

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION



Exofficio Report to Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

October 2022

Clair Benitez, Exofficio Representative to the GCPD

Director, Office of Disability Services Coordination

[Clair.Benitez@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:Clair.Benitez@hhs.texas.gov)

For questions about information in this report, contact  
[HHSCOfficeofDisabilityServicesCoordination@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:HHSCOfficeofDisabilityServicesCoordination@hhs.texas.gov)

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Renewal of Determination That A Public Health Emergency Exists.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Texercise Nourish.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>White Cane Day .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Early Childhood Intervention .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Building Skills with Vocational Services .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Community-based Apprenticeship Program.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Individualized Skills and Socialization .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Community Attendant Survey Live through October 7, 2022.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Money Follows the Person Demonstration Projects .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Follow-Up from Previous GCPD Meeting .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>HCBS Settings and Intentional Communities .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Durable Medical Equipment and Precautionary Power Options.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Rider 83 Highlight .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Senate Bill 968 Implementation.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Senate Bill 50 Implementation.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>HHS Program Level Updates .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Access and Eligibility Services (AES).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Aging Services Coordination (ASC).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Health, Developmental and Independence Services (HDIS) .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Health Specialty Care System (HSCS).....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Intellectual, Developmental Disability &amp; Behavioral Health Services (IDD-BHS). .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Chief Medicaid/CHIP Services Office (CMCSO) .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Office of Disability Services Coordination (ODSC).....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Program Updates on People Served .....</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>HHS System Level Updates .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Substantial Policy, Key Personnel, or Organizational Changes .....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>HHS Strategic Plan .....</i>	<i>27</i>

## Executive Summary

### Renewal of Determination That A Public Health Emergency Exists

---

Because of the continued consequences of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services, [renewed the Public Health Emergency](#) on July 15, 2022, with a new expiration date in October 2022. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is working closely with state and federal partners to ensure essential services continue while ensuring service delivery stays within state and local guidelines for COVID-19.

In January 2021, Acting Secretary Cochran indicated to governors that HHS will provide states with 60 days notice prior to the termination of the public health emergency declaration for COVID-19.

HHSC has a website dedicated to COVID-19 information, including information about the end of continuous Medicaid coverage:

- [HHSC COVID-19 Communications](#)
- [HHSC End of Continuous Medicaid Coverage Ambassador Toolkit](#)

### Texercise Nourish

---

March 10, 2022, ASC launched Texercise Nourish – a free, 12-week nutrition education program for adults 45 and older - to bring groups together (in-person or virtually) once a week to learn about, and engage in, healthy eating for healthy aging. The Nourish Coordinator Kit provides program coordinators with everything needed to host the program including an easy step-by-step guide.

To support participants in adopting healthy eating behaviors, Texercise Nourish provides:

- *Reinforcement items* – portion plates, reusable grocery bags, t-shirts, and more
- *Educational materials* – Nourish handbook, fact sheets and the Take Charge Challenge sheet

### White Cane Day

---

On Wednesday, October 12, 2022, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) are hosting the 20th anniversary of Austin's White Cane Day celebration.

Each year, the Austin community comes together at the TSBVI campus located at 1100 W. 45th Street for a celebratory White Cane Day event to acknowledge the abilities of people who are blind and visually impaired and to promote equal opportunities.

A hybrid event is planned for those unable to attend in person by watching the webcast portion of the October 12, 2022, event. The link will be posted on the White Cane Day [webpage](#). Check the website for more information and the link to view the event closer to the event date. Additional White Cane Day events throughout Texas can be found further in the report including Mission, El Paso, Houston, Laredo, San Antonio, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Wichita Falls.

### **Early Childhood Intervention**

---

Texas received an annual performance determination of “meets requirements,” which is the highest determination available, from the federal Office of Special Education Programs, including 14 out of 14 possible points (100 percent) on the compliance components.

In September 2022, the HHSC Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) office kicked off the Series for Meaningful Interagency Learning and Education (SMILE) sessions. To help strengthen the ECI program and its partnerships, the HHSC ECI office is offering SMILE sessions on the fourth Wednesday of each month. SMILE sessions will be one-hour live webinars that will provide an opportunity to learn about other programs, resources, and projects that will inform and equip ECI personnel to better serve the families they work with. Each SMILE session will include an introduction to a different interagency partner, a brief presentation, and time for questions and answers. All SMILE sessions will be recorded. The recording and any accompanying handouts will be posted on the ECI Archived Webinars site for those unable to attend.

