

TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION



Ex-Officio Report to Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

(GCPD)

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Executive Summary

Senate Bill 379

HHSC updated Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food restrictions to comply with [Senate Bill 379](#), passed during the 89th Texas Legislature in 2025, which prohibits the use of SNAP benefits to purchase items like candy and sweetened drinks.

Starting April 1, 2026, items restricted from purchase with SNAP benefits include:

- Candy, including:
 - Candy bars
 - Gum
 - Taffy
 - Nuts, raisins, or fruits that have been candied, crystalized, glazed or coated with chocolate, yogurt or caramel
- Sweetened drinks, including nonalcoholic beverages made with water that contain 5 grams or more of added sugar or any amount of artificial sweetener

People can continue to use SNAP benefits to buy:

- Fruits, vegetables, garden seeds, and plants that produce food
- Milk, milk products and milk substitutes
- Bread and cereal
- Meat, fish, and poultry
- Dairy products
- Beverages that:
 - Contain milk or milk products like soy, rice, or similar milk substitutes;
 - Have more than 50% vegetable or fruit juice by volume;
 - Contain natural sweeteners derived from plants (such as Stevia, Stevia Leaf Extract, and Monk Fruit) with less than five grams of added sugar; and

- Are considered medical grade electrolyte drinks. Medical grade electrolyte drinks are beverages used for illness related to dehydration and do not include any beverage marketed primarily as a sports drink.

To learn more about what you can and can't buy using SNAP, visit the [SNAP Purchase Restrictions webpage](#).

Children's Autism Program

The Children's Autism Program is hosting a free webinar April 29, 2026, 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in recognition of Autism Awareness Month. Dr. Dorothea Lerman PhD, BCBA-D, LBA-Tx, Director of the University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL) Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities will present the webinar. It will help behavior analysts, caregivers, and other professionals learn assessment and intervention approaches to prepare learners with autism for employment. The webinar will include results of recent Applied Behavior Analysis research at UHCL and additional tips for success. Register to attend at: [Free Webinar: Helping Learners Prepare for the Workforce](#)

The Children's Autism Program and the Texas Autism Research and Resource Center will host the "2026 Texas Autism Conference: Perspectives and Practices in Autism". This year's conference will take place virtually, June 15-18, 2026. The free event will include research about autism treatments, how autism intersects with other disabilities such as visual impairment, and continuing advances in treating autism spectrum disorder. The annual HHS Texas Autism Conference serves researchers, students, family members and caregivers, as well as professional providers working with people with autism spectrum disorder such as clinicians, counselors, therapists, service providers, and state agency staff. Email Childrens.Autism.Program@hhs.texas.gov for registration information.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Webinars

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) hosted/will host the following webinars during the third quarter of fiscal year 2026:

- Overview of the Certificate of Deafness for Tuition Waiver Program, March 5, 2026, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Board for Evaluation of Interpreters Program Overview, May 7, 2026, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Board for Evaluation of Interpreters Basic Test Preparation for Pre-certified interpreter: 6-week course offered in March 2026

- Board for Evaluation of Interpreters Advanced Test Preparation for Basic interpreters: 6-week course offered in April 2026
- Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program 101: May 12, 2026, 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
- Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program Voucher Exchange: May 13, 2026, 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
- Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program 101 In-person training at Deaf Action Center: May 13, 2026, 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.
- More Than Just Signs - Myth Busting Educational Interpreting: tentatively scheduled May 2026 and June 2026

Email dhhs.training@hhs.texas.gov for more information and register for DHHS training announcements using the link below to stay informed about future opportunities. [Subscribe to BEI\(HHSC\) and DHHS \(Health and Wellness\) Announcements](#)

The Community Partner Program

The Community Partner Program (CPP) connects Texas Health and Human Services with community and faith-based organizations across the state to help individuals and families access and manage public benefits. Through these partnerships, trusted local organizations provide computer access, application assistance, and guidance using YourTexasBenefits.com so clients can apply for and manage programs such as Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and SNAP. By meeting people where they already seek assistance, CPP helps remove barriers and builds confidence in navigating the benefits system, particularly for individuals who may face barriers related to mobility, technology access, communication, or completing and submitting required documentation.

Through these partnerships, CPP supported initiatives such as Direct Application Support, where trained navigators across community partner sites provided hands on assistance with thousands of applications in 2025, including support for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, older adults with disabilities, and others seeking help with benefit applications. Together, Community Partners, navigators, and local organizations demonstrate how strong collaboration can expand access to services and strengthen communities across Texas while helping more Texans connect with programs that support food access, health care,

and financial stability. CPP is presenting on May 21, 2026, during the GCPD Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar Series.

Disaster Preparedness Project and Training

HHSC Office of Aging Services Coordination (OASC) oversees The Disaster Preparedness Project, which provides education to aging services providers, healthcare workers, emergency personnel, first responders, volunteers, community members, and others serving older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities. The project includes a Texas Disaster Response Guide for Older Adults, Caregivers, and People with Disabilities; a series of training modules; and Social Stories that help people to better understand social expectations, reduce anxiety in unfamiliar situations, and promote positive social behaviors. The first training will launch in late July 2026.

