TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

Exofficio Report to Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD)

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Executive Summary

Housing Navigator Annual Conference

Housing navigators are funded by the Money Follows the Person Demonstration (MFPD). Housing Navigators hosted their annual two-day conference in December 2023, which was a success. This conference brings together staff from all 28 aging and disability resource centers (ADRCs) who are responsible for increasing access to affordable, accessible, and integrated housing.

The annual conference provided participants with an overview of the goals of the MFPD program. It also provided participants with current information on available affordable housing programs and government sponsored housing plans. The conference supported participants in developing a greater understanding of housing, homelessness, policy efforts, and information about MFPD grants. The conference also provided best practices on how some ADRCs are addressing the goals of the housing navigator role. During this conference, highlighted trainings consisted of cognitive adaptation training and evidenced-based interventions while working in the community.

Mental Health Self-Directed Care

Mental health self-directed care is a service delivery model that provides people with serious mental illness (SMI) with more control and choice over their services and providers. Although Medicaid-funded self-direction is commonly available for people with physical or intellectual and developmental disabilities, few states have implemented self-direction for mental health services.

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has demonstrated the value of mental health self-direction for adults with SMI in two independently evaluated, randomized trials. The trials resulted in improvements across a range of measures including recovery, mental and physical well-being, and employment, at no greater cost than the traditional service delivery model.

Building off the success of the trials, Texas is exploring the feasibility of implementing mental health self-direction within the Medicaid Managed Care system and the potential impacts of implementation.

Aging Texas Well

The Aging Texas Well (ATW) initiative helps Texans prepare for all aspects of aging at the individual, community, and state level. Established in 2005 by Executive Order R.P. 42, HHSC is directed to identify and discuss policy issues, guide state government readiness, and promote increased community preparedness for an aging population through ATW. The Executive Order also created the ATW Advisory Committee (ATWAC) which is comprised of stakeholders and experts in the field of aging who advise HHSC and make recommendations to state leadership on implementation of ATW. The next quarterly ATWAC meeting is February 7, 2024.

The meetings are conducted in hybrid format to provide in-person and virtual attendance. Information about how to access ATWAC meetings can be found at the bottom of this report within the HHSC System Level Updates section.

National Braille Literacy Month

In honor of National Braille Literacy Month in January, the Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program (BCP) hosted a lunch and learn on Jan. 10, 2024, for staff to learn more about the importance of Braille and how BCP supports Braille learning.

Attendees were provided the opportunity to use a Perkins Braille machine to write their names, check out Braille learning materials, and form a human Braille cell with co-workers. To learn more about BCP, email BCP or visit the BCP webpage.

Low Vision Awareness Month

BCP and Blindness Education Screening and Treatment (BEST) program are collaborating to raise awareness about low vision and the supports HHSC provides to the low vision community across Texas by hosting a lunch and learn on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, from noon to 1:30 p.m. CST. To attend, please email BCP at blindchildrensprogram@hhs.texas.gov or BEST at BESTprogram@hhs.texas.gov.

Brain Injury Continuum of Recovery Webinar

The Office of Acquired Brain Injury will host a webinar on Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, from noon to 1 p.m. CST.

John Wood, COO of Moody Neurorehabilitation Institute, will provide a presentation on the Brain Injury Continuum of Recovery. He works diligently with the brain injury communities across Texas to ensure patients and their families have access to resources and actively helps brain injury patients with community reintegration.

Continuing education credit for multiple disciplines will be provided for this event. This webinar is free and open to the public. Register here: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4580435035446140757

For questions, contact Blake Agee at oabi@hhsc.state.tx.us or 737-336-6540.

Early Childhood Intervention Services

The HHSC Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program is pleased to announce that on Oct. 21, 2023, Lakes Regional Community Center expanded their ECI service area to include Camp, Franklin, Morris, and Titus counties, and Sabine Valley Regional MHMR Center (dba Community Healthcore) expanded their ECI service area to include Bowie, Cass, and Red River counties. These expansions are the

result of Texarkana Special Education Center's (dba Opportunities, Inc.) decision to terminate their ECI contract effective Oct. 20, 2023. HHSC ECI updated the ECI Program Search page to reflect these changes.