### **Building Skills with Vocational Services**

---

Lubbock State Supported Living Center has expanded vocational services for residents, providing a variety of paid work options to increase interest and engagement. Vocational work at the SSLCs facilitate socialization, expand areas of interest, build confidence, provide opportunities for decision-making and problem-solving, and prepare residents for transitioning into the community workforce. With the supervision and support of facility staff, Lubbock SSLC residents have the option of outdoor or indoor vocational jobs such as camps and patio cleanup or packaging customized t-shirts. The most popular jobs are baking hand-crafted dog treats and using a machine to fill gravel bags that are used by local companies,

both of which allow the residents to see how their work benefits those in the community. Through the expansion of vocational work options, participation has increased 50 percent.

### **Community-based Apprenticeship Program**

---

The Vocational Apprenticeship Program serves people with IDD and those with mental health conditions living in Texas by offering opportunities for vocational training in a supported integrated environment. The program provides both classroom education and work experience by embedding apprentices in a real and practical work environment.

Apprentices gain competitive skills in a real work environment, which facilitates teaching and learning through feedback. The Vocational Apprenticeship Program provides the apprentice an opportunity to earn while they learn essential job skills. Apprentices also learn life skills in a classroom that increase their employability.

### **Individualized Skills and Socialization**

---

Day habilitation is a service in the Home and Community-based Services (HCS), Texas Home Living (TxHmL) and Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Programs. HHSC has determined that day habilitation does not meet the requirements of the HCBS Settings Rule. HHSC will replace day habilitation with a new, fully compliant service called individualized skills and socialization prior to March 17, 2023. HHSC will conduct an in-person public hearing to receive public comment on proposed Medicaid payment rates from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on October 11, 2022.

### **Community Attendant Survey Live through October 7, 2022**

---

The [community attendant survey](#) includes questions about demographics, workplace perceptions, experience during COVID-19, professional development, and current challenges or barriers for the workforce. ODSC invites community attendants, personal care attendants, personal care aides, and direct service workers to complete the survey. English and Spanish options are available. It takes approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and will now close on October 7, 2022.

### **Money Follows the Person Demonstration Projects**

---

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded Texas over \$25 million in May 2022 for activities designed to help people transition from institutional settings to community-based settings. Funding will support 23 different projects that address this goal.

One of the projects funded under Money Follows the Person (MFP) helps residents of State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs) transition to community-based settings. MFP funds support 14 transition specialists, and one transition specialist coordinator to implement this program. Transition specialists provide SSLC residents with information on available community supports and services, identify obstacles to community transition and initialize programming to overcome such obstacles. They also assist with monitoring and assessing people as they relocate to a community setting for 12 months after they move, to ensure their needs are met.

## **Follow-Up from Previous GCPD Meeting**

### **HCBS Settings and Intentional Communities**

---

HCBS federal settings rule still taking comments about intentional communities via the formal rule comment process on #21R058: Home and Community-based Services Program. [Public comment period](#) is open until October 17, 2022.

### **Durable Medical Equipment and Precautionary Power Options**

---

HHSC is aware that certain medical equipment is at higher risk of being damaged or destroyed in an environmental emergency. Based on feedback received from the GCPD during the May 20 discussion, HHSC continues to work to clarify and streamline durable medical equipment policy during public health emergencies and disasters.

### **Rider 83 Highlight**

---

In accordance with the [2022-23 General Appropriations Act, Senate Bill 1, 87th Legislature, Regular Session \(2021\)](#), HHSC is required to submit an annual report on the Independent Living Services (ILS) Program. The report is located on the reports page at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/regulations/reports-presentations>. The FY2022 annual report will be published by December 31, 2022.

Additionally, HHSC is required to conduct a study of the ILS program. The program identified a vendor to assist with distribution of a survey to stakeholders to address the study parameters directly listed in the rider.

The survey was distributed in May 2022. Over 600 responses were received, and a 50 percent response rate was realized for targeted stakeholders. The input received will be utilized for the study development currently in progress. The study will be published by December 1, 2022.

