alliance for Mental Illness  
Austin  
National Alliance for Mental Illness  
Texas  
National Association of Social  
Workers, Texas Chapter  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Council of Community  
Centers  
Texas Counseling Association  
Texas Hospital Association  
Texas Impact  
Texas Pediatric Society  
Texas Psychological Association  
Texas Suicide Prevention Council

Gyl Switzer  
Mental Health America of Texas  
Coalition Facilitator  
[gyl@mhatexas.org](mailto:gyl@mhatexas.org)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase or develop ways to encourage people to pursue careers as mental health and substance use disorder and to work in underserved areas, settings, and with populations that are under-served, by increasing or developing student loan forgiveness and other monetary incentives for all licensed/certified providers.
2. Increase internship, residency, and supervisory opportunities for providers as required by licensing or certification standards.
3. Remove barriers to effective use of telehealth such as credential reciprocity, adequate reimbursement rates and appropriate technology with HIPAA protections.
4. Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for all providers. Decrease obstacles that result from Medicaid policies and administrative barriers.
5. Expand opportunities for the provision of peer support services/recovery coach services including but not limited to making peer support services a Medicaid –reimbursable service in all appropriate settings.
6. Direct the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to authorize Licensed Professional Counselor – Interns to bill for services provided under supervision by Medicaid providers to expand the pool of providers.
7. Support the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Legislative Appropriations Request Exceptional Item regarding Graduate Medical Education (GME) expansion.
8. Support the Texas Department of State Health Services Legislative Appropriations Request Exceptional Item regarding State Hospital System Improvement, supporting the services of four psychiatric residents to work in the public mental health system.
9. Increase the availability of specialized therapists for high needs children with serious emotional disturbances as used in the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Waiver.