As part of the integrated monitoring activities required by Office of Special Education Program (OSEP), HHSC plans to implement some changes to the ECI programmatic monitoring procedures. Changes include minor content revisions to ensure tools are consistent with Texas Administrative Code and OSEP requirements and incorporation of third-party billing reviews. The most significant change will be to include caregiver and staff interviews in the monitoring procedure.

46th Annual 'Follow Your Dreams' State Music Festival Competition

The state office of Health Specialty Care Services (HSCS) hosted the "Annual Follow your Dreams State Music Festival Competition" in October 2023 in San Marcos. This competition is an event many look forward to every year. Originally exclusive to the state supported living centers (SSLC), in 2022 Austin State Hospital was the first hospital to participate with seven more joining the competition in 2023. The theme for this year was "Rock of Ages" with performance categories such as drama, instrumental, percussion, solo, and vocal duet/trio. Award winning performances included the Austin SSLC Rock Group who re-enacted "The Flintstones" cartoon opening scene, El Paso SSLC Drama Club's interpretation of "November Rain," and Abilene Drama Club's portrayal of "Rocky."

While competing is optional for SSLC residents and state hospital patients, the level of support, even between competitors, is widespread and remarkable. Participants maximize creativity while planning their performances, strengthen coping and social skills through navigating increased socialization, and work towards building their confidence and the confidence of others. As planning begins for the 2024 competition, it is inevitable that that those served within the SSLCs and state hospitals have already begun planning their performance and are counting down the days until it is showtime.

Waco Center for Youth Chapel Choir

HSCS' state hospitals are continuously assessing program needs to ensure high-quality care for those being served. After a routine discussion focused on new programming ideas, the Waco Center for Youth's (WCY) Chaplaincy Department expressed interest in creating a youth choir. The suggestion generated resounding excitement and the staff who initiated the idea was quickly designated as choir director. Forming the choir started slow with initially five girls interested, an additional seven girls quickly joined, capping the choir at 12. There are no tryouts to join, only a desire to sing. Early performances included singing at chapel services and have advanced to performing at the State Music Festival where choir members received certificates and medals.

Most recently the choir help to spread holiday magic by singing carols across the WCY campus. While the newly formed choir has brought joy to everyone who has

been in the audience, the experience has offered choir members an opportunity to establish meaningful relationships, practice socialization and teamwork, strengthen coping skills, building confidence, and a safe space to further develop skills and interest in singing. WCY's girls' chapel choir has been an incredible success and all involved are looking forward to more performances throughout 2024, as well as potentially the addition of a boys' choir once there is enough interest.

Public Health Emergency – End of Continuous Medicaid Coverage

HHSC initiated the unwinding period in April 2023 by beginning a phased eligibility review of Texans receiving Medicaid, focusing first on people least likely to still be eligible for Medicaid. As of Sept. 2023, HHSC has reached the midway point of the unwinding effort. In anticipation of the increase in workload for the unwind effort, HHSC strengthened recruitment and retention efforts to reduce the vacancy rate for frontline eligibility staff, employed a proactive, multi-pronged communications campaign and implemented a robust public education effort around the state.

Texas residents can visit the Your Texas Benefits website to learn about programs and services and connect with HHSC on social media. More information about the end of the continuous Medicaid coverage requirement is available on our webpage, End of Continuous Medicaid Coverage.

Follow-Up from Previous GCPD Meeting

Medicaid Transportation Benefits

In a previous GCPD meeting, an inquiry regarding transportation to treatment services provided in a court setting was posed by the committee and presenter. There are multiple ways to access Medicaid transportation benefits depending on the Medicaid program an individual is enrolled in. If the service the individual is accessing is not Medicaid covered, some transportation benefits may not be available, such as Nonemergency Medical Transportation (NEMT). However, some managed care organization (MCO) may consider this under value-added services. See below for additional information regarding Medicaid transportation benefits.

