



April 2, 2020

To our colleagues,

To fight the spread of COVID-19 and best protect the people we serve and our staff, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is pausing admissions at our state supported living centers. Our state hospitals will continue to take new patients at this time; however, we must manage admissions in a way that allows state hospitals to effectively respond to the outbreak.

We are experiencing the effect of COVID-19 at some of our facilities. Because of the spread of the virus, the SSLCs and the state hospitals must prepare appropriate isolation spaces for the people in our care to recover if they are infected.

We understand the community impact of this decision and do not take this action lightly. We have in place strict measures to limit access to our campuses and to screen and monitor our employees every day, and we must remain vigilant against further spread. This additional action is necessary to protect the health and safety of the people in our care and the people caring for them.

State Supported Living Centers

State supported living centers have significant populations who are medically fragile and at an extremely high-risk in the event of an outbreak. We will continue to accept inquiries and packets for future admissions, and those will be placed on a waiting list at this time. We will evaluate this plan at the end of April.

State Hospitals

Because of these unique challenges created by COVID-19, the state hospitals will need to create space to isolate patients. This means they cannot operate at full capacity. We will work closely with local mental health authorities to prioritize emergency civil admissions where there is no adequate community inpatient resource available, to ensure they will have access to the help they need. Priority will be given next to patients from our maximum-security units (MSU) in Vernon

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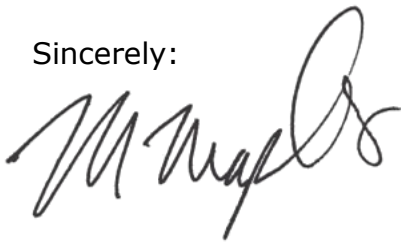
and Rusk to transfer to other state hospitals when the patients are determined to be not manifestly dangerous. This will help the MSUs make adequate space.

Having met these priorities, we will continue to admit local provider transfers and forensic patients as space and staffing allow. As always, we will continue to work to find the best placement for anyone who needs help, while maintaining the health and safety of those already in our care.

We will continue to evaluate our situation as the crisis evolves. Everything we do will be based on protecting the people we serve.

I know you all have your own unique challenges during this pandemic. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Maples". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Mike Maples, Deputy Executive Commissioner
Health and Specialty Care System