



TEJAS TALK

In this newsletter:

A Message From the CEO

Page 01

Inside Texas: National Suicide Prevention Hotline Program-988

Page 02

Member Center Highlight-Tropical Texas Behavioral Health

Page 03

Tejas Employee Highlight-Bobby Simmons

Page 04

The "Coaches Corner"- A Consumer's Journey

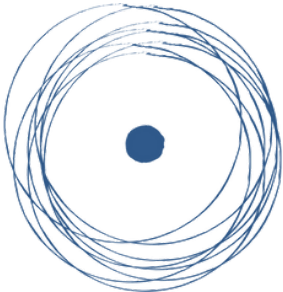
Page 05

Tejas Team & Events

Page 06

Tejas Member Centers

Page 07



TEJAS Health Management

Happy New Year! Everyone at Tejas, hopes each of you had a wonderful holiday season with your friends and loved ones. There is a lot to reflect on in the year of 2022. Tejas has gone through a tremendous amount of transition, and through your continued partnership and support, our team is stronger than ever and ready to take on the next year with renewed enthusiasm. With the launch of our newsletter, we've been able to connect more meaningfully with our members over the last year and, hopefully, provide insight into who we are and what we do for our members, the Community Mental Health Centers of Texas, and for those who receive services through our Healthy at Home program.

We will continue to focus on being the best support agency we can be, finding ways to positively impact our members and those they serve. From creating efficiencies in your daily work, to developing information technology solutions customized for Community Centers' needs, we are here to help.

In this issue, we highlight some of the impactful initiatives happening in our state and across the nation, related to suicide prevention and behavioral health services. We want to continue to shed light on successful programs, implemented by our members. Tropical Texas Behavioral Health has made tremendous strides in expanding their services and has built a robust housing program.

Also, we want to introduce you to Bobby Simmons, SmartCare Developer and Analyst. He's been with Tejas since June of 2021 and has brought immense value to the three Centers he works with. We thank him for his dedication and look forward to seeing him grow in his role.

We would love to hear from you. Please reach out with any thoughts on how we can better support you and any ideas you have for future newsletters.

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Hollie Chenault
CEO



-Inside Texas-

National Suicide Prevention Hotline-988

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, signed into law after the passage of bipartisan legislation in 2020, authorized 988 as a new three-digit number for suicide and mental health crisis support. All telephone service and text providers in the U.S. and the five major U.S. territories are required by the FCC to activate 988 no later than July 16.

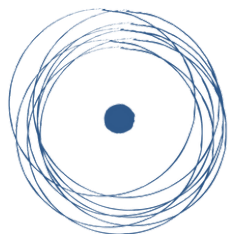
On Saturday, July 16, the U.S. will transition the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) to 988 - an easy-to-remember three-digit number for 24/7 crisis care. The lifeline, which also links to the Veterans Crisis Line, follows a three-year joint effort by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to put crisis care more in reach for people in need.

The U.S. had one death by suicide every 11 minutes in 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Suicide was the second leading cause of death for young people aged 10-14 and 25-34. From April 2020 to 2021, more than 100,000 people died from drug overdoses. Studies have shown that after speaking with a trained crisis counselor, most Lifeline callers are significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a network of more than 200 state and local call centers funded by HHS through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In 2021, the Lifeline received 3.6 million calls, chats, and texts. That number is expected to at least double within the first full year after the 988 transition.

HHSC contracts with four of the five NSPL centers: MHMR of Tarrant County, Emergence Health Network, The Harris Center, and Integral Care. While the Suicide and Crisis Center of North Texas (SCC) also answers calls for the National Suicide Prevention Line, HHSC does not have a formal contractual relationship with them. The Suicide and Crisis Center of N. Texas and HHSC continue to work collaboratively to address needs related to the NSPL. All HHSC-contracted NSPL centers provide statewide crisis hotline services to Texas communities, which is notable given the unique challenges of the state's geography and the varying breadth and scope of the regions each center support

The 10-digit Lifeline number 1-800-273-TALK (8255) will continue to be operational after July 16 and will route calls to 988 indefinitely. Veterans, service members, and their families can also still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the current phone number 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, or by chat or text to 838255.



TEJAS Health
Management



Member Center Highlight

Tropical Texas Behavioral Health



-Humble Beginnings-

This issue we highlight one of Tejas member centers- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health.

