



Here's What's Happening...

TEXAS PANHANDLE CENTERS
901 WALLACE BLVD. AMARILLO, TEXAS
www.texaspanhandlecenters.org

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BIG CITY MAYORS

Mayor Ginger Nelson has signed the letter supporting mental health funding in Texas, she signs this letter with many other mayors of large cities in our state.

February 1, 2023

As Mayors of the largest cities in Texas, we take this opportunity to call upon the Texas Legislature to make transformational investments in the state's mental health system. Despite progress over several sessions, Texas still ranks dangerously low on access to mental health services.

As the elected leadership for local governments, we know firsthand how this leaves our local police departments as a primary safety net mental health provider for too many Texans. This is not right, it is not cost-efficient, and it cannot continue.

People living with mental health conditions, like any other health issue, deserve to have them addressed in a healthcare setting. Local police departments, in which the Legislature has a particular interest, should not be the default mental health provider for Texans. We are asking too much of our police; let them get back to focusing on public safety by funding mental health services.

Given the record surplus in funding for state government, the choice is clear. If Texas does not take this opportunity, it is doubtful it ever will. Now, in this Legislative Session, is the time for Texas to step up and have the receipts match the rhetoric.

With the base budgets of both the House and Senate released, we would offer the following remarks about key priority areas:

Community Based Care

On January 24, 2023, the Health & Human Services Commission announced \$148 million for salary increases for employees of the state hospitals and state supported living centers. We support this action. However, this leaves out the community-based settings – including the mental health authorities that we often partner with

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Meet the Director of Community Services for IDD

Elvire Sanders-Blakemore, Director of Developmental Health

Megan Rodriguez was recently promoted to the Director of Community Services position replacing Trisha Wilson.

Megan has a BA degree in Social Work from West Texas A & M University and has been in the field of social work for 5 years. She worked as a service coordinator in Developmental Health Services for her first four years with TPC and recently accepted the position as the Director of Community Services. She shared that she has always, "had a heart to encourage and serve others and am passionate about my chosen career because the principles and values of social work connect with my own values". Megan became an aunt in 2022 to her niece, Scarlett Rose. She enjoys traveling and likes to travel to warmer areas so she can tan and swim. In her free time, she plays volleyball. She is a lover of the game of football and like most Texans, she is an avid fan of the Dallas Cowboys.

Megan supervises the day habilitation directors, transporters in the Community Living department, and two group home transporters. She has transitioned very well to her new role and continues to be very dedicated to the people we serve.

Beginning March 1, 2023, the state of Texas will implement new federal standards regarding day habilitation services for individuals receiving Home and Community-based Services (HCS) and TxHML services, Medicaid Waiver programs, which will transition to Individualized Skills and Socialization (ISS) services. ISS is designed to provide more off-site and on-site services for individuals to participate in more community activities from a more integrative ap-

proach. Each TPC day hab will have to be licensed prior to ISS services being rendered.

Megan is diligently working on the applications for the licenses for all of our day hubs so that we can implement the new changes.

Also, as part of the same federal regulations, our group homes and host homes will have to modify lease agreements to include a section that says that individuals in

our homes will not be evicted unless legal due process takes place that are similar to people in the community being evicted from apartment complexes or rental homes for not paying their rent.

This federal regulation also states that food has to be accessible at all times to the persons living in the group homes and host homes unless there is a valid restriction due to special diets or problems with compulsive eating, such as someone having an eating disorder, such as prader-willi syndrome. There should also be locks on the bedroom doors for individuals in our group homes and host homes. If someone is assessed, and based on the assessment, it is felt that the locks on the bedroom doors are not appropriate, for example due to safety reasons, the person's team will meet and discuss the rationale for not having the lock on the door. Although staff will have keys to all locked bedroom doors, they will respect each person's need for privacy at all times.

Although complying with the federal regulations is very time consuming, and may not be cost effective, the end result will provide a more normal and respectful approach in serving people with disabilities.



BIG CITY MAYORS CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

and who are active in our cities.