Children With Special Health Care Needs Services Program Waitlist

In January 2026, Children With Special Health Care Needs Services Program (CSHCN) notified 122 clients on the program waiting list that they would begin receiving comprehensive health care benefits effective January 30, 2026. This marked CSHCN's first waiting list removal for fiscal year 2026. The program reviews the waiting list each quarter to determine the appropriateness of additional removals.

Low Vision Awareness Month

In February, the Blind Children's Program and Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment Program (BEST) celebrated Low Vision Awareness Month with an internal communications article and information shared on social media. Low vision month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of common eye diseases such as cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma for people who experience vision loss and have daily obstacles.

Brain Injury Awareness Month

HHSC Brain Injury Programs (BIP) hosted a webinar series throughout March in recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month. The programs made all webinars free and open to the public.

This year's theme, "Behind the Injury: What Brain Injury Really Looks Like," focused on the often unseen or misunderstood realities of brain injury. The series covered topics from risk and trauma to long-term physical, cognitive, and emotional impacts. The webinars featured clinicians, subject-matter experts, and people who have experienced brain injury.

National Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month

March is National Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month. The Hemophilia Assistance Program (HAP) collaborated with stakeholders to share Did-You-Know-Facts about the disorders and links to resources.

On March 28, 2026, HAP and CSHCN staff traveled to Addison, Texas, to attend the Spring Family Education event hosted by the Texas Central Bleeding Disorders Foundation (TCBD). The event also hosted a live watch party for the National Bleeding Disorders Foundation's Educate to Elevate national livestream fundraiser. TCBD was one of five chapters nationwide selected and featured during the broadcast.

The event offered valuable education for families, created networking opportunities with industry partners, and allowed HAP to gain insights into the community's concerns which will inform future program improvements.

Follow-Up from Previous Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities Meeting

Analysis of HHSC Programs Related to NAMI Policy Proposal

During the January GCPD meeting, the committee requested an analysis that compared the policy proposal for a residential solution for people with severe and persistent mental illness, presented by Marilyn Hartman, co-chair of the Advocacy Committee at NAMI Central Texas, to related HHSC programs. The analysis is below.

State Hospital Step-Down

Program Summary

The State Hospital Step-Down Program (SHSDP) identifies, assesses, and facilitates the successful transition of adults with serious mental illness (SMI), or a combination of SMI and medical needs exceeding the supports available in traditional settings, who are clinically appropriate for transition to community-based services with proper supports. SHSDP providers form an Intensive Transition Team, which facilitates the transition process from the state hospital by providing pre-transition services and developing an individualized plan.

Funding Source

General Revenue and Community Mental Health Services Block Grant.

Program Eligibility

SHSDP participants must:

- Be 18 years of age or older,
- Have a history of SMI,
- Have a minimum of three hospitalizations or long-term care stay within the last five years,
- Not be a danger to themselves, others, or property,

- Be able to physically evacuate without assistance in the event of an emergency,
- Voluntarily consent or, if the person has a legally authorized representative (LAR), then the LAR must consent to the SHSDP home, and
- Have an Intensive Treatment Plan and HHSC approval prior to admission.

Home and Community-Based Services – Adult Mental Health

Program Summary

The Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) – Adult Mental Health is a 1915(i) Medicaid program that provides specialized supports through the provision of home and community-based services to adults diagnosed with a serious mental illness and extended tenure in psychiatric hospitals, frequent arrests, or emergency department visits.

Funding Source

General Revenue & Federal Medicaid match funding for Medicaid eligible participants.

Program Eligibility

Texans 18 years or older with a mental illness and an accepted Medicaid type for the program may be eligible if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Spent three or more of the past five years in a psychiatric hospital;
- Had four or more arrests and two psychiatric crises in the past three years; or
- Had fifteen or more emergency room visits and two psychiatric crises in the past three years.

Conclusion

Currently, there is no state-funded community-based program with a residential component designed for individuals who may be clinically stable, but unable to live independently, who may have anosognosia, who require a secure setting, and who

may experience cognitive decline over time, necessitating a long-term residential environment.

Additionally, at this time, comparing the policy proposal to Rider 56 would be premature, as the Rider 56 study is still underway. The policy proposal references the study included in the NAMI policy presentation as a potential source of residential options for the target population. However, the proposal also notes that multiple studies have already been conducted on this topic over the years, and that initial and sustained funding is needed, along with an implementation model capable of serving individuals with complex mental health needs.

The Department of Justice Settlement Agreement With The State of Texas

In the last GCPD meeting, HHSC provided an overview of the filing of a joint motion requesting the federal district court dismiss the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) settlement agreement for the State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs). During the meeting, the committee requested additional details about the joint motion.

In June 2009, the DOJ and Texas entered into a settlement agreement following investigations into Texas' 13 state-operated living centers. Over the past 16 years Texas state employees have collaborated with the DOJ to transform the SSLCs, ensuring residents are protected and consistently receiving high-quality clinical care. On December 9, 2025, the DOJ and State of Texas filed a joint motion requesting the federal district court to dismiss the settlement agreement. The independent monitor for the settlement agreement noted in his declaration to the court that there was rapid progress, especially over the past few years, and "across all provisions, more than 80% of the indicators have been exited or are showing stable high performance."