## **Senate Bill 968 Implementation**

---

[87\(R\) S.B. 968, Subchapter J](#) requires wellness checks for medically fragile individuals during certain emergencies. According to the legislation, the definition of "Medically fragile individual" in this situation means any individual who, during a time of disaster or emergency, would be particularly vulnerable because of a medical condition, including individuals:

- (A) with Alzheimer's disease and other related disorders;
- (B) receiving dialysis services;
- (C) who are diagnosed with a debilitating chronic illness;
- (D) who are dependent on oxygen treatment; and
- (E) who have medical conditions that require 24-hour supervision from a skilled nurse.

The Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) is the lead agency and last met with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) in December to discuss bill implementation. HHSC will report out more information as new updates are available.

## **Senate Bill 50 Implementation**

---

87(R) S.B. 50 is focused on competitive and integrated employment for certain Medicaid recipients in the HCS/TxHmL, CLASS, DBMD, and STAR+PLUS HCBS waiver programs. The bill requires development of a uniform assessment tool and identification of strategies that can increase utilization of Medicaid waiver employment services or employment services from the Texas Workforce Commission. HHSC has developed draft rules that are expected to be posted for public comment in 2023. HHSC is also working to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and other data sharing agreements needed for implementation. A new Employment First Uniform Assessment Tool will be added to Medicaid waiver program handbooks and will be posted on the HHS website by Fall 2022. HHSC will be releasing a provider information letter and MCO notice to inform them of the upcoming mandated use of the assessment tool. The first legislative report about S.B. 50 will be submitted to the legislature by December 31, 2024.

## HHS Program Level Updates

### **Access and Eligibility Services (AES)**

---

#### Navigator2022 Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) Conference

In August 2022, HHSC hosted the 2022 MIPPA Benefits Counseling Conference and Training to support the Area Agencies on Aging and Aging and Disability Resource Centers. Participants heard presentations on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Preventing Medicare Fraud. In addition, breakout groups were hosted to assist in identifying current needs and trends.

### **Aging Services Coordination (ASC)**

---

#### Aging Texas Well (ATW)

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](#), HHS is directed to identify and discuss policy issues, guide state government readiness, and promote increased community preparedness for an aging population through ATW. The order also created the ATW Advisory Committee which is comprised of stakeholders and experts in the field of aging who advise HHS and make recommendations to state leadership on implementation of ATW. The next quarterly ATWAC meeting is August 3, 2022. To comply with the Open Meetings Act requirements and allow for COVID safety measures, meetings are now conducted in hybrid format to allow for both in-person and virtual attendance. Information about how to access ATWAC meetings can be found on the HHSC website.

#### Age Well Live Well (AWLW)

ASC is in the second year of an AmeriCorps VISTA Project that strengthens HHSC cross-coordination among offices serving older adults, improves understanding of aging issues and needs, and increases capacity to provide services for older adults in Texas. The project includes VISTA Members in five offices across the agency. Two Member positions are located in the Office of Disability Services Coordination. These VISTA members assist their respective offices on a variety of projects such as capacity building, partnership development, and marketing efforts. Member recruitment is underway and three VISTA Members have been placed.



## Health, Developmental and Independence Services (HDIS)

---

### Blind and Visually Impaired

#### *Blind Children's Vocational Discovery & Development Program*

The Blind Children's Program (BCP) provides services to children and families to increase their overall independence and success. BCP supports families throughout their journey until they are confident and have the skills to thrive independently.

#### *White Cane Day events throughout Texas:*

- Mission
  - Saturday, October 1st
  - Noon–3 p.m.
  - 5th Annual Resources Fiesta for the Blind and Visually Impaired
  - City of Mission Parks and Recreation
  - 721 Bryan Road
  - Mission, TX 78572
- El Paso
  - Tuesday, October 11 and Wednesday, October 12
  - 10 a.m.–noon
  - [The University of Texas at El Paso](#), Tomas Rivera Conference Center
  - 2401 N. Oregon St.
  - El Paso, TX 79902
- Houston
  - Thursday, October 13
  - [Houston White Cane Safety Day](#)
  - 9:30 a.m. – Awareness March
  - 10 a.m.–noon – Program and Resource Fair
  - University of Houston Student Services Center South
  - 4455 University Drive
  - Houston, TX 77204
- Laredo
  - Friday, Oct. 14
  - 8 a.m.–noon
  - Laredo White Cane Day Event
  - Texas Workforce Solutions
  - 1406 Jacaman Road, Suite A
  - Laredo, TX 78041
- San Antonio