Nonemergency Medical Transportation Services

To receive NEMT services, individuals must be enrolled in one of three programs: Medicaid, Children with Special Health Care Needs, or Transportation for Indigent Cancer Patients. NEMT is available for medically necessary covered health care services, which can include check-ups and other doctor visits, dental appointments, lab visits, and pharmacy trips. If an individual has access to transportation through another source, such as a nursing facility, those transportation services must be used instead of NEMT.

NEMT services are available through the Medicaid state plan for Medicaid beneficiaries and their children to obtain transportation to medical appointments and associated trips. NEMT services are delivered through managed care and fee-for-service. NEMT services for managed care members are coordinated by their MCO. NEMT services for fee-for-service clients are coordinated by the Medical Transportation Program. NEMT services include:

- Demand Response Transportation Services (DRTS)
- Mass Transit
- Individual Transportation Participant (ITP) Services
- Meals and Lodging (for members aged 20 and under)
- Advanced Funds (for members aged 20 and under)
- Out-of-State Transportation

When approved, coverage includes accommodation for an attendant or the parent of a child receiving services. NEMT does not include emergency transportation or non-emergency ambulance services.

Home and Community-based Services (HCBS) Transportation

For transportation needs not related to obtaining covered medical services, individuals in an HCBS waiver program may be able to use HCBS waiver transportation services. Examples include transportation to access community activities, employment, or to receive other HCBS services.

Service-specific transportation

Some services include transportation as part of the scope of the benefit. Examples include transportation for individuals residing in a nursing facility, transportation needed for the HCBS service individualized skills and socialization, and some transportation between hospitals for individuals receiving inpatient services. Medicaid also covers emergency transportation and non-emergency ambulance services.

Value-added Services (VAS)

Value-added services are extra services that Medicaid MCOs can choose to provide to their members. These services vary from one MCO to another. If an MCO chooses to, they can use VAS to provide transportation not covered by Medicaid.

Presumptive Eligibility – End of Continuous Medicaid Coverage

During a discussion about the unwinding effort, a GCPD committee member inquired if all individuals accessing Medicaid services should expect to receive a yellow envelope prompting the individual to complete a renewal process. There are individuals who receive Medicaid because they receive another benefit, like Supplemental Security Income (SSI). So long as these individuals remain eligible for SSI, they will not need to take any action. Also, if the individual receives

medical assistance only, and they have renewed in the last 12 months, they would only need to renew on their regular cycle.

For more questions and answers about the End of Continuous Medicaid Coverage, visit our Q&A here.

Employment First Discovery Tool

HHSC has adopted new program rules in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 26, Part 1, Chapter 284, to implement Senate Bill 50, 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, and the Employment First Discovery Tool. The adoption was effective Nov. 14, 2023, and impacts Home and Community-Based Services (HCS), Texas Home Living (TxHmL), Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS), Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) programs, local intellectual and developmental disability authorities (LIDDAs), and STAR+PLUS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). As of Nov. 14, 2023, service coordinators and case managers in these programs must use the Employment First Discovery Tool as part of the service planning process to explore an individual's desire to work, establish strategies to increase number of individuals receiving employment services, and refer individuals to the Texas Workforce Commission , if an individual's person-centered service plan does not include employment services through the waiver program in which the individual is enrolled.

A training on the use of the tool was provided on Jan. 10, 2024. The training materials will be posted on the HHSC website for future reference; a link will be provided via GovDelivery once available.

Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP)

GCPD committee members requested a presentation regarding the STAP program. A presentation to provide general information on program processes and rules is scheduled to occur during the January 2024 GCPD meeting.

HHSC Program Level Updates

Chief Medicaid and CHIP Services Office (CMCSO)

Home and Community Based Services Settings Rule

On March 17, 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule at 42 Code of Federal Regulations §441.301(c), §441.710(a), and §441.530. To comply with the HCBS Settings Rule requirements, settings must be integrated in and support full access to the greater community for individuals receiving Medicaid HCBS. The deadline for compliance was March 17, 2023. CMS allows states to request a corrective action plan (CAP) for certain requirements of the HCBS settings rule for

which the state is not fully compliant as result of the federal COVID-19 public health emergency. HHSC received HCBS Settings CAP approval from CMS on Oct. 6, 2023. The CAP includes milestones for compliance related to individualized skills and socialization, employment services, and STAR+PLUS assisted living facility services.