The independent monitor's recommendation to exit is also based on finding the State of Texas in compliance with Part V, paragraphs C1 and C2 of the Settlement Agreement. These sections require the State to (a) develop and implement a process for assessing each Center's substantial compliance with each substantive section of the settlement agreement, and (b) develop and implement a process to train and approve State staff (called State Reviewers) to conduct monitoring in a reliable and professional manner.

The independent monitor also stated that given the number of provisions that have achieved substantial compliance, the number of indicators that are showing consistent high scores, and the stability and professionalism of the State Review Team, he was comfortable supporting the parties' motion for dismissal. The motion now awaits approval by the judge for the settlement agreement to be dismissed.

Voting Access for People in The Health and Specialty Care System

The Health and Specialty Care System (HSCS) has a voting rights policy for all State Hospital and SSLC facilities which establishes a process for providing the opportunity to register to vote. This policy also provides guidance on assisting with access to an election polling location, accommodations at an election polling location, or voting by mail. HSCS recently released updated training for staff on voting rights and processes, including information on how to accommodate the person's needs and requests. HSCS updates the policy and training based on statutory changes, as needed.

HSCS Coordination for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Criminal Justice Settings

During the January GCPD meeting, the committee requested details of diversion and coordination efforts for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in criminal justice settings.

HSCS works collaboratively to serve individuals with IDD referred from a criminal justice setting in both State hospitals and SSLCs. The Office of Forensic Services and Coordination is under the HSCS umbrella and is responsible for coordinating forensic services across HHSC. The Office of Forensic Services and Coordination oversees forensic clinical services and programming in state hospitals and SSLCs, develops strategies for forensic services in the HSCS, conducts research to support evidence-informed programs and practices, and provides forensic services training and technical assistance to mental health care facilities and community partners that assist people involved in the criminal justice system, as well as statewide and pilot forensic programs. The Office of Forensic Services and Coordination also facilitates the Joint Committee on Access and Forensic Services (JCAFS). The purpose of the committee is to provide customer/consumer and stakeholder input to the HHSC system in the form of recommendations regarding access to forensic

services within the state of Texas. The JCAFS considers and makes recommendations to the Legislature consistent with the committee's purpose.

Managed Care Organization Questions and Concerns

For questions and concerns with a Managed Care Organization (MCO), a member can call their MCO's member hotline (the telephone number is on the member ID card issued by the MCO). If the member continues to have issues with their MCO, they can reach out the [HHSC Ombudsman Managed Care](#) by calling 866-566-8989.

Health and Human Services Commission

Program Level Updates

Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program Services

Home and Community Based Services Quality Measure Set

Texas Medicaid and CHIP Services Quality team has hired two Project Managers to lead the HCBS quality measure set implementation efforts for fee-for-service and Medicaid managed care programs and is continuing to build the team infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability for Texas.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has not released the 2028 HCBS Quality Measure Set for public comment but is expected to publish the final measures in the federal register no later than December 31, 2026. Medicaid and CHIP Services Quality team anticipates CMS revisions to the 2026 iteration due to recent Quality Measure set workgroup recommendations. Medicaid and CHIP Services Quality team will monitor for CMS guidance while continuing to prepare for 2028 HCBS Quality Measure set reporting.

Medically Dependent Children Program Diversion Slots

HHSC is implementing Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP) diversion slots to provide a pathway for eligible medically fragile children and youth to access MDCP services without first waiting on the interest list or first entering a nursing facility. MDCP helps children and youth under 21 who meet a nursing facility or inpatient level of care remain safely at home with community-based supports delivered through managed care.

Full implementation requires approval from CMS. HHSC will provide operational guidance to MCOs and stakeholders ahead of the effective date. HHSC will also revise the MDCP handbook and amend the STAR Kids and STAR Health managed care contracts. The Texas Administrative Code, Title 1 , will also be amended ([1 TAC §353.1155](#)).

Diversion slots are anticipated to be available in December 2026.

Behavioral Health, Disability & Aging Services

Community Services

Office of Aging Services Coordination

Statewide Interagency Aging Services Coordinating Council

House Bill (H.B.) 728, 88th Legislature, Regular Session established the [Statewide Interagency Aging Services Coordinating Council](#) (SIASCC) . H.B. 728 charges SIASCC with developing a five-year strategic plan, biennial expenditure proposal and annual inventory of state-funded interagency aging programs and services. The SIASCC <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/about/advisory-committees/statewide-interagency-aging-services-coordinating-council> published the [fiscal year 2025 Inventory of State-Funded Aging Services and Programs](#) in December 2025. The SIASCC is gathering expenditure data for each member agency to develop the fiscal year 2026 SIASCC Coordinated Expenditure Proposal. The next meeting for SIASCC is June 10, 2026.