- Friday, Oct. 14
- 11 a.m.–noon
- [2022 White Cane Awareness Day](#)
- Beautify San Antonio Park
- 801–899 S. Main Ave.
- San Antonio, TX 78204
- Dallas/Fort Worth
  - Saturday, Oct. 15
  - 1–3 p.m.
  - [North Texas White Cane Safety Day](#)
  - 2201 West 7th St.
  - Fort Worth, TX 76107
- Wichita Falls
  - Friday, Oct. 21
  - 9:45 a.m.
  - [Annual White Cane Day walk and community picnic](#)
  - Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind
  - 300 7th St.
  - Wichita Falls, TX 76301

## 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 September 23, 2022. Updates were provided regarding new BEI staff and the rules project currently in progress. The next meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2023.

### Office of Disability Prevention for Children

The Office of Disability Prevention for Children (ODPC) works to prevent developmental disabilities and seeks to minimize the losses developmental disabilities cause, especially in infants and young children. ODPC prevents disabilities through provider and public education, partnership with other state agencies and stakeholders, and evaluating state efforts to prevent developmental disabilities. ODPC staff attend conferences and meetings to increase awareness of the program and to provide opportunities for collaboration.

During the reporting period, program staff hosted five statewide webinars: “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – Impacts Prevention and Support Strategies;” “How to

Keep Child Passengers Safe on the Road;" "Seizure Recognition and Seizure First Aid Certification Training;" "Introduction to Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs;" and "Keeping Kids Safe Around Medicine." A total of 2,470 providers, educators, health care professionals and parents, and caregivers attended the webinars.

Program staff operated ODPC exhibit tables at the Texas Parent to Parent Conference and the Austin Independent School District Back to School Event at Palmer Auditorium in Austin. Also, program staff exhibited and presented a session on injury prevention in infants and children at the Department of Family and Protective Services' Division of Prevention and Early Intervention Conference in Corpus Christi. More than 4,000 people attended all three events.

Between July and September, program staff and community volunteers prepared and distributed more than 8,000 pieces of education and public awareness materials to pediatricians, elementary school nurses, and other community stakeholders.

The Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) Advisory Council advises HHSC and the Legislature on research, diagnosis, treatment, and education related to PANS. ODPC supports the PANS Advisory Council as it addresses research, diagnosis, treatment, and education related to PANS throughout the state. During the reporting period, members created a mandated annual legislative report that was submitted to the Office of the Governor on Sept. 1.

The latest PANS meeting was held on August 10, and a meeting archive can be accessed at this link: <https://texashhsc.new.swagit.com/videos/178649>. The next PANS Council meeting is scheduled for November 19. Future meeting dates and more information about the PANS Council can be found at this link on the [PANS Advisory Committee webpage](#).

## Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI)

### *Social Media Awareness*

The ECI state office has launched a fiscal year 2023 social media awareness campaign designed to raise awareness of ECI services and when to make a referral, strengthen staff recruitment outreach, and highlight partners and the resources they provide families.

HHSC ECI's outreach team is collaborating with HHSC social media staff to implement this campaign. HHSC uses the following social media platforms:

- Facebook

- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

HHSC ECI has committed to post ECI messages monthly for FY 2023 and coordinated the first posting, which can be found on the [HHSC Facebook page](#). The ECI state office will also coordinate social media efforts with some of our partners who have pledged their support in pushing our messages out to their networks via their platforms.

#### *Partnership with Texas Workforce Commission*

ECI executed an interagency contract with TWC to receive American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from TWC for initiatives designed to strengthen partnerships between ECI and childcare centers, including projects to:

- Create and provide training to childcare personnel on topics such as early brain development; typical child development and developmental red flags; strategies for discussing developmental concerns with parents; developing inclusion plans and strategies for creating an inclusive classroom.
- Host four regional conferences for ECI personnel, childcare center staff, and TWC staff.
- Fund 100 ECI personnel and 100 TWC personnel to receive train-the-trainer training on developmental screening tools.
- Support ECI practitioners to gain intensive training to strengthen their ability to support childcare center staff around children's social-emotional needs.

#### *Independent Living Services (ILS)*

The ILS Program helps people with disabilities achieve greater independence in the home and community. HHSC contracts with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to provide independent living services statewide. Counseling to help with adjusting to a disability, orientation and mobility to learn how to navigate without vision, assistive technology, and vehicle modifications are just a few examples of services CILs can provide through the ILS program. There are 27 CILs in Texas. All CILs are open and providing independent living services virtually or in person.

