



(Promote & Protect)

Talking Points: DSHS State Budget Reduction Options

- Reduction Options of \$90 million to community mental health services, \$4 million to substance addiction services and \$44 million to the state hospital system total \$138 million in proposed cuts to the public mental health system in Texas.
- If these reductions are implemented by the Legislature, more than 20,000 Texans will lose access to mental health care in our state.
- The loss of services will result in more people in emergency rooms, hospitals, and local jails at a higher cost to local and state government.
- Losing ground on the smart investments made by state leaders the past two legislative sessions will not help the state budget in the long run.
- According to a state directed, independent evaluation conducted by Texas A & M University, the investment made by state leaders in the crisis mental health system and expanded access to community-based alternatives has more than paid for itself by reducing demand on higher cost systems (including hospitals).
- Texas has nearly eight times as many people with serious mental illness in prison as it does in psychiatric hospitals. Seems unconscionable to lose traction now just as we're beginning to have the capacity to provide treatment and support for people at a point in their illness when we can really make a difference.
- In fact, the earlier we can make a difference in the cycle of mental illness, the better it is for people and the better it is in terms of cost to government. A cut in services of this magnitude will set the mental health system back a long way.
- Decision makers need to keep in mind that Texas is the fastest growing state in the nation—with a struggling economy that drives increased demand on public systems. If mental health services are cut, no doubt the stage will be set for bigger problems and a higher cost to government down the road.
- We are confident our state leaders will ultimately recognize that reducing access to mental health services will have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of our communities and the citizens of our state.

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- **Bottom-Line:** As a result of the smart investments in mental health services made by state leaders, the Community Centers of Texas are in a far better position to respond earlier to mental health crisis, deliver lower cost services, support people toward recovery and ensure best use of taxpayer resources by keeping Texans with serious mental illness out of emergency rooms and the criminal justice system.

If ever there was a time to tap the state's rainy day fund and help all Texans weather this storm—our friends, neighbors and loved ones alike—this is the time!

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