Aging Texas Well Strategic Plan: A Multisector Plan on Aging

HHSC OASC oversees the development of the Aging Texas Well (ATW) and Strategic Plan (required by Executive Order R.P. 42), which also serves as Texas' multisector plan on aging (MPA). MPAs are state-led blueprints that are cross-sector, multi-year guides to address the unique needs of the aging population, including older adults with disabilities and caregivers.

OASC is currently preparing for the 2028-29 ATW Strategic Plan, which provides a six-year vision for supporting aging Texans. OASC hosted a cross-sector kick-off webinar on January 21, 2026, that had over 160 cross-sector partners in attendance. During the webinar, OASC shared information on the MPA and how cross-sector stakeholders can help inform the development of the 2028-29 ATW Strategic Plan. OASC has established four cross-sector workgroups based on the four MPA domains including access to services, healthy aging, caregiver support, and age-friendly.

Aging Dashboard

OASC and the Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) Center for Health Statistics are creating an Aging Data Dashboard that they will place on the DSHS

site and feature on the HHSC site. The dashboard will be similar to the current DSHS mental health dashboard [Texas Health Data - Mental Health](#). A letter of instruction is currently routing, and the project team is identifying publicly available (non-confidential) data to feature.

Foster Grandparent Program

Throughout quarter one of fiscal year 2026, Foster Grandparent Program staff participated in 93 community engagement events. This included in-person and virtual presentations along with health fairs. Additionally, the program onboarded 46 new Foster Grandparent volunteers. These activities allow for new placement options and increased opportunities to mentor and serve Texas children.

Independent Living Services Program

Outreach Campaign

In the past two years, HHSC has conducted successful media campaigns focused on radio, TV, social media, community clinics, and doctors' offices. The campaigns helped to generate awareness of services provided by Centers for Independent Living (CILs). This year's outreach campaign will instead focus on development of a toolkit for CILs to use in their local outreach efforts. The purpose of the campaign is to enhance local outreach activities and increase referrals. This campaign will include training for CIL staff on how to use the toolkit, and approaches for the distribution of new and existing materials from the toolkit.

The work will begin around May with trainings provided to both purchased services and base grant CILs by October.

Special Projects

Employment First and Employment Services Training

In calendar year 2026, Special Projects plans to conduct two in-person Employment First and Employment Services trainings across the state, along with two to three virtual trainings. The purpose of these trainings is to provide knowledge and understanding of Medicaid employment services. This year's training curriculum consists of the following topics:

- Overview of Employment First and the national movement,
- Providing employment services,
- Family concerns,

- Employment and soft skills,
- Apprenticeship programs, and
- Employer relationships.

Employment Webinar Series

In calendar year 2026, Special Projects will host a series of webinars that discuss Employment First topics, from basic understanding to more complex implementation. The next scheduled webinar is:

- The Role of Employment in Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Recovery (April 29, 2026).

To receive notifications and registration information on upcoming webinars, please subscribe to GovDelivery and choose the “Employment First” topic. For questions regarding Employment First events and initiatives, please visit the [Texas HHS Employment First webpage](#) or email SE.Questions@hhsc.state.tx.us.

The Third Annual Cross Agency Employment Conference

The Third Annual Cross-Agency Employment Conference brings together Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and HHSC to continue building a coordinated, statewide approach to employment services. The employment conference provides information and training for service recipients who are seeking employment, their supporters, providers, and the numerous staff who engage in Employment First activities. The conference is tentatively scheduled for November 2026.

Behavioral Health Services

Managed Care Organization Transition Specialist Pilot

The MCO Transition Specialist Pilot transitions adults with SMI and physical health needs/conditions from nursing facilities to Medicaid managed care (STAR+PLUS) HCBS. People with SMI are more likely to incur chronic medical conditions and enter nursing facilities earlier in life than the general population. They often have issues with focusing, planning, and organizing their daily lives that can make it a challenge to live in the community.

The Pilot provides interventions, including an evidence-based skills training known as Cognitive Adaption Training (CAT) and other transition support services.

Dedicated transition support specialists employed by the MCOs provide services under the Pilot. Each MCO in the Travis and Bexar managed care service delivery areas provides up to six months of intensive pre-transition support in nursing facilities and continues transition support in the community for up to a year. Participants continue to receive regular STAR+PLUS medical services and HCBS after the transition period. The Project has exceeded original expectations of participation and outcomes thus far. The Pilot also results in net savings to Medicaid since premiums for community-based care are significantly lower than for Medicaid members in nursing facilities. It is a model that Texas could potentially replicate and sustain statewide.

Data

The Pilot, implemented in October 2022, has significantly exceeded HHSC's original estimate of 25 participants a year. To date, 178 people have enrolled in the Pilot and 72 have entered the community. Independent evaluation indicates that participants have experienced reduced impacts from their physical and mental disabilities, increases in wellbeing and high scores on ratings of recovery. Key elements of recovery measured by the independent evaluator included feeling control over one's life, ability to get better, and ability to have positive relationships.

