



## Recommendations for HHS FY26-27 LAR Request

November 21, 2023

The members of the Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds (TCHM) respectfully provide the following recommendations regarding the FY26-27 HHSC Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR). In separate documents, we've also included the additional requested details.

As we prepare for the 89 Legislature, TCHM may develop other recommendations, and pursue additional appropriations. The eight recommendations below represent the current status of our budget priorities.

### **SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS**

**Recommendation:** Fund recovery housing accreditation of level II and III recovery homes, by requesting an allocation of an additional \$5 million to be used for provider accreditation assistance, rental assistance, capacity expansion stipends, recovery housing navigators and key staff, and critical administrative costs. Please see the attachment for a breakdown of costs and additional information.

**Recommendation:** Strengthen the substance use disorder service continuum and preserve access to residential treatment by raising the reimbursement rate to cover the cost of providing this level of service.

**Recommendation:** Support greater access to substance use and mental health recovery support services delivered by Recovery Community Organizations (RCO) for underserved populations by allocating an additional \$10 Million in appropriations to Peer Support and Recovery.

### **YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

**Recommendation:** Increase funding that prioritizes family preservation and supports youth and families' mental health, specifically to support overall funding for services provided to children through LMHA/LBHAs; HB 13 (85th) and SB 26 (88th) community-matching grant programs; and Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Programs.

**Recommendation:** As critical programs are transferred from DFPS to a new HHSC Family Support Services division at the start of FY25, the agency should request any necessary funding to address unanticipated costs of the move and avoid any decrease in families served in the current biennium. If HHSC identifies gaps or increased need for services, we urge the agency to seek additional funds.

### **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE**

**Recommendation:** Expand existing HHSC workforce efforts currently funded through federal mental health block grant funds by using state dollars to expand programs for the licensed social work internship stipends program and the tele-supervision hubs for social workers seeking clinical licensure program.

**Recommendation:** Prioritize supporting the entire behavioral health workforce spectrum in the public mental health system through the funding and creation of a pilot program for state hospitals, LMHAs, and state contracted entities to provide paid internships, paid licensing/credentialing, and paid clinical hours for behavioral health providers with a focus on Peer Support Specialists, Recovery Coaches, and Certified Family Partners. Consider including 988 crisis hotlines in this pilot program to fill critical gaps in the hotline workforce.

**Recommendation:** Request \$27 million to provide pay parity for all mental health providers utilizing the psychotherapy benefit; allow Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSWs), LPC-Associates and LMFT-Associates working toward their clinical license the ability to bill for psychotherapy.

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Resource Members:



**The Texas Coalition for Healthy Minds** advocates for the health and well-being of all individuals living in our state impacted by or at risk of mental health and substance use disorders. Collectively, our organizations represent thousands of doctors, psychologists, counselors, social workers, mental health professionals, and other advocates promoting policies that prioritize prevention, identification, treatment, and support.