



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



Health and Human Services Commission Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2029, Part I

As Required by Texas Government Code Chapter 2056

Health and Human Services

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Agency Vision and Mission

Vision:

Making a positive difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Mission:

We serve Texas.

The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), part of the Texas Health and Human Services system (HHS), delivers hundreds of services and supports to millions of Texans through the efforts of more than 36,000 employees across the state. We provide for those who need assistance to buy necessities, eat nutritious foods, and pay for healthcare costs, by administering programs such as: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The agency operates and oversees 13 state-owned supported living centers, which provide direct services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. HHSC also operates ten state hospitals, which serve people who need inpatient psychiatric care, and a residential treatment facility for youth in Waco. These 24 facilities operate all hours of the day, all days of the year.

HHSC also regulates childcare, acute care, and long-term care providers, and provides a multitude of additional mental health and substance use services, help for people with special healthcare needs, community supports and services for older Texans, disaster relief assistance, and resources to fight human trafficking.

HHSC continually looks for better ways to provide services to Texas through program evaluation and application of best practices to our work. In support of our vision and mission, HHSC is guided by the following principles: Fidelity, Collegiality, Nurture Talent, Communication, and Agility.

HHSC is appropriated approximately \$93.4 billion in All Funds for the 2024-25 biennium, which accounts for about 29 percent of the state budget. Approximately 90.6 percent of appropriations is for grants and client services, while 3.2 percent is for state-operated, facility-based services, and 6.2 percent is for direct and indirect

administration including eligibility determination services, contract management, financial services, information technology, regulatory services, and oversight.^a

^a Amounts do not include funds outside the agency's bill pattern.

Agency Goals and Action Plan

Below are HHSC's four operational goals, their objectives, and their action items. Dates are subject to change due to contingencies such as required federal approvals, procurement timelines, operational readiness, and other factors.

Goal 1. Improve and support health outcomes and well-being for individuals and families.

Objective 1.1. Enhance quality of direct care and value of services.

- **Action Item 1.1.1. Staff to Patient Ratios.** Improve quality of care and quality of life for residents in Quality Incentive Payment Program (QIPP) participating facilities by improving staff retention and workforce development. (September 2024)
- **Action Item 1.1.2. Community Attendants.** Promote the community attendant role by expanding workforce development opportunities for attendant-like positions, including at the regional and local level. (December 2024)

Objective 1.2. Prevent illness and promote wellness through public- and population-health strategies.

- **Action Item 1.2.1. Engaging Older Adults.** Assess and grow social engagement opportunities for older adults by expanding program options, such as the [Know Your Neighbor](#) campaign, by 10 percent. (January 2025)
- **Action Item 1.2.2. Mental Health First Aid Training.** Increase Mental Health First Aid training sessions by 20 percent. (August 2025)

Objective 1.3. Encourage self-sufficiency and long-term independence.

- **Action Item 1.3.1. Improve Support for Women, Children, and Families.** Increase the number of support and mental health services provided to children and adults by 10 percent. (August 2026)

- **Action Item 1.3.2. SNAP Eligibility Determination.** Decrease SNAP eligibility determination days-to-decision by 59 percent to more efficiently connect Texans to services and supports. (December 2025)

How Goal 1 Supports Each Statewide Objective

Accountability

HHSC continuously works to improve accountability for responsible expenditures in the administration and oversight of all programs to improve the overall health, safety, and well-being of Texans. For example:

- Promoting social engagement opportunities for older adults supports the agency's objective to promote wellness through public health strategies.
- HHSC practices fiscal responsibility by exploring non-wage-based strategies to support the community attendant workforce.
- Through QIPP, payments are made by STAR+PLUS Managed Care Organizations to nursing facilities with improved performance on certain quality measures.

For more information about HHSC's commitment to accountability, see the [Accountability](#) discussion under Goal 4: Continuously enhance efficiency and accountability.

Efficiency

HHSC continuously seeks more efficient ways to operate and deliver services, looking to maximize each dollar invested and provide the highest quality services to Texans who rely on HHSC programs. Finding efficiencies ensures HHSC is a good steward of taxpayer resources, maximizes services to those who rely on them, and allows HHSC to be better prepared for the rapid population growth that is projected for Texas. Specific examples of HHSC's commitment to efficiency include:

- By significantly reducing the time to determine SNAP eligibility, Access and Eligibility Services Operations aims to restore efficient service delivery that meets federal standards and the needs of Texans relying on this support.
- Committing to researching strategies that inform best practices and opportunities to streamline and coordinate workforce efforts for QIPP participating facilities.