In addition, HHSC received the first heightened scrutiny approval on Oct. 23, 2023, for a Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) Program, intentional community setting. Heightened scrutiny is the process by which a state can submit to CMS settings that appear to be institutional but that the state believes could be considered community based. CMS reviews the evidence provided by the state and the provider to determine if the setting can be considered community based.

Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project

HHSC's Positive Behavior Management Supports (PBMS) trainings are one of many projects funded by the Money Follows the Person funds. This training helps attendees learn strategies and techniques for the prevention of challenging behavior. The PBMS training sessions teach participants to use positive reinforcement to "tip the scales" toward adaptive and positive behavior as well as to prevent potentially harmful behaviors safely and effectively. Reducing challenging behavior is helpful to individuals exiting institutions to be successful and remain in community settings. The advanced PMBS training focuses on Efficient Functional Assessments and are designed to help attendees learn techniques for developing and carrying-out assessments and analyses, to understand why problem behavior is occurring, and assist in designing individualized treatments. HHSC plans to offer PBMS and advanced PBMS training beginning in Summer/Fall 2024. For more information on PBMS trainings and other free trainings, visit our webpage.

Chief Program and Services Office

Access and Eligibility Services

House Bill 54- Personal Needs Allowance Adjustment

Medicaid recipients residing in a Nursing Facility (NF) or other long-term care facilities are allowed to keep a portion of their income each month to purchase personal goods and services that are not provided by the facilities or covered by Medicaid. The personal needs allowance (PNA) reduces the amount the Medicaid recipient is required to pay the facility each month. House Bill 54, 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023 increases the monthly PNA from $60.00 to $75.00. Medicaid recipients who reside in a long-term care facility and continue to receive a $30 federal SSI payment from the Social Security Association also receive a supplemental payment from HHSC to ensure they have access to the minimum personal needs allowance established by the state. The monthly state supplemental payment will increase from $30.00 to $45.00. The increase in the PNA is effective as of Jan. 1, 2024.

House Bill 1287- Increasing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Vehicle Exclusions

A set amount of a person's vehicle value may be excluded from counting toward the resource limit when determining SNAP eligibility. House Bill 1287, 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023 updates Texas' SNAP vehicle value exclusion, from $15,000.00 to $22,500.00 for first vehicles, and from $4,650.00 to $8,700.00 for any additional vehicles for SNAP eligibility. The change in value exclusion is effective as of Jan. 1, 2024.

Replacement of SNAP Benefits—Update

Additionally, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023 allows states to replace either the full benefit amount stolen or the two most recent months of the household's monthly allotment (the lesser of the two amounts) and will permit no more than two instances of benefits replacements per household per federal fiscal year. Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) benefits are not eligible for replacement under this law.

HHSC's proposed plan to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was approved to validate, replace benefits, and report the scope and frequency of benefit theft by skimming (and other similar fraudulent methods). Households were allowed to submit claims beginning May 31, 2023, for any stolen benefits that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2022 through Sept. 30, 2024. As of Sept. 30, 2023, HHSC received 3,869 unauthorized use replacement requests and issued $1,694,712.58 in replacement benefits. HHSC will continue to monitor these claims and collect information to comply with requirements.

HHSC has continued its efforts to obtain information and guidance related to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Chip Card implementation by attending the series of sessions in 2023 held by the USDA to discuss and obtain feedback on the possibilities and challenges. HHSC employees are still actively participating in workgroups with the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), other states, the Office of Inspector General (OIG), and our EBT vendor to help identify ways to prevent fraudulent activity.

In addition, when the EBT card is issued, HHSC provides education to SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients by distributing materials on how to protect their benefits and EBT card. HHSC has also placed scam advisory messages on the Lone Star help line for customers to hear and the YourTexasBenefits.com page. Messages were also shared on HHSC and HHSC OIG social media platforms and 2-1-1 for customer awareness.