#### *American Rescue Plan Act*

In January 2022, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) announced the ARPA funding to expand the public health workforce within the disability networks

funded by ACL such as the CILS. The eligible entity to receive a portion of this award is the designated state entity (DSE) for Part B Independent Living Services under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act. As the Texas DSE, HHSC accepted the ARPA funds.

As required in the [Federal Register](#), contracts will be processed and executed for use of these funds with the Texas CILs that currently receive Part B funds, the Texas State Independent Living Council (SILC), both or other viable options. HHSC received the Notice of Award from ACL on March 9, 2022, in the amount of \$121,081.

HHSC requested input on how the ARPA funds should be distributed via a survey to the Texas CILs that currently receive Part B funds and the Texas SILC. The unanimous decision was to award the ARPA funds to the Texas SILC.

HHSC will award the ARPA funds to the Texas SILC via contract with terms that include all funding requirements and grantee plan of activities. The SILC accepted the allocation of these funds during the June 17, 2022, SILC public meeting. HHSC has finalized the contract with the SILC to expand the public health workforce.

## **Health Specialty Care System (HSCS)**

---

### [State Supported Living Centers \(SSLC\)](#)

#### [\*Leveraging Community Outings and Support\*](#)

Attendance at the Space Cowboy's baseball games is a regular occurrence for Richmond State Supported Living Center residents during baseball season. Residents take turns attending two to four games each month. As they take in the game and enjoy the atmosphere, the baseball games allow the residents to feel a sense of community, promote socialization, and create memories.

#### [\*Direct Support Professional Recognition Week\*](#)

Although their dedication and talent is recognized and appreciated daily, HSCS officially celebrated the state supported living center's Direct Support Professionals during the week of September 11th. DSPs play a critical role in the care of SSLC residents and are foundational to effective facility operations. To honor the work of DSPs, facilities statewide planned and implemented special events throughout the week.

## State Hospitals

### *Austin State Hospital Dining Program*

Austin State Hospital has recently implemented a patient program that promotes engagement in treatment, as well as preparation for returning to the community. Each month a small group of patients are selected to enjoy a three-course dinner offered at the facility canteen. Facility staff prepare and serve the themed dinner, while the patients enjoy the event just as they would if they were at a community restaurant. For patients who have been in the hospital for extended periods of time, this program creates an opportunity to engage in social interactions with others and not lose sight of returning to the community. Although this patient dining experience is limited to once a month, the benefits of participating will have long-term affects for the patients during their hospital stay and once they transition into the community.

## **Intellectual, Developmental Disability & Behavioral Health Services (IDD-BHS)**

---

### *Employment First*

“Employment First” is an approach to facilitating the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Under this approach, integrated, competitive employment should be the first option considered for individuals with disabilities and should be the expected outcome of education and publicly funded services for working-age youth and adults. Individuals with disabilities are much less likely to have a job than individuals without disabilities.

### *Disability Inclusive Community*

The Disability Inclusive Community project is an initiative to assist people and communities in integrating a person with disabilities into all aspects of community life. A toolkit was developed to assist communities with initiation or improving the inclusiveness of all citizens, especially those with disabilities. Texas is an Employment First state, and the toolkit will address Texans with disabilities who may not be employed due to chronological age, degree of, physical or cognitive impairment, or a combination of disabilities. How they spend their day, how they would like to spend their day, and the community’s efforts to include these individuals will be the focus of the toolkit. HHSC is currently seeking funding to partner with LIDDAs that will facilitate the project on a local level.

### *Topic of the Month/Topic of the Quarter Webinars on Employment*

Building from prior Employment First Training events and lessons learned, HHSC will have a long-term, multiyear strategy to commence with the development of one-hour live webinars which will involve a “topic of the month or topic of the

quarter,” as determined by HHSC. Audience focus will be LIDDA staff involved in any facet of supporting Employment First, private providers, and others who may be interested in attending. This project will be a team effort with various curriculum developers involved dependent on the topic to be covered and will involve various presenters.

#### *Employment Recruitment Coordinator (ERC)*

The ERC assists in the implementation of the HHSC Supported Employment Initiative, conducting other activities as necessary to improve employment services for individuals with disabilities served by HHSC, and establishing employment related training to the direct service workers who work with these individuals. The ERC position is also responsible for networking and building relationships with employers across the state with the goal of increasing integrated employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and sharing Employment First principles with employers and service providers.

