

Texas Hospitals Support Growing the Substance Use Workforce

Texas has long had too few health care professionals to treat the growing number of Texans with substance use disorders. The workforce shortage is becoming more acute as the rate of opioid abuse increases, and users are getting younger.

QUICK FACTS

ABOUT HB 3083 / SB 1509



HB 3083/SB 1509 adds licensed chemical dependency counselors to the state's existing Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals, making them eligible for education loan repayment assistance.



The maximum repayment amount for an LCDC is roughly \$7,000 per student – an amount significantly smaller than that of other behavioral health professionals currently eligible under the program.

The goal is to:



Increase the number of substance use treatment providers;

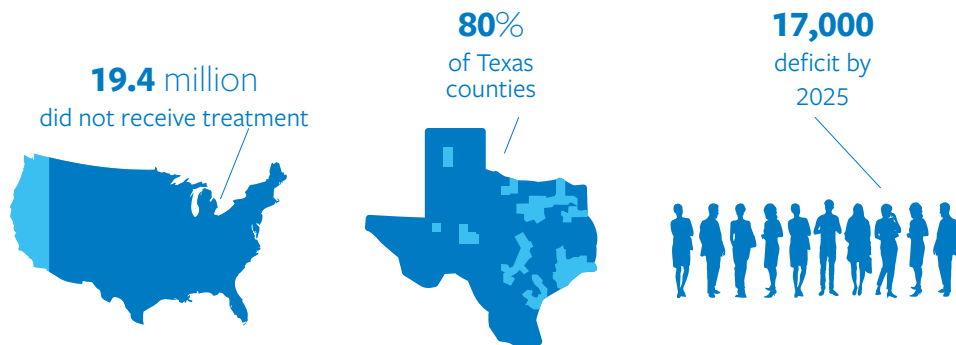


Incentivize them to serve indigent patients in behavioral health professional shortage areas; and



Build on the state's 2015 investment of \$325 million in substance abuse prevention and treatment services.

Scope of the Workforce Shortage



In 2015, just 2.3 million of the 21.7 million Americans needing substance use treatment actually received it.

In Texas, more than 80 percent of counties have too few behavioral health providers to meet residents' needs.

By 2025, the national need for addiction treatment professionals will exceed the projected supply by 13 percent, resulting in a workforce deficit of almost 17,000 full-time equivalent professionals.

Consequences of Untreated Substance Use



The consequences of untreated substance use manifest in more chronic health conditions, poorer health outcomes, increased encounters with the justice system and reduced employment and economic productivity.

Texas Hospitals Support HB 3083 and SB 1509



To begin to address the substance use professional workforce shortage in Texas, Texas hospitals support **House Bill 3083** by Rep. Four Price (R-Amarillo) and **Senate Bill 1509** by Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen).

Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors

LCDCs receive in-depth education and training specific to addressing drug and alcohol problems and treating substance use disorders. No other licensed class of behavioral health professional is similarly prepared or qualified in this arena.

There is an extreme shortage of chemical dependency counselors to fill open criminal justice, outpatient and hospital positions, especially in rural and underserved areas. Integrating LCDCs into substance use treatment has been shown to yield positive outcomes:

- Increased community safety;
- Decreased crime rates;
- Decreased substance use-related hospitalizations;
- Safer roads; and
- Decreased domestic violence rates.