Success Stories

ZZ

A car accident at 37 resulted in ZZ losing an arm, losing the ability to walk or care for himself, and entering a nursing facility. He remained in the facility for 5 years. He recalled saying to his roommate, another younger resident, "We're going to die here." Fearing the rest of his life would be confined to an institutional setting, his serious mental illness worsened. With the help of his transition specialist, he moved to the community and learned the skills he needed to live independently. Now he pays rent, purchases groceries, and manages his own daily needs again. He has reconnected with his friends and family.

AA

AA entered the nursing facility in his early 70s after having a workplace accident that resulted in a traumatic brain injury. Serious mental illness complicated his recovery. He described the transition from "outdoorsman," to "being cooped up," in an institution for two years as extremely difficult. His MCO Transition Specialist played an important role in helping him complete housing paperwork and

connecting him with healthcare resources that supported him becoming independent in the community. He physically recovered and has begun to walk outside again. He learned skills to live more independently. This has allowed him to complete chores and connect with neighbors. He hopes to continue to recover and one day begin working in landscaping again.

BB

BB has a serious mental illness and complex medical care needs. She had lived for about two years in a nursing facility before enrolling in the Pilot. Before entering the program, she heard repeatedly that “no one ever leaves” a nursing facility. She worked closely with her transition specialist, practicing exercises to regain her autonomy in everyday choices like selecting her own clothes, preparing small meals, and maintaining her cognitive health. When she transitioned to the community, she rebuilt her daily routines, re-engaging in the community through volunteer work at a diaper bank, attending church services at a small local congregation, and began taking trips to the museum and farmers markets using her local paratransit transportation service.

State Hospital Step Down Program

In July 2024, HHSC executed new contracts with current SHSDP providers to expand the program and added two new contracted providers to expand operations in new regions.

During the 88th Legislative Session, HHSC received funding to expand the SHSDP through Rider 52(c)(2) of the 2024-25 General Appropriations Act.

In fiscal year 2025, the program opened a new home and expanded from 30 to 39 beds. The projected capacity will be 72 beds at the end of fiscal year 2026.

In fiscal year 2025, the program admitted 24 and successfully discharged 27 participants. HHSC will continue to ensure continued access to this innovative programming.

[Reporting of Waiting Lists for Mental Health Services](#)

Health Specialty Care System

HSCS employees worked on various initiatives and programs to brighten the holidays for the patients and residents of State Hospitals and SSLCs. Every facility made sure that the holiday spirit was present, including Rusk State Hospital and Abilene SSLC. Rusk staff made sure that maximum-security patients got to enjoy

the holiday season within security protocols. Abilene, known for its impressive holiday light show, also organized an enormous Winter Wonderland scene in the gym to the delight of the residents.

As the calendar turned to 2026, the Waco Center for Youth held an open house with community stakeholders that will help improve care for the adolescents – during and after their time at the center. And residents at Lufkin SSLC took a pre-Valentine’s road trip to Nacogdoches for the Night to Shine event, created by the Tim Tebow Foundation as a prom experience for people with special needs.

State Supported Living Centers

Texans Served

Table 1: The percentage of each population served and average length of stay in fiscal year 2026.

Fiscal Year 2026	Adult Civil Commitments	Adult Forensic Residents	Child/Adolescent Residents
Percent of population served:	89.5%	6.6%	3.1%
Average Length of Stay*	24.7 years	5.3 years	1.1 years

***For all residents currently admitted.**

As of December 29, 2025, the SSLCs have served 2,653 individuals in fiscal year 2026 with an average monthly census of 2,604 residents.

State Hospitals

Texans Served

Table 2: The percentage of each population served and average length of stay in fiscal year 2026.

Fiscal Year 2026	Adult Civil Commitments	Adult Forensic Patients	Child/Adolescent Patients
Percent of population served:	20.8%	71.4%	7.8%

Fiscal Year 2026	Adult Civil Commitments	Adult Forensic Patients	Child/Adolescent Patients
Average Length of Stay:	101.2 days	222.2 days	82.7 days

As of December 29, 2025, the state hospitals have served 2,871 individuals in fiscal year 2026 with an average daily census of 1,938 patients.

Co-Occurring Psychiatric and Substance Disorder Program at Kerrville State Hospital

The Co-Occurring Psychiatric and Substance Disorder (COPSD) program at Kerrville State Hospital provides specialized support for individuals with a history or current challenges related to substance use. Through COPSD, individuals have access to a wide range of therapeutic interventions designed to meet them where they are, promote sobriety during hospitalization, and build the skills and resources necessary to maintain recovery after discharge. By combining structured education, individualized support, and opportunities for real-world recovery practice, Kerrville State Hospital's COPSD program helps strengthen sobriety and supports individuals in their journey toward long-term wellness.

