

Legislative Priorities

Access and Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage



The pandemic and population growth have increased the demand for behavioral health services, and inflation has increased costs. In 2022, every county in Texas except one is a whole or partially federally designated mental health professional shortage area. Significant state shortages of all major mental health professionals reduce access to care. The Harris Center had 226 open positions in October 2022. Funding earmarked for workforce stabilization is needed.

Children, Youth and Adult Mental Health Services



Investment into community mental health services is critical to improving outcomes: access to core mental health services; specialty services such as coordinated specialty care for young adults experiencing their first psychosis and Multi-Systemic Therapy; diversion from the justice systems; increased capacity for local psychiatric beds and community-based alternatives; and threat assessment teams.

Crisis Responses to 988 Behavioral Health Emergency Calls



The Harris Center answers 155K crisis calls annually and around 1/3 of all 988 calls in Texas. Since 988 went live, we've seen around a 30% increase in calls. Experts expect call volumes to double over time. The increased call volume will place new demands on mobile crisis outreach teams, crisis stabilization, hospitalization, and aftercare.

- Someone to talk to** - Network of community-based crisis lines
- Someone to respond** - Expand Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams or multidisciplinary teams that can respond rapidly
- Some place to go** - Expand Crisis stabilization, hospitalization, referrals and aftercare

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

988 Line
Live July 2022

IDD Statewide Interest List Reduction



Funding and reforms are needed to reduce the statewide interest lists of 307K people waiting for IDD community services and supports. (Oct. 2022) The majority of people wait more than six years for services.

 **The HARRIS CENTER** *for*
Mental Health and IDD

Transforming Lives