- Promoting the Know Your Neighbor campaign through no-cost promotional methods is an efficient way to spread awareness and promote wellness for older adults.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of service, as measured by improved outcomes, is the core of Goal 1. Each action item aims to strengthen the health and well-being of individuals and families. An approach that focuses on the individual is at the heart of many HHSC programs, from those that serve children to those that serve older adults and ensures the provision of truly effective services that meet the needs of our clients. Examples include:

- By significantly reducing the time to determine SNAP eligibility, Access and Eligibility Services Operations aims to meet or exceed federal timeliness performance standards of 95 percent.
- HHSC demonstrates a commitment toward continuous improvement in workforce development by creating the Direct Care Workforce Taskforce, a dedicated team focused on attendant-like workforce development research, and the launch of [Direct Care Careers](#).
- Improving staff retention and workforce development improves the quality of care and quality of life for residents in QIPP participating facilities.
- The Family Violence Program (FVP), Children’s Advocacy Program (CAP), and Thriving Texas Families (TTF) provide advocacy and supportive services for women, children, and families by promoting self-sufficiency, safety, and health. FVP provides emergency shelter and supportive services to victims and their children. CAP provides critical advocacy services for children who have experienced abuse, witnessed violence, or are in the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services. TTF provides education and support services to pregnant women and families with children under 3 years old. All services are provided for free and there is no income verification for eligibility.

Excellence in Customer Service

HHSC strives for excellence in customer service by taking a tailored approach to service delivery. Specifically, Goal 1 action items support excellence in customer service in the following ways:

- Improving the timeliness of SNAP eligibility decisions directly supports Access and Eligibility Services' broader commitment to deliver excellent, people-centered services that meet the needs of all Texans.
- The Know Your Neighbor campaign is an important acknowledgment of the unique needs and challenges older adults have and the importance of maintaining social connections to age well.

Transparency

HHSC uses several strategies to support the statewide objective of transparency.

- HHSC has conducted a series of statewide listening sessions aimed at connecting with communities, listening to the experiences of people served or seeking HHSC services, and furthering our understanding of the critical infrastructure of attendant-like positions.

Goal 2. Ensure efficient access to appropriate services.

Objective 2.1. Empower Texans to identify and apply for services.

- **Action Item 2.1.1. Community Partner Program.** Increase the presence of Community Partner Program collaborations by 16 percent across Texas counties so we can connect a greater number of Texans to services and supports. (September 2027)
- **Action Item 2.1.2. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program.** Increase the average monthly participation in the WIC Program by 8 percent to improve outcomes for both mothers and young children. (August 2027)
- **Action Item 2.1.3. Family Engagement.** Increase family engagement in improving services and supports for children with developmental delays or disabilities by increasing the Family Outcomes Survey response rate of contractors with response rates below the fiscal year 2024 statewide average by 5 percent. (August 2027)

Objective 2.2. Provide seamless access to services for which clients are eligible.

- **Action Item 2.2.1. Health Outcomes for Pregnant Women.** Improve health outcomes for pregnant women by developing standardized non-medical screening questions, requirements for screening administration, and increased eligibility for Case Management for Pregnant Women providers. (September 2024)
- **Action Item 2.2.2. Healthy Texas Women.** Transition Healthy Texas Women from fee-for-service to managed care to enhance continuity of care and increase access to preventive health care and breast and cervical cancer services. (September 2025)
- **Action Item 2.2.3. State Hospital System Capacity.** Increase the number of available beds by 40 percent in the state hospital system through construction and staffing of additional capacity. (August 2027)
- **Action Item 2.2.4. Integrated Care.** Expansion of integrated Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) statewide to ensure dual-eligible individuals continue to receive integrated care following the end of the dual eligible demonstration. (January 2026)

Objective 2.3. Ensure people receive services and supports in the most appropriate, least restrictive settings, considering individual needs and preferences.

- **Action Item 2.3.1. State Supported Living Center Quality.** Demonstrate improved quality of care provided to the approximately 2,600 residents of the state supported living centers. (August 2027)
- **Action Item 2.3.2. Prevocational Services.** Create a prevocational service for individuals in certain Medicaid waiver programs. (November 2024)
- **Action Item 2.3.3. STAR+PLUS Person-Centered Planning Enhancement.** Enhance the STAR+PLUS Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) person-centered planning process to ensure the STAR+PLUS Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) are delivered in a way that affords members the opportunity to achieve greater independence and community integration through exercising self-direction, incorporating individual

perceptions and experiences, personal preferences and choices, and control with respect to services and providers. (September 2025)

Objective 2.4. Strengthen consumers' access to information, education, and support.

