



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

March 4, 2010

The Honorable Patrick Rose
Texas House of Representatives
Chair, House Human Services Committee
Post Office Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768-2910

Dear Chairman Rose:

The General Appropriations Act, 81st Legislature, Rider 65, requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to contract with an independent entity for an evaluation of community mental health crisis services. Attached please find the independent final evaluation report by Texas A&M University that examines the impact of the DSHS statewide initiative to redesign the community mental health crisis system. An initial evaluation report was submitted on January 1, 2009, in accordance with Rider 69 of the 80th Legislature. As required, the attached two-year evaluation includes an analysis of the implementation of the Crisis Redesign program and the impact of crisis services on clients, local communities, mental health and health care providers, and law enforcement.

Using a combination of visits to selected Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA), interviews with community partners (law enforcement officers, judges, and emergency room staff), statewide online surveys of key stakeholder groups, client satisfaction surveys of users of DSHS-funded community mental health crisis services, archival data analyses, and a return-on-investment study, the Texas A&M University evaluation team generated the following 10 findings on the impact of Crisis Redesign:

1. Crisis Redesign funds are being used as intended to improve local crisis infrastructure.
2. Since Crisis Redesign, more consumers of crisis services are being served than ever before, and they are more likely to receive treatment in a community setting.
3. Direct and measurable cost savings associated with crisis redesign more than cover the cost of the program, even while supporting a 24% increase in crisis episodes from 2007 to 2008.
4. Increased funding for crisis services alone is not sufficient. Parallel investment in ongoing routine services is also needed to prevent a crisis-driven mental health system.
5. Crisis hotline users remain generally pleased with the help received while users of other types of crisis services reported lower rates of satisfaction in 2009.
6. Changing characteristics of the population of crisis services users since Crisis Redesign may require an adaptive response from LMHAs if the needs of new crisis services consumers are to be met.

7. Community partners perceive some positive impacts of Crisis Redesign, but further improvements are needed.
8. Increasing numbers of crises continue to place burdens on law enforcement agencies and emergency rooms.
9. Communities with engaged and informed stakeholders seem to be implementing Crisis Redesign more effectively, although many communities continue to have difficulty collaborating with stakeholders.
10. Community partners must commit to resolve issues impacting the success of Crisis Redesign.

This evaluation by Texas A&M University points to several recommendations that support DSHS appropriations from the 81st Legislature, including continued support for Crisis Redesign and additional funding for transitional and ongoing intensive community mental health services.

Mike Maples, Assistant Commissioner, Division for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, is available to answer any questions you may have. He can be contacted at 512-206-5968 or Mike.Maples@dshs.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,



David L. Lakey, M.D.
Commissioner

Enclosure

Cc: Thomas Suehs, Executive Commissioner, Health and Human Services Commission



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March 4, 2010

The Honorable Jane Nelson
Texas Senate
Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Post Office Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Chairwoman Nelson:

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March 4, 2010

The Honorable Joe Strauss
Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives
Post Office Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Speaker Strauss:

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March 4, 2010

The Honorable David Dewhurst
Lieutenant Governor of Texas
Post Office Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst:

The General Appropriations Act, 81st Legislature, Rider 65, requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to contract with an independent entity for an evaluation of community mental health crisis services. Attached please find the independent final evaluation report by Texas A&M University that examines the impact of the DSHS statewide initiative to redesign the community mental health crisis system. An initial evaluation report was submitted on January 1, 2009, in accordance with Rider 69 of the 80th Legislature. As required, the attached two-year evaluation includes an analysis of the implementation of the Crisis Redesign program and the impact of crisis services on clients, local communities, mental health and health care providers, and law enforcement.

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March 4, 2010

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of Texas
Post Office Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Perry:

The General Appropriations Act, 81st Legislature, Rider 65, requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to contract with an independent entity for an evaluation of community mental health crisis services. Attached please find the independent final evaluation report by Texas A&M University that examines the impact of the DSHS statewide initiative to redesign the community mental health crisis system. An initial evaluation report was submitted on January 1, 2009, in accordance with Rider 69 of the 80th Legislature. As required, the attached two-year evaluation includes an analysis of the implementation of the Crisis Redesign program and the impact of crisis services on clients, local communities, mental health and health care providers, and law enforcement.

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March 4, 2010

The Honorable Lois Kolkhorst
Texas House of Representatives
Chair, House Public Health Committee
Post Office Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Chairwoman Kolkhorst:

The General Appropriations Act, 81st Legislature, Rider 65, requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to contract with an independent entity for an evaluation of community mental health crisis services. Attached please find the independent final evaluation report by Texas A&M University that examines the impact of the DSHS statewide initiative to redesign the community mental health crisis system. An initial evaluation report was submitted on January 1, 2009, in accordance with Rider 69 of the 80th Legislature. As required, the attached two-year evaluation includes an analysis of the implementation of the Crisis Redesign program and the impact of crisis services on clients, local communities, mental health and health care providers, and law enforcement.

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