- The Legislature must significantly invest in this workforce or the system as a whole will not function. The Texas Council of Community Centers has identified \$155,805,409 for 5 funding strategies that are critically needed to address inflationary cost increases. We strongly support this needed investment in our community-based teams.

Coordinated Specialty Care

Currently, there are 37 coordinated Specialty Care Teams in Texas that provide services to Texans experiencing their first episode of psychosis. The outcomes produced by these services have shown strong results that improve overall quality of life, reducing recurring episodes, and, accordingly, create long-term savings of taxpayer dollars.

- We applaud the \$4 million increase that would add 4 additional teams. However, we believe Texas should go farther by funding 10 Coordinated Specialty Care Teams to offer intervention services across the state. The cost of each team is approximately \$475,000 annually, meaning this expansion would cost \$5.7 million more than in the base budget.

Crisis Calls and Response

With the rollout of “9-8-8” this past July, Texas is expected to have a three-fold increase of calls coming into call centers.

- In the first month only 57% of calls were answered in state, while the other 43% went out of state. Through community mental health crisis services, Texas funds call centers, mobile crisis outreach teams (MCOTs), crisis stabilization, crisis respite

and other follow-up services an individual may need. The foundation of community mental health crisis services is in diverting people from emergency rooms and criminal justice involvement. It is critical that as a state we fund these vital services for those experiencing a crisis.

- We are very pleased to see the \$84 million increase over the biennium in crisis services, increasing the annual allocation for strategy D.2.3 from \$115 million to over \$157 million. This shows an understanding that with increased access will come increased usage. Inclusion of this increase in the final budget is vital to providing needed crisis services.

Loan Forgiveness

In 2015, Texas created the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals, a financial incentive program for a broad spectrum of mental health providers. The program was funded with \$2 million and requires graduates to work in a mental health professional shortage area (MHPSA) for five years. Despite the state’s dire workforce needs, there have been no new applicants to the program since 2019 because of a lack of funding.

- Both base budgets provide \$24.8 million to create more capacity for the mental health workforce as well as consider removing the MHPSA requirement to include all of Texas. We applaud this wise investment by the House and Senate and strongly recommend that members keep this measure in the final budget.

New Mothers Medicaid Coverage

In 2021, the Texas Legislature took the first step in expanding Medicaid coverage to new

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mothers from 60 days to 6 months. According to the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force top recommendation, these services should be expanded to 1 year. Patient advocacy organizations note this policy would be the single most effective step the State of Texas can take to combat Post-Partum Depression.

- The Legislature must continue its commitment to Texas families by extending the existing maternal Medicaid benefit to one year to reduce healthcare costs, uncompensated emergency room visits, and preventable deaths.

Many of these initiatives have received repeated, strong bipartisan support in both chambers of the Texas Legislature. Whether we are Republicans or Democrats, local government is impacted by the State's underfunded mental health system.

- Costs estimate showed the difference between expanding from 6 months to 12 months was \$41 million annually, \$82 million over the biennium.

No other investment taken by the State of Texas will improve the lives of Texans more than the decision to increase access to mental health services. Children, students, and adults - especially our own frontline workers - are facing unprecedented mental health challenges that were only heightened by the pandemic. We call on Legislators to make mental health access a top priority by providing transformative funding to these key areas.

Community Based Care Workforce	\$155 million
Coordinated Specialty Care	\$5.7 million
Crisis Call and Response	\$84 million*
Loan Forgiveness	\$25 million*
<u>Mothers' Medicaid</u>	<u>\$82 million</u>
Total above base budgets	\$242.7 million

****Already in both base budget proposals***

Based on the figures in the base budgets, it is clear that Legislators are taking the issue of access to mental healthcare seriously. We thank Finance Chair Senator Joan Huffman as well as Houston Appropriations Chair Greg Bonnen for their continued work on the budgeting process. We believe the recommendations listed here align with the overall state plan to increase access and fund needed interventions as well as expanding existing programs with proven track records of success.