- **Action Item 2.4.1. Support Call Containment.** Increase the eligibility support call containment rate by 5 percent to more efficiently connect Texans to services and supports. (October 2028)
- **Action Item 2.4.2. Servicemember Support.** Implement universal screening for servicemember status to allow for aggregate reporting and planning to improve person-centered referrals and servicemember outcomes. (August 2025)
- **Action Item 2.4.3. Self-Service Access to Public Information.** Establish pages on HHS websites through which the public may access public information identified by HHS as frequent subjects of the Public Information Act. (June 2026)
- **Action Item 2.4.4. 988 Lifeline.** Maintain the [988 Lifeline](#) in-state answer rate of 90 percent in fiscal year 2026. (August 2026)

How Goal 2 Supports Each Statewide Objective

Accountability

HHSC continuously works to improve accountability in the administration and oversight of all programs while increasing access to services, all to improve the overall health, safety, and well-being of Texans. For example, implementing universal screening for servicemember status holds the agency accountable to statutory requirements passed by the legislature.

For more information about HHSC's commitment to accountability, see the [Accountability](#) discussion under Goal 4: Continuously enhance efficiency and accountability.

Efficiency

HHSC continuously seeks more efficient ways to ensure clients access our programs and services, while maximizing each dollar invested, and providing the highest quality services to Texans who rely on HHSC programs. Examples include:

- Providing access to frequently sought information on the HHS website offers the public faster and more convenient access to information. Members of the public will not be required to request that information under the Public Information Act, with its associated costs and timelines. This frees up resources that can be used to respond to other, more complex public information requests.
- HHSC is leveraging Contact Center Artificial Intelligence technology for the 2-1-1 eligibility support service which allows customers to access information using natural language requests, compared to older touch tone responses to predetermined questions. The aim is to provide more efficient and effective access to requested information through technology and contain the call to the automated systems. Higher call containment translates to less calls requiring more expensive live-agent support.
- Ensuring all eligible Texans can access high-quality, inpatient psychiatric care is a priority for the Health and Specialty Care System (HSCS). This means increasing the number of beds available statewide to meet the current needs of Texans, and anticipating future needs as Texas continues to grow.
- HSCS recognizes how building strong partnerships impacts the efficiency of services and overall system of care. Strong partnerships support successful transitions of care and ensure the most vulnerable Texans have continued access to services needed.
- WIC is a nutrition program that helps low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and young children up to the age of five receive tailored nutrition education, breastfeeding support, referrals to essential health and community resources, and supplemental nutritious foods. WIC improves short- and long-term health outcomes of Texans by providing families with supplemental nutrition during the most critical stages of pregnancy and child development. WIC-approved foods are rich in protein, Vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium and tailored to the specific nutritional needs of each participant. Supporting the health and well-being of mothers and children is an efficient investment, as it decreases their likelihood of dependency on health and human services later in life.
- Expanding Community Partner Program collaborations across Texas counties will streamline access to services and ensure Texans can efficiently identify and apply for support without unnecessary delays or administrative obstacles.

- Implementing universal screening for servicemember status in the initial eligibility and application process identifies needs and enables redirection to appropriate alternative services.

Effectiveness

All action items under Goal 2 support HHSC's improved effectiveness at fulfilling its core functions of providing necessary services to qualified applicants, whether by serving more clients in need, serving clients for longer time periods to meet their needs, or serving clients better. Specifically:

- The STAR+PLUS person-centered planning enhancement initiative identifies existing supports and services necessary to achieve the individual's desired outcome.
- The addition of two new provider types, Community Health Workers and doulas, increases access to case management services for children and pregnant women.
- Conducting screening for non-medical health needs for all pregnant women that opt-in and coordinating services and referrals improves the comprehensiveness of care.
- Transitioning Healthy Texas Women into managed care improves continuity of care across a woman's life cycle. Managed care will increase patient access to preventive health care, contraceptives, and screenings for cancer, STIs, and chronic conditions.
- D-SNP expansion advances the coordination of services for people dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare.
- The prevocational services for individuals in certain Medicaid waiver programs supports individual progression towards competitive, integrated employment.
- HSCS is committed to effectively fulfilling its core function of ensuring clients receive care driven by evidence-based practices that are implemented in a culture of quality.
- Increasing the presence of the Community Partner Program enhances our effectiveness in connecting Texans to appropriate services, ensuring that we maximize the utilization of taxpayer funds by efficiently directing resources to those who need them most. Expanding this outreach initiative aligns with our overarching goal to effectively serve Texans.