Individuals who have experienced EBT theft may call the Lone Star Help Desk at 800-777-7328 to report a compromised EBT card and obtain a replacement. Individuals should also report the theft to local law enforcement and the USDA OIG by calling 800-424-9121 or online at www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm. This USDA

OIG contact information on how to report fraud can also be found on the Welcome Brochure sent to all SNAP and TANF recipients.

Community Services

Office of Aging Services Coordination (OASC)

Caregiver Awareness Campaign

The HHSC "Strengthen the Care You Give" campaign launched February 2023 to highlight family (unpaid/informal) caregivers. Campaign resources provide information on available services and supports and tools for developing caregiver skills. These resources can be found on the website: Support for Caregivers | Texas Health and Human Services. A strong social media and marketing plan has been developed to ensure continued focus on the campaign and the website hosts a robust set of tools for community organizations to use. These media resources were designed to be evergreen and feature editable options to allow community resources and programs to be highlighted.

A stakeholder workgroup that helped guide the development and launch of the campaign is now helping develop the Texas Roadmap for Family Caregivers. This group is reviewing the 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers action items for states and developing an implementation plan for Texas. The Roadmap will include resources needed to implement the action items and tools to facilitate local action.

No Wrong Door Governance Grant Project

HHSC was awarded a grant from the Administration for Community Living to assess and strengthen the state's No Wrong Door System. OASC, in collaboration with the Office of Disability Services Coordination and the Office of Veterans Services Coordination, is leading this agency-wide effort. Client and provider feedback was obtained through regional listening sessions and a statewide survey. The two-year grant will culminate in a strategic working plan that will address the identified barriers and concerns and establish stronger oversight of the HHS "doors". The University of North Texas is performing the analysis from the listening sessions and surveys to inform the NWD strategic working plan and sustainability efforts. Data and input gathered during the research and discovery phases will also be used to inform other HHSC strategic plans, including the ATW Strategic Plan and the Promoting Independence Plan.

Texercise Connects

As part of the Texercise SNAP-Ed grant funding, Texercise developed Texercise Connects, an intergenerational e-workbook that provides opportunities for older adults and youth to interact and engage with each another, create friendships, and foster growth and learning by engaging in healthy activities together. The e-workbook aims to build and strengthen intergenerational relationships by providing

activities around healthy behaviors (physical activity, nutrition, brain health and creativity). Download Texercise using the Aging Well Resources Order Form.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI)

The BEI Advisory Committee consists of seven members appointed to assist in administering the interpreter certification program, and to help develop the qualifications for each level of certification based on proficiency. The committee held a hybrid meeting on Oct. 20, 2023. Updates were provided regarding testing updates, future training opportunities, interpreter referral agency practices, disciplinary action procedures regarding certified interpreters, and board member terms and solicitation cycle. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 2, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Independent Living Services Program (ILS)

ILS Standards Revisions

The Independent Living Services Standards for Providers and Independent Living Base/Operational Grant Standards for Service Providers in the HHSC ILS program have been revised. These standards outline the service delivery process, ensure consumer rights are protected, and determine procedures Centers for Independent Living (CILs) must follow as part of the grants. We appreciate all of the feedback provided by the CILs to help make the documents beneficial for HHSC, the CILs, and of course, the people being served. The Standards for Providers can be found here, while the Base/Operational Standards can be found here.

Annual Legislative Report

In compliance with Senate Bill 1, 87th Legislature, Regular Session, Article II, Rider 82, the ILS program is required to submit an annual report on the status of the purchased services, base grant, and State Independent Living Council operations. It outlines areas of growth, trends, and opportunities for improvement for the Centers for Independent Living (CIL). The report for fiscal year 2023 has been published and is on the HHS public website. A link can be found here.

ILS Media Campaign

The ILS program is in the process of procuring a media campaign which will help to raise awareness among people in the disability community across Texas about services available through the CILs. Many individuals who could benefit from services are either unaware CILs exist or do not realize the full scope of the services available to them. It will be a statewide campaign using varieties of different media to maximize the number of people who can be reached. This campaign is estimated to roll out in the Spring or early Summer 2024.