Tropical Texas Behavioral Health (originally called Hidalgo County Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center and then Tropical Texas Center for Mental Health & Mental Retardation) had the distinct honor of being one of the first community mental health and intellectual and developmental disability centers in the State of Texas to be established under House Bill 3.

The Center began as a small operation. Services commenced in the basement of Grandview Hospital in Edinburg. The Center opened with limited staff and a small array of services, but everyone shared a vision. It was a vision of hope, hope of effective treatment and the reality of recovery.

In 1990 the Center moved into the new decade with the groundbreaking of a new main facility in Edinburg. The doors opened in September of 1992, continuing the vision of effective treatment and the reality of recovery for the citizens of the lower Rio Grande Valley.

In 2008, the Center applied for an international accreditation survey from the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International. The following programs received the highest accreditation possible, a three-year accreditation: Assertive Community Treatment: Mental Health (Adults); Outpatient Treatment: Mental Health (Adults); Outpatient Treatment: Mental Health (Children and Adolescents); and Residential Treatment: Integrated DD/Mental Health (Adults). During the 2011 CARF survey, the Center repeated the highest accreditation level and added the following programs to their accreditation list: Case Management (MH) and Crisis Services. In August of 2014 the Center underwent their third CARF Survey, applying the Governance Standards for the first time. The Center services listed above received another three-year accreditation.

On July 26, 2022, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health's Board approved a new housing project. Although Tropical has been highly effective historically at bringing new and expanded services for people with MH and IDD issues to the Rio Grande Valley, significant resource gaps remain. Due to non-existent, limited or overly prescriptive funding, housing continues to be a problematic void in the continuum of care.

Many factors were examined regarding solutions or plans to impact these areas. Including (but not limited to) were:

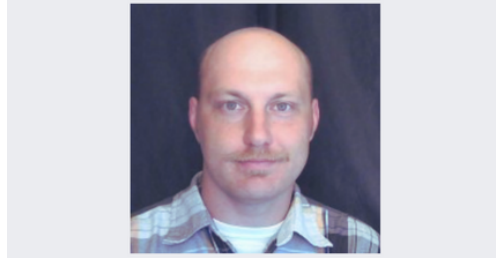
- Level of need for the service and estimated number of people per year to be served
- Anticipated positive outcomes for consumers, area partners, the community
- Projected annual cost and possibility of securing alternate/external/supplemental funding in the future
- Location issues
- Anticipated challenges/risks

Housing Services Program - This program serves up to 10 adult males and females who have progressed in their recovery from mental health challenges in such that they are ready to transition from hospitalization or mental health crisis in the community. All residents must be able to perform basic daily life skills (hygiene, mobility, eating, etc). The average length of stay will be 14 to 20 days where residents will gain skills and coping strategies to promote independent living and stable employment and housing. Strict curfews will be observed. Alcohol and drug use will be prohibited. Residents causing a disturbance in the home or neighborhood will be grounds for immediate dismissal. High standards for property maintenance will be maintained.

Today, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health continues to be dedicated to providing person-centered mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities and substance use disorder services for individuals of Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. The Center, with the assistance of their community partners, is a leader in the State and Nation in implementing new and innovative programs.

Employee Highlight

Bobby Simmons



SmartCare Developer and Support Analyst

I got my first look at an IT/IS career in 2014 and quickly found it was a good fit for me. I've enjoyed the learning experience from day one and that's still true today. I find the work satisfying in that I'm able to solve problems in thoughtful and creative ways. Each project I contribute to has the potential to make a positive impact in the lives of real people in their day-to-day work. With Tejas, that impact can be even more broad because of our unique position in the Texas BH environment. I think it makes a lot of sense for the Texas Centers to leverage Tejas where their interests overlap, so I'm happy to be a part of that work.

I started with Tejas on June 1st of 2021, so I've been at it now for just about 18 months, and I think the "Shared Developer" project has been a big success. I've heard Scott use the language of "Improving Administrative Efficiencies" to describe what Tejas is all about and that's exactly what we've done. We've been able to automate some processes that led to big improvements in development turn-around times. Even in many of the projects where we're not directly focused on automation, the solution for one center is often a drop-in / plug-and-play solution for another, and so the time savings there is huge also. That's not to say that everything is reusable, but I really enjoy analysis and problem solving, so it's a win-win for me whether it's writing reports, or rooting out bugs, or just brainstorming around emergent issues.