#### *Positive Behavior Management and Supports (PBMS) Workshops*

Texas HHSC has hosted PBMS workshops for the past thirteen years. The PBMS workshops are delivered by the University of North Texas Behavior Analysis Resource Center (BARC).

The workshops are designed to help attendees learn techniques for supporting positive behavior, including strategies and techniques for the prevention of problem behavior. Attendees from a variety of backgrounds and professions learn proactive approaches to establishing positive relationships with and supporting individuals who engage in challenging behavior. The sessions teach participants to use positive reinforcement to "tip the scales" toward adaptive and positive behavior and to prevent potentially harmful behaviors safely and effectively.

The workshops are offered in person and via Zoom.

#### *Electronic Tablet Job Coach Program*

This Electronic Tablet Job Coach program serves people with IDD and those with mental health challenges living in Texas by offering opportunities for vocational training in a supported environment. The Program combines electronic tablets and apps to assist job coaches in teaching the vocational skillsets needed to accomplish assigned task in the workplace. The app software selected will improve a person's success in new environments with emphasis during this program on the vocational setting.

Each participant will experience six months of working with a job coach and an electronic tablet with individual need-specific apps that enhances their learning of job skills. At the end of the six-month period, the participants are welcome to

continue accessing this job coaching service with their own tablet or smart phone. By enhancing workplace skills, this program benefits the participant, workplace, and community.

## **Chief Medicaid/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 (CFR) §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.

CMS has given states until March 17, 2023, to bring Medicaid programs into compliance with the HCBS Settings Rule.

### **Individualized Skills and Socialization**

Day habilitation is a service in the Home and Community-based Services (HCS), Texas Home Living (TxHmL) and Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Programs. HHSC has determined that day habilitation does not meet the requirements of the HCBS Settings Rule. HHSC will replace day habilitation with a new, fully compliant service called individualized skills and socialization prior to March 17, 2023. Draft program rules for individualized skills and socialization were posted for informal comment from December 17, 2021, to January 14, 2022. HHSC received many comments from providers and advocacy organizations. The rules were posted for the formal public comment period on July 29, 2022 and presented formally proposed during the August Medical Care Advisory Committee meeting. During the formal public comment period, a public hearing held on September 7, 2022, and the HHSC Executive Council meeting held August 18, 2022, HHSC received comments regarding the proposed rules from 84 commenters. HHSC is currently working to update the rules based on comments received. Provider-focused Individualized Skills and Socialization webinars were held on July 19, 2022, and August 22, 2022, and covered important aspects of the new individualized skills and socialization service. HHSC will conduct an in-person public hearing to receive public comment on proposed Medicaid payment rates from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on October 11, 2022.



## Statewide Transition Plan (STP)

CMS requires states to submit a transition plan describing their planned initiatives and activities to achieve compliance with the federal HCBS Settings Rule. The statewide transition plan (STP) provides assurances of compliance or sets forth the actions the state will take to bring HCBS programs into compliance with the HCBS Settings Rule. HHSC submitted revised versions of the STP to CMS in April 2022 and August 2022. HHSC is making additional revisions to the STP based on feedback from CMS and plans to resubmit the STP in October 2022.

## STAR+PLUS Pilot Program

House Bill 4533, 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, amends Texas Government Code Chapter 534 and directs development and implementation of a pilot through the STAR+PLUS Medicaid managed care program to test person-centered managed care strategies and improvements based on capitation. The STAR+PLUS Pilot Program (SP3) will test the managed care delivery of long-term services and supports (LTSS) for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), traumatic brain injury that occurred after age 21, or people with similar functional needs as a person with IDD.

The SP3 implementation is partially dependent on the operational start date for the STAR+PLUS program, currently under procurement. The current anticipated operational start date for STAR+PLUS is February 2024. HHSC is planning the SP3 implementation in phases.

Updated information on the STAR+PLUS procurement can be found here: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/contracting-hhs/procurement-opportunities>.

SP3's implementation will occur in three phases, and all phases include ongoing stakeholder collaboration. Examples of activities for each phase are provided below.