We look forward to working with you throughout this Legislative Session to make sure every Texan has access to the mental healthcare they need.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jim Ross
City of Arlington, Texas



Mayor John Muns
City of Plano, Texas



Mayor Kirk Watson
City of Austin, Texas



Mayor Ron Nirenberg
City of San Antonio, Texas



Mayor Oscar Leeser
City of El Paso Texas



Mayor Joe Zimmerman
City of Sugar Land



Mayor Sylvester Turner
City of Houston, Texas



Mayor Dr. Victor Treviño
City of Laredo, Texas

POINTS TO PONDER

Vania Beavers, Rights Protection Officer

Hi, my name is Vania Beavers, and I am excited to be the new Rights Protection Officer for TPC. I recently moved to the Amarillo area from Knoxville, Tennessee, where I was the Health and Individual Rights Coordinator for a local nonprofit.



I got my start in this field by working as a direct support professional with people with IDD and Behavioral Health needs in 2014 in Alaska. I found that I enjoyed this field more than working in the medical field, and changed my major from nursing to Behavioral Health. I have since worked as a case manager, program manager, and employment coordinator. I pride myself on being a strong advocate for individuals with IDD and Behavioral Health needs and I am pleased to be able to advocate for individuals receiving services at TPC. I look forward to working with you all to make lives better for the people we support!

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns or just to introduce yourself and say hello. I can be reached at 806-351-3400 and/or at vania.beavers@txpan.org.

WHITE HAT AWARD



The IDD Service Coordination Department would like to present **Julie Williamson, LVN**, with this month's White Hat Award. Julie is always willing to help others. She demonstrates great care and compassion for the individuals we serve and strives to assist wherever she can. Julie often goes above and beyond to ensure quality care. Thank you Julie for all you do!

Cecilia Gallegos for IDD Service Coordination Department.

Articles or suggestions for this publication may be submitted by the 1st of each month to:

Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen • 901 Wallace Blvd., • Amarillo, Texas 79106
Phone: (806) 351-3308 Fax: (806) 351-3345 Email: joyce.lopez@txpan.org

Welcome these New Employees...

Kayla Barker	CMHC Grant
Vania Beavers	Quality Management
Shelby Burnett	Pampa Group Home
Violette Kragh	ECI
Alberta Wynne	Children's BH Service Coordination
Kim Bowen	IDD Nursing
Nicole Boyd	BH Continuity of Care
Jenny Felton	IDD Service Coordination
April "White" Kowal	Adult BH Service Coordination
Hadleigh O'Brien	Adult BH Service Coordination
Tammy Pendley	IDD Service Coordination



The Party Is Over for Tax Credits

The big tax perks after the pandemic are reduced this year. Parents won't be getting checks, but they will still have a (smaller) credit to use against taxes owed.

The Child Tax Credit was boosted for the 2021 tax year to \$3,600 for children younger than 5 and \$3,000 for kids 6 to 17. For the 2022 tax year, the child tax credit will drop to \$2,000 for all children 16 and under. Some low-income earners may receive a partial tax credit of up to \$1,500. Children 17 years of age no longer generate a tax credit.

The Child and Dependent tax credit was also boosted in 2021 to a max of 50% of costs up to \$8,000 per child (max 2 kids) but will drop in 2022 to a max of 35% up to \$3,000 per child (max 2 kids). Last year, the credit was fully refundable, but for 2022 it's non-refundable.

Further, tax deductions for charitable gifts will also be less generous. When the pandemic was still in full swing, many Americans depended on charities for food and other vital services. In response, lawmakers increased incentives to make cash donations, but those are expiring. So if you're used to giving, for better or worse, tax authorities may be taking more this time around.

The Earned Income Tax Credit was also expanded in 2021, but is set to decline in 2022. For the 2021 tax year, the qualifying age dropped from 25 to 19, but it'll now return to 25. The maximum EITC credit for childless workers will also decline from \$1,502 to \$560.



COMPLIANCE CORNER

Welcome back to Compliance Corner. In Compliance Corner we will address a question that was received internally for the purpose of education. (All personal identifying information has been removed to protect the identity of the employee and/or individual).

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.....