I think one of the most interesting and productive aspects of this role has been the communication with all of the Texas Centers. I enjoy the dialogue around challenges and hearing different ideas even when they directly contradict my own because they give me an opportunity to not only understand the different conclusion, but to understand a different methodology of thinking that led to a different conclusion. From a bird's eye view, my professional communication is something like a "methodology melting pot". You could say I'm utilizing that melting pot to produce a stronger "alloy" if you like two-part analogies, but in real terms the result is a better way of thinking, communicating, coding, or managing projects. All in all, I'm enjoying the work, I'm excited about the things we're doing, and I'm looking forward to working with the team to address the business and technical challenges on the horizon.

(Submitted by: B. Simmons)



"The Coaches Corner"

-Stories from the field-

Introducing the newest addition to the Tejas newsletter, "The Coaches Corner".

Each issue will highlight a personal success story from the Healthy at Home Care Transition program participants as they navigate their personal health care journey. These stories are gathered by the assigned health coaches in a one-to-one setting.

This issue we highlight:

A 31-year-old with a history of opioid dependence. Her services in rehab were ending in 2 weeks when the coach contacted her. She was afraid that upon her release, and her return to her home that she shared with roommates, she would slip into her old habits as she did after every previous rehab release. The coach & I were able to pull together our addiction resources from the Dallas area and offer her solid options that would be covered under SHP Medicaid. She was able to locate, and line up, a room at a sober living house, and schedule intake with a LCDC that specializes in opioid addictions for when she returns to Dallas.

A 16-year-old battling severe Major Depressive Disorder. This young girl's mother was completely at a loss when it came to providing her daughter the tools, she needed to deal with the issues she was experiencing. The family was from Mexico and mental health was not talked about or addressed in their household. The young girl received no outside therapy other than trips to the family's General Practice doctor. The coach assigned to her case talked with the member's mother numerous times regarding services for her daughter. Near the end of the member's participation in the Healthy at Home program, her mother asked the coach to refer her daughter to the BRAVE telepsychiatry and medication management provider, as these sessions would take place in the home. Since then, the mother has let the coach know that the 1st appt with BRAVE was successful, the member loved her therapist, the family was happy that BRAVE provider services would continue for the member.

Tejas Healthy at Home is a care transition program developed to support individuals being discharged from a hospital or other higher level of care and is designed to decrease their probability of readmission. Patients who suffer from a health condition that can be successfully addressed in the community are eligible for entry into the program. Our health coaches come with a vast amount of experience and education ranging from a masters to bachelors' level education in the fields of behavioral health, physical health and social services.

(Submitted by: L. A. Dyess)



Tejas Team

Hollie Chenault
CEO
(P) 512-279-9372
hollie.chenault@tejashma.org

Scott Trapp
IT Director
(P) 512-279-9371
scott.trapp@tejashma.org

Lori Anne Dyess
Director of Population Health
and Next Health President
(P) 737-300-4013
lori.dyess@tejashma.org

Richard R. Flores
Director of Payor Engagement and
Marketing
(P) 737-300-4016
richard.flores@tejashma.org

Paige Morris
Business and Finance Manager
(P) 737-300-4015
paige.morris@tejashma.org

Fontella Provost
Customer Service Manager
and Provider Liaison
(P) 737-300-4014
fontella.provost@tejashma.org

[Past Newsletters:](#) (right click & link)



UPCOMING EVENTS 2023

- 1/1/23-New Year's Day
- 1/16/23-Martin Luther King Day-closed
- 2/7th & 8th/23-CTAAFSC Conf.
- 2/12/23-Lincoln's Birthday
- 2/14/23-Valentine's Day
- 2/16/23-Tejas- Board of Directors meeting
- 2/20/23-President's Day
- 2/22/23-Ash Wednesday-Lent
- 3/17/23-St. Patrick's Day
- 3/19/23-Daylight Savings Time

TEJAS MEMBER CENTERS

We would also like to thank our member centers who have been a vital part of our success. We are grateful and thankful for everyone's partnership and confidence in us to provide quality services.