Family Resources & Eligibility Services

Access and Eligibility Services

Lone Star Card—Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Security

HHSC takes the security of clients' benefits very seriously. Anyone who believes their Lone Star Card has been stolen or compromised can find instructions on how to report it on the HHSC website at: [Lone Star Card FAQ | Texas Health and Human Services](#)

As a reminder, HHSC offers tools through the Your Texas Benefits website and mobile app that allow clients to monitor their card transactions, change their PIN, and lock their card between purchases. This includes the ability to freeze, unfreeze or cancel and replace a potentially compromised card by calling the Lone Star Card Help Desk or on the Your Texas Benefits mobile app. The ability to freeze and unfreeze a card via the mobile app has been available to clients since February 2023. HHSC is dedicated to the improvement of Lone Star Card security and continues to research new technology and innovative ways to protect clients. HHSC advises clients to be proactive about preventing fraud on their Lone Star Card.

Client tips about how to protect themselves from fraud are available on the HHSC website at: [Lone Star Card Fraud Awareness and Prevention](#).

SNAP benefits stolen due to fraud (skimming or cloning, for example) on or after Dec. 21, 2024, cannot be replaced due to the expiration of federal funding. Anyone who believes their SNAP benefits have been stolen or that their EBT card (Lone Star card) has been compromised, are encouraged to take action, contact the Lone Star Card Help Desk at (800) 777-7328 to cancel the card. A new card should arrive in the mail within seven days. To learn more about how to report fraud, waste, or abuse, visit the [Office of Inspector General website](#).

Family Health Services

Child Disability Prevention

Child Disability Prevention, formerly the Office of Disability Prevention for Children, shifted its focus to more closely align with current agency structure and objectives. This refocusing of efforts allows Child Disability Prevention to serve Texas children and their families in the following areas: Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Protective and Compensatory Experiences; congenital infections; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD); and prematurity and low birthweight.

HHSC included the following in its [Sunset Evaluation Report](#): The HHS System has undergone two major transformations addressing mental health, disability services, and improving birth outcomes for children. Additionally, DSHS and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) established child injury prevention initiatives. The result of these changes is a duplication of some of Child Disability Prevention's previous activities. To avoid this duplication of effort, Family Health Services (FHS) Strategy made the prevention of disabilities caused by maternal health issues during pregnancy the top priority.

In October 2025, the Child Disability Prevention Program Specialist presented "From Trauma to Triumph: Community Actions that Make a Difference" for the HHS Community Service Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma-Informed Care Conference. Child Disability Prevention continues to promote cross-agency coordination through participation in several child disability related workgroups, including DSHS' Children with Special Health Care Needs Systems Development Group, and the TEA's Unified Services for All Children. In January 2026, the program initiated new data analysis projects related to Hyperemesis Gravidarum

and FASD to support future efforts, such as raising public awareness of these conditions.

Early Childhood Intervention Services

Early Intervention Specialist Credentialing

In December 2025, the Texas HHSC Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program introduced a new pathway for professionals seeking the early intervention specialist (EIS) credential. In accordance with Sections 55.004 and 55.0041 of the Texas Occupations Code, amended by House Bill 5629, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, HHSC ECI implemented procedures to grant the EIS credential to military service members, veterans, and spouses who possess a current out-of-state license with a scope of practice similar to the EIS credential.

Guidance Document Regarding Early Childhood Intervention Eligibility for Children Under 3 who are Deaf of Hard of Hearing or Have a Visual Impairment

HHSC ECI and the TEA collaborated to develop a guidance document for ECI providers and local educational agency (LEA) staff related to ECI eligibility, enrollment, and referrals for children under 3 who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) or have a visual impairment (VI). Additionally, ECI provided a joint webinar with TEA staff in January 2026 for ECI providers to review and provide clarification of the guidance.

Updated Memorandum of Understanding Between HHSC ECI and TEA

HHSC ECI and TEA have executed a new [memorandum of understanding](#) (MOU).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires the MOU between HHSC ECI and TEA, and the MOU addresses:

- The roles and responsibilities between HHSC ECI and TEA for birth to 3 services, including the required steps and services and the required ECI and LEA team members.
- The transition process for children turning 3 and exiting the ECI program.
- Referral and child find responsibilities for birth to 3, including specific responsibilities pertaining to children who are DHH, are deafblind, or have a VI.

In the MOU update, HHSC ECI and TEA clarified the ECI eligibility requirements for children who are DHH and have a VI to align with TEA's Texas Administrative Code amendments that took effect July 30, 2024. These rule amendments aligned ECI's and TEA's responsibilities related to children who are DHH or have a VI with the "Early Childhood Intervention and Texas Education Agency Joint Guidance on Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or Have a Visual Impairment" document. Additionally, HHSC ECI clarified that with parental consent, the child's ECI enrollment date must be sent to the child's LEA during the child's transition process.

Early Childhood Intervention Family Stories Project

The ECI Family Stories Project aims to collect and share real-life success stories from families who benefited from ECI services. These personal stories help inspire other families to get services for their children and educate stakeholders to better understand the positive impact of the ECI program on families. Families have shared incredibly powerful stories about the difference ECI made in their lives, and HHSC ECI has been able to share them via webinars, presentations, and newsletter articles. For example, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired highlighted the ECI Family Stories Project in their latest TX SenseAbilities newsletter. If you know a family that may be interested in participating in the project, please contact Gaby Lopez at gabriella.lopez01@hhs.texas.gov for more information.

