

Demand for behavioral health care surged during the pandemic. And the after-effects continue to unfold with increases in anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation among children and adults. While Texas has recognized the critical importance of a strong behavioral health infrastructure, behavioral health services unfortunately remain difficult to access for many Texans.

Like never before, behavioral health concerns have been pushed front and center – and **the time is now to make additional investments in behavioral health policies, hospitals, programs and workforce.**

The consequences of untreated mental health conditions are significant, ranging from drug overdoses, increases in violence, lost jobs, and poor physical health. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, **3,900 Texans died from suicide** and 750,000 adults had suicidal thoughts in 2020. Mental health conditions affect **one in five Texans** every year. And over **two-thirds of people with a behavioral health condition get no treatment** for that condition.

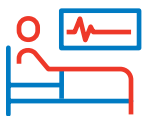
The Texas Hospital Association is committed to ensuring behavioral health is at the forefront of the agenda in local communities, statewide and in Washington, D.C. THA will continue to lay the groundwork for sound behavioral health care policy in the Texas Legislature.



Here are THA's top behavioral health priorities for the 88th Texas legislative session:



- Secure a federal waiver from the Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion rule, which would allow Texans aged 21-64 to be covered for Medicaid inpatient behavioral health stays longer than 15 days.



- Increase in general reimbursements for adults and pediatric inpatient psychiatric beds under Medicaid.

- Increase behavioral health hospital capacity by increasing contract beds and rates for state-contracted beds, both adult and pediatric.

- Mandate coverage in Medicaid for intensive outpatient therapy and partial hospitalization.

- Improve and increase hospital workforce by increasing funding to the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program.



- Streamline the detention warrant acquisition process through electronic warrant applications.

- Create a grant program for behavioral health providers who lack access to electronic medical records and interoperability technology.