Family Health Services

Office of Disability Prevention for Children (ODPC)

ODPC works to prevent developmental disabilities and seeks to minimize the losses developmental disabilities cause, especially in infants and young children. The program's mission is to promote respect, foster understanding, and highlight the importance of person-centered prevention and early intervention initiatives in the lives of Texas children and families.

During the reporting period, ODPC hosted two statewide webinars: "Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS), an Often-Overlooked Condition in Children" and "Injury Prevention During the Holidays." The webinars had a combined attendance of 1,141 providers, educators, health care professionals, parents, and caregivers attended the webinars.

Health Specialty Care System

State Supported Living Centers

New Horizon Reading Club at Brenham SSLC

Programming that offers a variety of activities and events is essential for ensuring SSLC residents remain engaged and have opportunities to grow their interests. Brenham SSLC's New Horizon Center provides residents numerous activity and event options each month. A popular activity among Brenham's residents is the reading club, held every Tuesday and Thursday, where a selected book is read to residents by a community volunteer. Once the reading concludes, residents then participate in open discussion regarding the book. Along with the opportunity for social engagement, the reading club allows residents a chance to expand their knowledge and imagination as the topic changes and open discussion is encouraged. This activity promotes positive social connections and continued learning in a relaxing, welcoming environment.

State Hospitals

Mural Arts Vocational Program at Kerrville State Hospital

It is not uncommon for artists to describe how therapeutic creating pieces of art can be, especially knowing how the artwork could potentially impact those able to see it. After one of Kerrville State Hospital's (KSH) cherished murals was painted over, the hospital's Art Therapy Department created the Mural Arts Vocational Program. KSH's mural team consists of patients and artists who work as a team to fulfill "client" requests made for murals across the hospital. The artists work Monday through Friday, two hours each day, and are paid minimum wage, and as an added benefit, the artists showcase their talents while improving the treatment environment for others served at KSH. They are fully engaged in the process from start to finish including receiving and managing client requests, creative planning, painting, cleanup, and applying feedback from clients. Each step of the process benefits the artists through promoting recovery, providing opportunities to learn

new skills, and creating an environment that allows personal growth. With the KSH mural team being in high demand, there is no doubt the Mural Arts Vocational Program and mural team members will continue to thrive moving through 2024.