Employees are the “eyes and ears” of the organization to detect any violation of our Compliance Program. You are required to immediately report anything that you encounter at TPC that you believe may be unethical, illegal, or fraudulent to:

- Your supervisor or
- Donald Newsome, Director, Quality Management & Compliance, (Privacy Officer)
Phone: (806) 351-3284
Email: Donald.newsome@txpan.org

Question:

Sometimes, I need to change something in my progress notes, when is it okay or not okay to modify my progress note?

Answer:

The requirement is that progress notes are entered within two business days. If you need to make a modification to a note within that time frame, you can go into iServ and edit your note, making sure to put the reason for the modification when prompted. If it is past that time frame, you need to speak with your supervisor, or someone in QM regarding the amendment process. It is never appropriate to enter a partial note; this is called “place-holding” and is a compliance issue. Please refer to the Ethics in Documentation training provided in New Employee Orientation if you have questions.



NOTE: If you have been notified that there is an audit or a compliance investigation in progress, modifying your note is strictly prohibited.

If you have a question/scenario that you would like to be considered for inclusion in the newsletter, email the information to [Compliance Corner@txpan.org](mailto:ComplianceCorner@txpan.org).



Payment apps will soon report on your income to the IRS

Making some side cash via the gig economy, maybe giving lifts through Lyft or slinging some goods on eBay? If so, you'll want to pay closer attention during 2023.

The IRS is planning to drop the 1099-K form threshold from \$20,000 to just \$600, owing to changes written into the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

What that means is third-party cash networks, such as Venmo, Cash App, or PayPal, will need to provide 1099-K forms to people getting money through their apps. It used to be you had to make more than \$20,000 to get a tattle-tale 1099-K form from one of these apps. But now, the level is down to \$600. Those cash apps are going to remind both you and the IRS of just how much you are making from that side hustle.

In the past, you still had to report the income, of course. If you have been playing it a little casual with the math, that's over.

Many everyday people -- the ones who are clearing out the garage by selling stuff online, for example -- could end up handling more paperwork and reporting more income.

Folks using apps like Door Dash or Uber as side hustles will also likely be impacted. Before the threshold, the forms involved would have largely been limited to full-time drivers, professional sellers (say, a second-hand goods retail-

er on eBay), and others handling a lot of transactions.

Income on the 1099-K form is subject to not just income taxes, but also the 15 percent self-employment tax, so it's smart for taxpayers to plan ahead. Otherwise, they may lack the funds when the time to pay comes, increasing the risk of penalties. Meanwhile, some companies will also need to make sure they have the systems in place to generate and send the reports to their clients.

Initially, the 1099-K threshold change was supposed to land for the 2022 tax year, but the IRS delayed it for a year. Good thing, too, as the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants warned that "The excessive reduction in the de minimis reporting threshold for third-party network transactions has created a significantly large reporting burden." The organization further elaborated that with the IRS already facing an unprecedented backlog, the lowered threshold would result in yet more delays.

IRS Commissioner Doug O'Donnell announced in December that the 1099-K reporting requirements will be delayed. Still, the threshold definitely will be lowered for the 2023 tax year.



Karen Lekas, LVN, Adult Med Clinic, answered last month's questions correctly and was randomly selected to win a \$25 gift card.

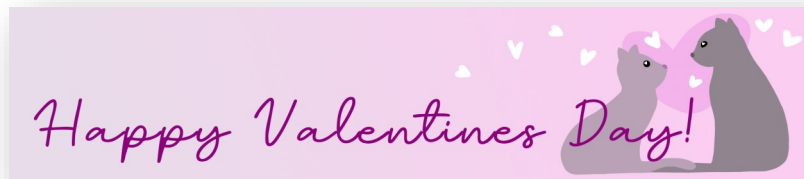
To claim your card, contact Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen at 806.351.3308 or email: joyce.lopez@txpan.org.



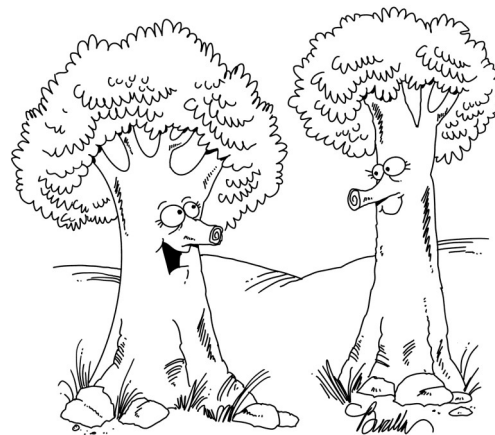
“Because it helps us to remember, there is no more powerful force than a people steeped in their history.”