Family Support Services Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program

Future Planning Training

On March 10th, 12 Blind Children's Program (BCP) families completed the final session of a 5-part training series on future planning hosted by BCP in collaboration with The Arc of Texas. Future planning 101, an introduction to planning for a bright future ahead, is a 5-part virtual training series available to families of children enrolled in BCP. The training provides parents/guardians support in planning for their child's future and includes topics related to building community, employment, guardianship, financing the future and supporting daily and major life decisions. BCP plans to schedule additional training dates.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program

The Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) continues to maintain a processing turnaround time of up to 30 days. DHHS Training and Education program is currently offering STAP quarterly webinars about the application and equipment exchange process.

Email dhhs.training@hhs.texas.gov for more information and register for DHHS training announcements using the link below to stay informed about future opportunities. [Subscribe to BEI\(HHSC\) and DHHS \(Health and Wellness\) Announcements](#)

Program Updates on People Served

The table below 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. Data is quarterly, unless otherwise noted. 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	Program Impact
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	By the end of the first quarter of FY 2026, ADRCs statewide conducted 39,436 client interactions
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	For the FY2026 first quarter, 74,288 people received 2,767,209 meals through the congregate and home-delivered meals programs, and 4,518 people received 143,457 trips.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	Program Impact
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	For the first quarter in FY 2026, 953 people received screening and 45 people received treatment services.
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	For the first quarter in FY 2026, 282 people were served.
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	For the first quarter in FY 2026, 883 people were served.
Community Attendant Services (CAS)	Community Attendant Services (CAS) offers non-technical, non-skilled, in-home attendant services to people with an approved medical need for assistance with personal care tasks.	Community Attendant Services (CAS) Texas Health and Human Services	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 71,486 people were served.
Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services (CMPAS) Title XX	A CMPAS licensed agency offers personal assistance services to people 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. Participants interview, select, train, supervise, and release their personal assistants.	Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services (CMPAS) Texas Health and Human Services	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 324 people were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	Program Impact
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	During the second quarter of FY 2026, the program served 304 people
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	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 4,452 people 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	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 318 Foster Grandparent Program volunteers served 92,897 hours.
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	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 20,351 people were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	Program Impact
IDD Crisis Intervention and Crisis Respite Services	HHSC has funding totaling \$28 million, per biennium, towards the provision of crisis intervention and crisis respite services. Currently all 39 local IDD authorities (LIDDAs) provide crisis intervention and crisis respite support to people who have IDD and may have behavioral health or mental health support needs to maintain independent lives in the community, free from institutionalization.	n/a	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 1,185 people were served.
LIDDA Enhanced Community Coordination (ECC)	LIDDA ECC coordinators provide intense monitoring and flexible support to ensure participants' success in the community. The ECC 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	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 970 people were served.
Independent Living Services (ILS)	Designed to promote the independence, integration, and inclusion of people with significant disabilities into society, the ILS Program provides short-term services to enable independent living by consumers wanting to avoid placement in an institution.	Independent Living Services Texas Health and Human Services	For the first two quarters of FY 2026, there were 2,126 people served in the purchased services grant and 3,872 people served through the base grant.
Outpatient Biopsychosocial Interventions	The 86th Legislature allocated \$3.0 million for IDD Outpatient Mental Health clinics to enhance the services available for people with IDD and mental health needs. This funding established the Outpatient Biopsychosocial Interventions program. HHSC contracts with five LIDDAs to provide biopsychosocial assessments, collaborative care case management, skills training and educational opportunities to participants of the program, their support system, and community providers.	n/a	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 160 people were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	Program Impact
Primary Home Care (PHC)	PHC offers nontechnical, non-skilled, in-home attendant services to people 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	For the first quarter of FY 2026, 1,182 people were served.
Texas 2-1-1/Texas Information and Referral Network (2-1-1 TIRN)	Helps Texans connect with the services they need. A participant 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)	For the first quarter of FY 2026: 331,470 callers were served, and 5,023 online chats were answered.
LIDDA Transition Support Teams (TSTs)	TSTs provide support to people or diverting 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 people 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	For the first quarter of FY 2026, the TSTs provided: 175 educational opportunities with 1,879 people in attendance. 955 opportunities for technical assistance were provided to 1,258 recipients. 715 peer reviews/case consultations were provided to 1,955 recipients.

HHSC System Level Updates

Substantial Policy, Key Personnel, or Organizational Changes

On April 1, HHSC implemented a thoughtful realignment of some functions at the agency, with the goal to make it easier to work together as one team, respond more effectively, and provide the best possible service to our clients.

As part of this change, the new structure will focus on the core functions:

- Medicaid & CHIP Services, Emily Zalkovsky, Chief
- Behavioral Health, Disability and Aging Services, Jordan Dixon, Chief
- Family Resources and Eligibility Services, Molly Regan, Chief
- Regulatory Services, David Kostroun, Chief

The Office of Strategic Integration will align efforts on system priorities and better connect work happening across the agency by bringing together data, planning, and major initiatives. With these changes, HHSC is better positioned to serve Texans effectively and consistently.