Program Updates on People Served

The below table provides a brief overview of programs and services, a webpage to find more information, and an update on people served since the last GCPD quarterly report. This list is not fully inclusive of all HHSC programs and services and only represents a few programs which provide this type of data in GCPD reports.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)	ADRCs support the Texas "No Wrong Door" system by serving as a key access point to person-centered, long-term services and supports needed to live independently in the community. The 28 ADRCs collaborate with AAAs, affordable housing coalitions, local service providers, food pantries, and other community-based organizations to provide information and referral services. In addition to information and referral services, ADRCs often subcontract with faith- and community-based organizations to provide respite care to family caregivers. ADRCs also ensure that faith- and community-based organizations are represented in their local advisory groups.	Find an ADRC | Texas Health and Human Services	October 2023 through December 2023, ADRCs assisted 16,224 callers.
Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)	AAAs contract with HHSC to provide services to help older adults remain in their homes and communities. AAAs are designated by statute and are housed within community-based non-profit organizations and local governments. While AAAs contract with for-profit vendors for certain services, such as congregate and home-delivered meals and transportation, they provide most services through partnerships with non-profit and faith-based organizations.	Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) | Texas Health and Human Services	During the period of October 2023 through December 2023: 78,275 people received 2,974,189 meals through the congregate and home-delivered meals programs. The transportation service provided 128,364 trips to 4,522 people.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
Blindness Education, Screening, and Treatment (BEST)	The BEST program provides blindness prevention education and resources, vision screenings and eye medical treatment to prevent blindness. BEST contracts with Prevent Blindness Texas to provide free vision screenings across the state.	Blindness Education, Screening & Treatment (BEST) Program | Texas Health and Human Services	As of Nov. 30, 2023, BEST has provided beneficial treatment services to 61 individuals and screened the vision of 1,011 people through its contract with Prevent Blindness Texas, for a total number served of 1,072 as of November 2023, in fiscal year 2024.
Children's Autism Program	The Children's Autism Program provides focused Applied Behavior Analysis services through local community agencies and organizations to children ages 3 to 15 with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum.	Autism | Texas Health and Human Services	As of Nov. 30, 2023, Children's Autism has provided services to 605 children in fiscal year 2024.
Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program	CSHCN helps children ages 20 and younger who have special health care needs and people with cystic fibrosis of any age improve their health, well-being, and quality of life.	Children with Special Health Care Needs Program | Texas Health and Human Services	As of Nov. 30, 2023, the CSHCN Services Program has provided services to 968 clients in fiscal year 2024. Additionally, as of this same date, there are 799 clients on the waiting list.
Community Attendant Services (CAS)	Community Attendant Services (CAS) offers non-technical, non-skilled, in-home attendant services to individuals with an approved medical need for assistance with personal care tasks.	Community Attendant Services (CAS) | Texas Health and Human Services	In November 2023, 68,172 individuals were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services (CMPAS) Title XX	A CMPAS licensed agency offers personal assistance services to individuals with physical disabilities who are mentally and emotionally competent and able to supervise their attendant, or who have someone who can supervise the attendant for them. Individuals interview, select, train, supervise, and release their personal assistants.	Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services (CMPAS) | Texas Health and Human Services	In November 2023, 306 individuals were served.
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Training and Education Program	Training activities are provided throughout the year for people who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as for their families, service providers, schools and institutions, employers, and government agencies. Topics presented include mental health in the deaf and hard of hearing community, deaf self-advocacy training, interview skills training, ethical healthcare interpreting, and communication strategies.	Deaf & Hard of Hearing | Texas Health and Human Services	Throughout the first quarter of FY24, approximately 12 training events were offered with more than 560 attendees. In addition, staff are preparing for the first in-person Camp Sign event since 2019. Camp Sign is expected to occur in the summer of 2024.
Family Care (FC) Title XX	FC offers a non-skilled, nontechnical attendant care service to eligible adults who are functionally limited in performing activities of daily living.	Family Care (FC) | Texas Health and Human Services	In November 2023, 3,874 individuals were served.
Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)	FGP serves a dual purpose. It provides income-eligible adults, age 55 and older, with meaningful volunteer opportunities while also meeting critical community needs by serving children with developmental delays or disabilities; visual hearing, or speech impairments; physical challenges; and children with other exceptional needs. Primarily funded by the AmeriCorps, FGP has been operating nationwide since 1965. There are 17 service areas in Texas, eight of which are administered by HHSC.	Foster Grandparent Volunteer Program | Texas Health and Human Services	Between Oct. 1, 2022, and Sept. 30, 2023, 270 Foster Grandparent volunteers mentored and tutored 15,895 exceptional needs children and youth throughout the eight HHSC administered service areas.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
Home Delivered Meals (HDM) Title XX	HHSC contracts with community-based provider agencies to deliver a nutritious meal through the HDM program to the eligible person's home to ensure they get at least one healthy meal per day.	Home-Delivered Meals (HDM) | Texas Health and Human Services	In November 2023, 19,341 individuals were served.
Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Crisis Intervention and Crisis Respite Services	During the 2020-2021 biennium, HHSC provided $4 million to local intellectual and developmental disability authorities (LIDDAs) to provide crisis intervention and crisis respite support to individuals who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who may have behavioral health or mental health support needs. This funding gives a total of $28.6 million towards crisis intervention and crisis respite services. Currently, all 39 LIDDAs statewide provide crisis intervention and crisis respite services to support individuals to maintain independent lives in the community, free of institutionalization.	n/a	From Sept. 1, 2023 through Nov. 30, 2023: 858 individuals received crisis intervention services and 159 individuals received crisis respite services.
LIDDA Enhanced Community Coordination (ECC)	The LIDDA ECC service coordinators provide intense monitoring and flexible support to ensure individuals' success in the community. The ECC service coordinator links individuals to critical services and monitors the success of those services for one year following a transition or diversion from an institution.	n/a	From Sept. 1, 2023, through Nov. 30, 2023, 975 individuals were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
IDD Outpatient Mental Health Clinics	the 86th Legislature allocated $3.0 million for IDD Outpatient Mental Health clinics to enhance the services available for individuals with IDD and mental health needs. This funding established IDD community outpatient mental health services. On November 1, 2020 a pilot was implemented to provide the outpatient mental health services identified in the exceptional item.	n/a	As of Nov. 30, 2023, a total of 158 individuals were enrolled and served in the IDD community outpatient mental health services program. Since the inception of the program, a total of 401 individuals have been served.
Primary Home Care (PHC)	PHC offers nontechnical, non-skilled, in-home attendant services to individuals with an approved medical need for assistance with personal care tasks. PHC is available to eligible adults with a practitioner's statement of medical need, whose health problems cause them to be functionally limited in performing activities of daily living.	Primary Home Care (PHC) | Texas Health and Human Services	In November 2023, 1,182 individuals were served.
Texas 2-1-1/Texas Information and Referral Network (2-1-1 TIRN)	Helps Texans connect with the services they need. An individual may access this program by phone or the internet. This resource strives to present accurate, well-organized, and easy-to-find information from state and local health and human services programs. 2-1-1 TIRN is a free, anonymous social service hotline, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.	2-1-1 Texas | Texas Health And Human Services Commission (211texas.org)	From Sept. 26, 2023 through Dec. 31, 2023: 532,661 callers were served and 9,155 online chats were answered.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
IDD Transition Support Teams (TSTs)	TSTs provide support to individuals transitioning from institutional settings into the community who may have significant medical, behavioral, and psychiatric support needs. The support teams provide educational opportunities and materials, offer technical assistance, and consultative case reviews to aid community waiver program providers and LIDDAs to successfully assist individuals with coordinating their transition from institutional settings, or remaining in the community when at risk for institutionalization.	LIDDA Transition Support Teams | Texas Health and Human Services	Sept. 1, 2023 through Nov. 30, 2023, the TSTs provided: 122 educational opportunities with 1,983 people in attendance. 868 opportunities for technical assistance provided to 1,067 recipients. 652 peer review/case consultations provided to 1,708 recipients.