- Phase I is complete as of June 2022, and includes activities required to determine the SP3 design in collaboration with the IDD SRAC and SP3W, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). These activities include developing needs-based eligibility criteria and target groups; establishing possible service areas; selecting tools used for assessment and person-centered planning; developing the service array and service descriptions; exploring alternative payment methodologies; establishing roles and responsibilities for service coordination and providers; and modifying consumer directed services to increase access and use.

- Phase II identifies activities that will be complete by September 1, 2023, and includes finalizing policy, rules and seeking federal authority; conducting outreach and education for participants and providers; facilitating member selection of participating SP3 MCO(s); and performing readiness activities and system changes.
- Phase III identifies activities that will be complete by February 2024, including finalizing systems updates, completing trader partner testing and readiness; obtaining final CMS approval; and initiating assessment, service planning and service delivery for SP3 participants.

### Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Program

HHSC formed an external workgroup in April 2022 in response to concerns raised by current and former DBMD providers and families of people receiving DBMD services. The workgroup was convened after a DBMD provider voluntarily terminated their contract, impacting many families across the state. Work group meetings have now concluded and HHSC is evaluating recommendations made by the workgroup, which consisted of DBMD providers as well as advocates for the DBMD program.

The workgroup recommended policy changes to administratively simplify the contract and regulatory oversight of the waiver program, a targeted increase in certain rates and raising the current waiver cost cap. In 2019, HHSC raised service rates in the DBMD Program in response to concerns from providers and advocates and as a result, some individuals in the program exceeded the existing waiver cost cap. The external workgroup members stressed the need for HHSC to raise the waiver cost cap as they believe institutional costs have increased, but the waiver cost caps (which are based on institutional costs), have not been increased. HHSC is currently reviewing the workgroup recommendations.

### Office of Disability Services Coordination (ODSC)

---

#### Direct Service Workforce Surveys

ODSC released two surveys to gain insight into the needs of the community attendant workforce in Texas.

The [community attendant survey](#) includes questions about demographics, workplace perceptions, experience during COVID-19, professional development, and current challenges or barriers for the workforce. ODSC invites community attendants, personal care attendants, personal care aides, and direct service workers to complete the survey. English and Spanish options are available. It takes approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and will now close on October 7, 2022.

The second survey is targeted to the 28 local workforce development boards across Texas to how the boards are serving the needs of the community attendant workforce. The survey includes questions about the board's experience serving community attendants, resources or trainings provided, and observations of challenges or barriers for this workforce. This is a pre-survey with the post-survey occurring in 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
<b>Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)</b>	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.	<a href="#">Find an ADRC   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	June 2022 through August 2022, ADRCs assisted 15,754 callers.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
<b>Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)</b>	(AAAs) contracts 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.	<a href="#">Area Agencies on Aging Directory   HHS (texas.gov)</a>	June through August 2022 (State Fiscal Year Quarter 34) 74,767 people received over 3 million meals through the congregate and home-delivered meals programs. The transportation service provided 121,174 trips to 4,347 people.
<b>Blindness Education, Screening, and Treatment (BEST)</b>	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.	<a href="#">Blindness Education, Screening &amp; Treatment (BEST) Program   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	In fiscal year 2022, 99 people received beneficial treatment services to prevent blindness and screened the vision of 3,055 people through its contract with Prevent Blindness Texas, for a total number served of 3,154.
<b>Children's Autism Program (CAP)</b>	CAP 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.	<a href="#">Autism   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	As of August 2022, the CAP has provided services to 1,042 children in fiscal year 2022.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
<b>Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program</b>	<p>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.</p>	<p><a href="#">Children with Special Health Care Needs Program   Texas Health and Human Services</a></p>	<p>In July 2022, 190 children were moved from the waiting list and provided active coverage. This included 121 children listed as Priority 1 (Under Age 21, Urgent Need) who have no other available coverage.</p> <p>As of August 2022, there are 292 clients on the waiting list. The CSHCN Services Program has provided services to 1,506 clients in fiscal year 2022.</p>
<b>Community Attendant Services (CAS)</b>	<p>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.</p>	<p><a href="#">Community Attendant Services (CAS)   Texas Health and Human Services</a></p>	<p>As of May 31, 2022, 69,962 individuals were served.</p>