Excellence in Customer Service

HHSC strives for excellence in customer service by taking a tailored approach to service delivery and focuses on ensuring clients receive the right services when and where they need it. Examples include:

- Offering access to frequently sought information on the HHS website demonstrates the agency's commitment to the public's interest and to responding to the public's needs. Members of the public can access that information without making a request under the Public Information Act and on their own timeline.
- HHSC demonstrates its commitment to excellence in customer service through this effort to improve the quality of experience that is inherent with increased efficiency and effectiveness and reduction. The increase in eligibility calls served through the automated system reduces the number of individuals waiting for live-agent support.
- HSCS is working with academic partners across Texas to design new state hospitals and with community providers to ensure continuity of care. These partnerships will merge cutting-edge research with operational expertise to create a more customer-centered, effective healing environment.
- HSCS is committed to exceptional customer services through high-quality service delivery and meaningful community partnerships.
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) provides excellent customer service to ensure families of young children with developmental delays or disabilities have the resources and support needed to reach their goals. ECI implements strategies to increase the response rate of the Family Outcomes Survey, designed to assist in measuring family outcomes and identifying areas for increased family engagement and program improvement.
- The expansion of the Community Partner Program directly contributes to enhancing customer service by providing Texans with localized support and assistance in navigating service options, thereby improving their overall experience in accessing necessary services.
- Screening for servicemember status supports a person-centered approach to identifying needs and providing appropriate service options.

Transparency

Transparency about HHSC operations improves efficient access to information and to appropriate services. For example:

- Providing free and on-demand access to frequently sought information offers the public greater insight into HHSC’s programs and operations.
- Collecting data on the number and needs of servicemembers seeking services from the agency provides visibility into how programs are used to support this unique population.

Goal 3. Protect the health and safety of vulnerable Texans.

Objective 3.1. Optimize preparation for and response to disasters, health threats, and disease outbreaks.

- **Action Item 3.1.1. Emergency Broadcasting to Regulated Entities.** Implement an emergency broadcast system across the Regulatory Services Division (RSD) to allow program areas to send emergency notifications, request feedback from providers, and provide reporting capability. (August 2027)

Objective 3.2. Prevent and reduce harm through improved education, monitoring, inspection, and investigation.

- **Action Item 3.2.1. Focus on High-Risk Providers.** Enhance the focus on high-risk providers when planning and conducting audits, inspections, investigations, and reviews. (August 2029)
- **Action Item 3.2.2. Harm Reduction in Regulated Facilities.** Reduce the number of recurring serious violations in nursing facilities, acute care facilities, and childcare operations by 5 percent through consistent and efficient processes for licensing, surveying, and enforcement. (August 2026)

- **Action Item 3.2.3. Safe Child Day Care Capacity.** Increase capacity in child day care operations by 5 percent through community engagement activities aimed at identifying individuals who need to be regulated as well as individuals who want to provide childcare, which will strengthen health and safety protections for children in out-of-home care. (August 2026)

How Goal 3 Supports Each Statewide Objective

Accountability

A crucial role of HHSC is to protect the most vulnerable populations in Texas. RSD and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) support this goal by holding facilities and contractors accountable for the care and services provided to clients. To ensure funding for health and human services are spent properly, OIG uses audits, investigations, inspections, and reviews to detect, deter, and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse within the state health care delivery system. Specifically:

- Through proactive efforts, in fiscal year 2023, the OIG:
 - ▶ Recovered more than \$532 million,
 - ▶ Identified nearly \$1.1 billion in potential future recoveries, and
 - ▶ Achieved more than \$172 million in cost avoidance by deterring potentially questionable spending before it could occur.
- The OIG focus on high-risk providers protects against fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer funds and ensures that Texans receive the services they need.
- It is vital that regulated facilities protect the health and safety of the individuals under their care. RSD is committed to improving the safety of regulated facilities by developing and enhancing efficient processes for the licensing, surveying, and enforcement of nursing facilities, acute care facilities, and childcare facilities across Texas.
- As Texas' population continues to grow, it is important that child day care capacity grows, while maintaining the standards that are intended to protect the health and safety of the children under their care. RSD's Child Care Regulation division employs community engagement activities designed to identify individuals: (1) who should be regulated but are not; and (2) are interested in becoming childcare providers. Targeted training and resources are offered to assist these individuals in becoming licensed providers.

- For more information about HHSC’s commitment to accountability, see the [Accountability](#) discussion under Goal 4: Continuously enhance efficiency and accountability.

