



Senate Health and Human Services Committee – Senate Bill 26 (88R)

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Services

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TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

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Section 2: Non-physician Mental Health Professional Waiver

Senate Bill (SB) 26 establishes a process for local mental health authorities (LMHA) and local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs) to request a waiver from HHSC to hire a **licensed master social worker** or **licensed professional counselor** associate **in lieu of** a non-physician mental health professional.

Rules establishing waiver process became effective **June 11, 2024**.

Program now called **Behavioral Health Partnership Program**.



Section 3: Innovation Grant Program (1 of 2)

SB 26 creates a matching grant program for mental health early intervention and treatment to support community-based initiatives designed to reduce:

- The need for future intensive care.
- The number of children at risk of placement in foster care or the juvenile justice system.
- The demand for state hospitals, inpatient mental health facilities and residential behavioral health facilities.



Section 3: Innovation Grant Program (2 of 2)

Article II, HHSC Rider 48 appropriates \$30 million for the biennium to fund the Innovation Grant Program.

Status of Implementation:

- Request for Application for the grant was released on Jan. 10, 2024.
- Contracts are currently being routed for selected applicants.
- Contract Term:
 - ▶ Begins: July 1, 2024
 - ▶ Ends: Aug. 31, 2025



Section 4: Nursing Facility Transition Plan

SB 26 requires HHSC, in consultation with nursing facilities, to develop a plan (due Jan. 1, 2025) to transition patients deemed medically appropriate for discharge to nursing facilities if the patients have both a high level of behavioral need and a nursing facility level of care.

HHSC's plan will include:

- ▶ Context and additional information pertaining to the target population including current services.
- ▶ Recommendations for incentives to providers and for methods to create capacity.
- ▶ Fiscal estimates associated with transitioning individuals and potential cost savings.



Section 6: State Hospital Transitions – State Hospitals (1 of 4)

SB 26 requires HHSC to ensure that each state hospital designates at least one employee to provide transition support services to patients ready for discharge and concentrates the provision of transition support services for patients who:

- Have been admitted to and discharged from a facility multiple times during a 30-day period; or
- have been in the facility for longer than 365 days.



Section 6: State Hospital Transitions – State Hospitals (2 of 4)

Each state hospital, including Waco Center for Youth, hired a discharge specialist to:

- Focus on complex inpatient cases with an emphasis on post-discharge placement and support; and
- Maintain a small caseload of 10 or fewer patients due to the intensive case management required.

HHSC also hired a transition program coordinator.



Section 6: State Hospital Transitions – State Hospitals (3 of 4)

The state hospital discharge specialists facilitated **53** discharges from January to July 2024.

At least **6** of these individuals had a length of stay ranging from approximately **10-15** years at discharge.



Section 6: State Hospital Transitions – LMHAs/LBHAs (4 of 4)

SB 26 also requires LMHAs and LBHAs to:

- Ensure the successful transition of patients who are determined by the state hospital to be medically appropriate for discharge.
- Participate in joint discharge planning with the state hospital prior to discharge.

HHSC is implementing requirements outlined in S.B. 26 in a rules project with an anticipated effective date of January 2025.



Section 7: Voluntary Admissions

S.B. 26 requires inpatient mental health facilities to only approve the admission of a person for whom a proper request for voluntary inpatient mental health services is filed, if at the time of the request, there is available space at the facility.

State Hospital	§572.0026 Community Referrals
Big Spring	4
El Paso	8
Rusk	3
Terrell	4
Total	19

As of September 1, 2023 – August 4, 2024



Section 8: Public Reporting System (1 of 2)

S.B. 26 requires HHSC to report additional LMHA/LBHA outcome measures in the agency's public reporting system.

New required measures include:

- Timely and adequate screening
- Timely access to community-based crisis services
- Improved functioning as a result of medication related services
- Length of time between referrals and admissions
- Rates of denial of service requests from jails and other entities
- Quality of care
- Number of hours of services provided



Section 8: Public Reporting System (2 of 2)

HHSC has defined the measures and identified data points and data sources necessary to capture the measures and is actively implementing system enhancements to capture and report all required data measures.

Measures currently available are publicly reported biannually on the HHSC Mental Health and Substance Abuse Public Reporting System website.

All data points and measures will be captured and reported by September 2025.





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Thank You

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