



Report on Hill Country Crisis Stabilization Unit Pilot Project House Bill 654, 80th Legislature

Overview

House Bill 654, passed by the 80th Legislature, required the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to implement a crisis stabilization unit pilot project by establishing and operating a 16-bed crisis stabilization unit on the grounds of the Kerrville State Hospital. The bill specifies that DSHS must contract with the local mental health authority that serves the Hill Country area (Hill Country Community MHMR Center) to operate the crisis stabilization unit. According to the bill, DSHS shall ensure that the crisis stabilization unit provides short-term residential treatment, including medical and nursing services, designed to reduce a patient's acute symptoms of mental illness and prevent a patient's admission to an inpatient mental health facility. In addition, the bill requires a report that includes an analysis of the effectiveness of the pilot project and recommendations regarding the continuation or expansion of the pilot project.

The Kerrville State Hospital building identified for use by the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) requires significant rehabilitation and construction to comply with CSU licensing standards. Since construction and renovation is not expected to be completed until March 2009, DSHS cannot report on project implementation at this time.

Issues

- After the passage of HB 654, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Facility Support Services Maintenance and Construction staff prepared a cost estimate for renovating the Kerrville State Hospital building that was identified for use by the Hill Country MHMR Center. The renovations would bring the building up to a usable condition and to meet programmatic needs. Since the building would be utilized as a Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), it would have to meet the licensing standards for those units as defined in statute and rule. Meeting these standards added considerable cost to the building renovation.
- No funding had been requested or appropriated for the renovation of this building.
- A contingency rider for HB 654 (Article IX, Sec. 19.90, General Appropriations Act, 80th Legislature) appropriated \$500,000 for each year of the FY08-09 biennium to develop and operate the CSU.

Work to Date

This project is currently in the construction phase and the following actions have been taken:

- Bid documents were developed and bids were received on July 17, 2008.
- Contractor's qualifications were reviewed and the architect/engineering firm was recommended for the contract award.
- The construction contract with Zimmerman Construction was executed on September 15, 2008.
- The pre-construction conference was conducted on September 18, 2008.

- The start work date was September 29, 2008, and construction has been initiated:
 - Asbestos and lead based paint abatement phase is complete.
 - Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning work began November 3, 2008.
- The construction contract completion date is March 1, 2009.
- HHSC Maintenance and Construction has requested documentation from Hill Country MHMR Center on the entry road and fence they are to install.
- Kerrville State Hospital has begun developing contracts with Hill Country MHMR to provide food service, laundry service, lawn care and equipment rental to the Crisis Stabilization Unit. These contracts will include:
 - Identification of each contract area.
 - Specifics of each service to be provided and cost.
 - Any additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions that may be needed.
 - Any capital equipment needs that will be required.
- DSHS has developed a Statement of Work that addresses the CSU program services. This document is being revised based on the new timelines created by the delayed renovation. This document spells out all the programmatic requirements including service targets, performance measures and outcomes.

Hill Country MHMR Center Update

- Construction of wall studs, interior and exterior walls, and sheet rock should be completed in December 2008 and final construction is on schedule to be completed in March 2009.
- Positions for the CSU have been posted and advertised.
- Application for inspection of the facility has been forwarded to the Health and Human Services Commission for processing, with inspections anticipated to be completed in February 2009.
- Draft policies and procedures for facility operation will be completed by February 1, 2009.
- Furnishings and equipment to be installed once appropriate measurements are taken for all spaces; expected to be completed by March 1, 2009.
- HCMHMR is in conversation with several prospective key employees. Training for new employees should be completed by March 30, 2009, in anticipation of opening April 1, 2009.
- Two private foundations have given funding for this project, and two other potential funding sources are pending. The city of Kerrville has requested that the project apply for funds through their Economic Incentive Coalition.

Conclusion

An analysis of the effectiveness of the pilot project cannot be made at this time because the construction phase of the project has not been completed. Consequently, the actual implementation of the pilot project has not begun. Once the construction is completed and the program is implemented, the Statement of Work document will enable DSHS to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.