HHSC System Level Updates

Substantial Policy, Key Personnel, or Organizational Changes

- Molly Regan, Deputy Executive Commissioner, Access & Eligibility Services, Office of the Chief Program & Services Officer
- Camisha Banks, Deputy Executive Commissioner for Managed Care, Office of Chief Medicaid & CHIP Services
- Mariah Ramon, Deputy Executive Commissioner for Policy & Quality, Office of Chief Medicaid & CHIP Services

HHSC Strategic Plan

Every two years, the Texas Health and Human Services system updates its Strategic Plans, which describe its work to address multifaceted and evolving factors affecting health and human services. Each of the system's divisions contributes to the development of the Strategic Plans. The Plans define the system's mission, goals, objectives, and action items to address specific issues over a five-year period.

HHSC Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 Part I
HHSC Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 Part II

Long-range Plans for People with Disabilities

Maximizing Resources and Long-Range Planning for State Supported Living Centers
Proposed Long-Term Care Plan for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Related Conditions Fiscal Years 2022-2023
2022-2023 Aging Texas Well Plan
Rider 157 – Community Attendant Workforce Development Strategic Plan
Promoting Independence Plan 2022-2024

Publications, Meetings and Proposed Rules

Advisory Committee Meetings

All Health and Human Services (HHS) advisory committee meetings resumed using virtual or hybrid formats until further notice. For a full list of archived and upcoming committee hearings visit the HHS Communications & Events page.

Reports & Presentations

Visit the HHS Reports and Presentations page for the latest list.

Proposed Rules

Prior to HHS rules becoming final, stakeholders have an opportunity to review and comment. The proposed rules are published in the *Texas Register* and open for public comment until the end of the stated comment period. Information about HHS rules is found at: Health-Human-Services-Rulemaking and HHS Rulemaking Public Comment.