HHSC is also reinforcing accountability and fiscal responsibility by combining some administrative support areas under the Chief Financial and Operating Office.

[Texas Health and Human Services Organization Chart](#)

Health and Human Services Commission 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 2025-2029-Part I](#)

[HHSC Strategic Plan for 2025-2029-Part II](#)

Publications, Meetings and Proposed Rules

Advisory Committee Meetings

All Health and Human Services (HHS) advisory committee meetings continue to be held in virtual or hybrid formats. 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.

Americans with Disabilities Act Information and contacts

Electronic and Information Resources Accessibility Coordinator for Health and Human Services Commission

Crystal M. Gonzales is the Accessibility Coordinator for HHS and can be reached at: accessibility@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Title II Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator for Health and Human Services Commission

The Director of the HHSC Civil Rights Office, Dana Hess, is the ADA Coordinator and can be reached at: HHSCivilRightsOffice@hhsc.state.tx.us

The HHSC Civil Rights Office processes reasonable accommodation requests (RAR's) and investigates discrimination complaints on behalf of HHS. Information about contacting the HHSC Civil Rights Office and filing a discrimination complaint or

requesting an accommodation are available at the following link: [Your Rights | Texas Health and Human Services](#)

Ombudsman Office information and Contacts

Ombudsman offices and contact information					
Foster Care Ombudsman	Ombudsman for Behavioral Health	Ombudsman Managed Care Assistance Team	IDD Ombudsman	Ombudsman Complaint Services (OCS) & Specialized Ombudsman Services (SOS)	Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
<p>We help foster youth (up to their 18th birthday) with inquiries and complaints about Department of Family and Protective Services and HHS programs such as Child Protective Services, Community-Based Care, and Residential Child Care Regulation.</p> <p>Toll Free: 844-286-0769 hhs.texas.gov/foster-care-help</p>	<p>We help patients at state hospitals and those receiving services from a local mental health authority (LMHA). We also work with anyone needing access to behavioral health care through a health plan.</p> <p>Toll Free: 800-252-8154 hhs.texas.gov/behavioral-health-help</p>	<p>We help Medicaid health plan members access care by investigating complaints, helping them navigate the managed care system, understand their coverage and appeal rights, and teaching them how to advocate for themselves.</p> <p>Toll Free: 866-566-8989 hhs.texas.gov/managed-care-help</p>	<p>We help people with intellectual or developmental disabilities with services under the Home and Community based Services (HCS) program, the Texas Home Living (TxHmL) program or a local IDD authority (LIDDA).</p> <p>Toll Free: 800-252-8154 hhs.texas.gov/idd-help</p>	<p>We work with anyone with questions or concerns about a Texas HHS program. We help address complaints after a consumer has tried to work with program staff but still have concerns.</p> <p>Toll Free: 877-787-8999 hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman</p>	<p>We visit assisted living and nursing facilities to advocate for residents' rights and protect their quality of care. When you call us, you will be asked to enter your zip code so you can be routed to staff in your local area.</p> <p>Toll Free: 800-252-2412 mailto:lrc.ombudsman@hhsc.texas.gov</p>

Examples of when to contact each office

Foster Care Ombudsman	Ombudsman for Behavioral Health	Ombudsman Managed Care Assistance Team	IDD Ombudsman	Ombudsman Complaint Services (OCS) & Specialized Ombudsman Services (SOS)	Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not able to reach caseworker by phone • Not allowed to visit or contact persons outside of the foster care system • Not receiving personal documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights violations, such as unable to get an appointment at the clinic or treated unfairly • Health insurance parity for mental health or substance use disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to an in-network provider (non-PCP) • Case information error • Difficulty filling or refilling a prescription • Access to durable medical equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violation of a person's rights • Difficulty receiving services • Financial issues • Wanting to exercise the same rights as other Texans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility application not processed on time • Denial of eligibility application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case error • Benefits not issued or incorrect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about resident rights • Concerns about physical and other therapies • Problems with food and inadequate facility staffing

Referrals to Other Areas

Adults concerned about children or youth in foster care are directed to the DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs at 800-720-7777 . Reports about abuse or neglect are directed to the Texas Abuse Hotline at 800-252-5400 .	Concerns about a substance use disorder, chemical dependency or a narcotic or opioid treatment facility, are referred to Regulatory Services at 800-973-0022 , Option 8.	Providers' complaints are referred to Managed Care Compliance and Operations (MCCO) or TMHP. Email: HPM.Complaints@hhsc.state.tx.us .	Complaints about ICFIIDs (Intermediate Care Facilities for people with Developmental Disabilities) are referred to Regulatory Complaint and Incident Intake at 800-458-9858 , Option 1, and Option 3 to complain about an ICF-IDD facility or state supported living center.	Concerns about discrimination are referred to Civil Rights at 888-388-6332 . Employee calls regarding questions about personnel issues are referred to Human Resources at 737-867-8691 .	Allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation, are also referred to the Complaint and Incident Intake at 800-458-9858 or ciicomplaints@hhsc.state.tx.us .
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