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
<b>Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services (CMPAS) Title XX</b>	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.	<a href="#">Consumer Managed Personal Attendant Services (CMPAS)   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	As of May 31,2022, 69,962 individuals were served.
<b>Deaf and Hard of Hearing Training and Education Program</b>	Training activities are provided for people who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as for their families, service providers, schools and institutions, employers, and government agencies. Training is offered throughout the year. 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.	<a href="#">Deaf &amp; Hard of Hearing   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	As of August 31, 2022, approximately 40 training events were offered with more than 2,600 attendees.
<b>Family Care (FC) Title XX</b>	FC offers a non-skilled, nontechnical attendant care service to eligible adults who are functionally limited in performing activities of daily living.	<a href="#">Family Care (FC)   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	As of May 31,2022, 4,790 individuals were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
<b>Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)</b>	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.	<a href="#">Foster Grandparent Volunteer Program   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	Between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, 255 Foster Grandparent volunteers mentored and tutored 8,807 exceptional needs children and youth throughout the eight HHSC administered service areas.
<b>Home Delivered Meals (HDM) Title XX</b>	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.	<a href="#">Home-Delivered Meals (HDM)   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	As of May 31, 2022, 19,862 individuals were served.
<b>Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Crisis Intervention and Crisis Respite Services</b>	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 June 1 through August 31, 2022:  1052 individuals received crisis intervention services; and  185 individuals received crisis respite services.



Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
<b>LIDDA Enhanced Community Coordination (ECC)</b>	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 June 1 through August 31, 2022, 620 individuals were served.
<b>IDD Outpatient Mental Health Clinics</b>	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 August 31, 2022, a total of 118 individuals were enrolled and served in the IDD community outpatient mental health services program. Since the inception of the program, a total of 232 individuals have been served.
<b>Primary Home Care (PHC)</b>	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.	<a href="#">Primary Home Care (PHC)   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	As of May 31, 2022, 1,468 individuals were served.

Program/Service	Description	Webpage	People Served
<b>Texas 2-1-1/Texas Information and Referral Network (2-1-1 TIRN)</b>	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.	<a href="https://211texas.org/">2-1-1 Texas   Texas Health And Human Services Commission (211texas.org)</a>	June 1, 2022, through August 31, 2022, over 681,275 callers were served. Additionally, 11,039 online chats were answered.
<b>Transition Support Teams (TSTs)</b>	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 give educational 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.	<a href="https://lidda.texas.gov/support-teams/">LIDDA Transition Support Teams   Texas Health and Human Services</a>	June 1 through August 31, 2022, the TSTs provided:  189 educational opportunities with 4,295 people in attendance.  584 opportunities for technical assistance with 3,323 people in attendance.  608 peer review/case consultations with 3,942 in attendance.

## HHS System Level Updates

### Substantial Policy, Key Personnel, or Organizational Changes

---

#### CPSO

The CPSO Realignment has a target completion date of November 1, 2022. As reported on in previous HHSC Ex-Officio reports, the realignment creates two new divisions within CPSO—the Family Health and Community Services Division.

- Dana McGrath will serve as the Associate Commissioner of Local Access and Support within the new Community Services Division.
- Faith Sandberg will serve as the Associate Commissioner of Family Clinical Services within the new Family Health Division.
- Anne McGonigle will serve as the Deputy Associate Commissioner of IDD and Preadmission Screening and Resident Review within the new Community Services Division.
- Michelle Principe will serve as the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator within ODSC.
- Larry Thomas will serve as the Operations and Policy Specialist within ODSC.
- Tracy Frederick will serve as the Direct Service Workforce Data Analyst within ODSC.

#### CMCSO

- Katherine Layman will serve as a Director of Program Policy.
- Kaili Hintz will serve as the LTSS Policy Unit Manager.
- Erica Nunn will serve as a Senior Advisor to the Director of Program Policy.
- McKenzie Sanchez will serve as the LTSS Policy Lead for HCS and TxHmL.

### HHS 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.

- [HHS Strategic Plans FY 2021-2025](#)

## 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](#)

## Publications, Meetings and Proposed Rules

---

### Reports & Presentations

Visit the [HHS Reports and Presentations](#) page for the latest list.

### Advisory Committee Meetings

All HHS advisory committee meetings resumed using virtual formats until further notice. For a full list of archived and upcoming committee hearings visit the [HHS Communications & Events page](#).

### Proposed Rules

Below is a list of proposed rules published in the *Texas Register*. The proposed rules published in the *Texas Register* are open for public comment until the end of the comment period. Information about HHSC rules is found at: [Health-Human-Services-Rulemaking and HHSC Rulemaking Public Comment](#)