And there is no higher cause than honoring our struggle and ancestors by remembering.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch



Unemotional Support Animal



“At first it bothered me, but then I realized, 50 growth rings is the new 40 growth rings.”



Quality Management would like to recognize those case managers/service coordinators who score 95 or higher on the bi-monthly compliance reviews. All staff who score 95 or higher will have their name put in a drawing. After the two monthly reviews are completed a name will be drawn and the winner will receive a \$25 gift card. A special thank you to the **TICTOC Committee** who made it possible for us to offer this recognition.

The winner for last month is **Gina Escajeda, Adult BH Service Coordination**.
Congratulations, Gina!

Thank you for your hard work! Please reach out to Gaynelle Williams in QM for your gift card.



Navigating the Death of a Loved One

“Our dead are never dead to us until we have forgotten them.”

– George Eliot



Welcome to the **February 2023 edition of TotalWellbeing**, your guide to the **8 dimensions of wellbeing**. This month we'll talk about a very difficult subject, navigating the death of a loved one.

No death is harder to process and accept than the death of a loved one. This can include friends, family, and beloved pets. Navigating the aftermath of losing one of these special people or animals in our life takes time and can make you feel powerless and can be very overwhelming. But in these dark times we can't let ourselves despair as life continues on for those left and we have to process what has happened so we too can continue, no matter how hard it may seem. Taking simple and small steps at first, like just making sure you eat something today, is important to start. From there reaching out to friends and family for support when you are ready and making sure you are continuing on with your self-care is a good next step. Remember that it takes time and to be patient with yourself. Healing is a long process and can take longer for some than others. Visit [PersonalAdvantage](#) below to learn more about coping with grief and understanding the various ways mourning and grief can affect you as well as others.

Remember that your EAP is here if you or a loved one has lost someone important, or just need to talk to someone. You have access to free and confidential counseling, wellness coaching, work/life concierge services to help find needed daily resources, and more! Plus, an online resource library full of proactive self-help tools! Visit [PersonalAdvantage](#) for helpful articles, personal development tools, a free mindfulness app, and more!

To your total wellbeing,

The MINES Team

Employee Recognition

Debra Cooksey, Office Manager, Dumas Behavioral Health, was recognized at the January 26, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting for fifteen years of service with the Center. Vice Chair, Patty Ladd, presented Debra with a plaque, gift card and a day off.

Congratulations!



On to other things...

Genna Dunlap, TPC's former CFO, retires after 32 years of service with the Center.

A retirement reception was held for Genna on Friday, February 3.

Happy Retirement!



Employee Assistance Program

★ Now Access Your EAP Services Online! ★

MINES and Associates are excited to announce MINES is now offering a new digital intake for EAP services!

This will help make accessing your EAP benefits easier than ever before. [Please click here](#) or use the link below for instructions on how to use the digital intake. Members may still access us via telephone as well.

https://www.minesandassociates.com/Documents/MINES_Digital_Intake_Overview.pdf

Please call us at 800-873-7138 M-F 8:30am to 5:00pm MST if you have any questions about the digital intake, would like assistance completing your intake, or if we can assist with anything else.

Answer's to last months questions:

1) Privacy 2) 180 days 3) Time management

Answer the questions correctly and your name will be entered in a random drawing to be eligible to win a \$25 gift card.

1. Vania Beavers is the new _____.
2. Modifying a progress note after being notified of an _____ or _____ is strictly prohibited.
3. Mines and Associates offers a _____ full of proactive self-help tools.



[Submit your answers to joyce.lopez@txpan.org](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org). Deadline for responses is the 5th of the following month. You must type "Monthly Drawing" in the email subject line to be eligible. For those that do not have a computer, entries may be submitted via interoffice mail. The same requirements apply for hard copy submissions.