Efficiency

HHSC enhances protection of Texans living in regulated facilities and focuses on improving efficiency in the following ways:

- The OIG uses limited state resources efficiently by focusing enforcement activities on providers at the highest risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- The RSD Emergency Alert and Notification System gives HHSC the ability to rapidly disseminate information to regulated providers across the state, including critical information during emergencies or disasters. The system will enable HHSC to quickly gather information from regulated providers about their operational status and needs during an emergency or disaster. This information can then be shared with response partners in the State Operations Center to allow for rapid deployment of resources and assistance.

Effectiveness

All action items under Goal 3 support HHSC’s improved effectiveness at fulfilling its core functions. Specifically:

- The OIG maximizes effectiveness in identifying fraud, waste, and abuse and recouping state funds by focusing on providers with high-risk behaviors and patterns.
- HHSC regulates certain types of facilities and providers and is committed to reducing the number of recurring serious violations in regulated facilities by ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. HHSC consistently and efficiently surveys, investigates complaints, implements corrective actions, determines appropriate administrative penalties, and educates providers to prevent recurrences.

Excellence in Customer Service

HHSC seeks to enhance customer service to Texans in a variety of ways relating to long-term care facilities, other medical facilities, and childcare operations. The RSD Emergency Alert and Notification System provides HHSC with an additional method to provide regulated providers with critical information during an emergency or disaster. This can include information about temporary suspensions of state or

federal requirements, mandatory evacuation or shelter-in-place orders, local, state, and federal declarations of disasters, and other information relevant to the health and safety of residents, clients, and providers, as well as effective operations.

Transparency

The public relies on transparency when faced with making choices about care facilities. HHSC makes information available to support informed choices.

- On the HHSC website, overview information and links to a variety of resources are published for:
 - ▶ Long-Term Care
 - ◇ [Long-term Care Credentialing](#)
 - ◇ [Long-term Care Providers](#) (licensing and registration)
 - ▶ [Child Care Regulation](#)
 - ▶ Health Care Regulation
 - ◇ [Health Care Facilities Regulation](#)
 - ◇ [Professional Licensing, Certification, and Compliance](#)
- The OIG submits reports to statewide leadership and publishes quarterly reports, audits, and inspections on this [Reports](#) page on the OIG website.
- RSD submits reports to state leadership and publishes them on the HHS website. A recent example includes: [Quality Monitoring Program: Early Warning System for Long-Term Care Facilities](#).

Goal 4. Continuously enhance efficiency and accountability.

Objective 4.1. Promote and protect the financial and programmatic integrity of HHS.

- **Action Item 4.1.1. Focus on High-Risk Contracts.** Identify and audit vendors of high-risk contracts to determine whether vendors complied with key financial and programmatic contract provisions. (August 2029)

- **Action Item 4.1.2. Cybersecurity.** Further defend against cybersecurity threats to protect agency assets and citizens' confidential data. (August 2029)
- **Action Item 4.1.3. SNAP Fraud Framework Grant.** Increase detection of potentially fraudulent SNAP claims by 10 percent. (December 2024)

Objective 4.2. Strengthen, sustain, and support a high-functioning, efficient, and resilient workforce.

- **Action Item 4.2.1. State Facilities Staffing.** Improve services to clients of state facilities by strengthening staffing through improved recruitment, hiring processes, and training. (August 2025)
- **Action Item 4.2.2. Critical Position Staffing.** Conduct an agency-wide analysis of market salary data to help identify areas of focus, specifically for those positions with high turnover and vacancy areas. (January 2025)

Objective 4.3. Continuously improve business strategies with optimized technology and a culture of data-driven decision-making.

- **Action Item 4.3.1. Identifying Trends and Outliers.** Continue to expand advanced data analysis techniques to identify trends and outliers for audits, inspections, investigations, and reviews. (August 2029)
- **Action Item 4.3.2. Improved Contract Management.** Implement or enhance the functionality of information technology systems to improve efficiencies in processing requisitions and managing, monitoring, and reporting contracts for the agency. (August 2027)
- **Action Item 4.3.3. Data Quality and Maturity.** Enhance the value of data by establishing policies to document data management/data stewardship roles and responsibilities required to enable clean, consistent data across HHSC sources and systems. (September 2026)
- **Action Item 4.3.4. Connected Analytics.** Provide curated data to enhance agency analytics and reporting capabilities through full-service, self-service, and hybrid models using associated technology, tools, and automation, in coordination with the Data Governance and Performance Management process. (August 2029)

Objective 4.4. Create/enhance a work environment in which employees are empowered to recommend and embrace change.

- **Action Item 4.4.1. Continuous Improvement Culture.** Provide leadership and promote continuous improvement by increasing collaboration opportunities and training received across HHSC by 5 percent. (August 2027)
- **Action Item 4.4.2 Create a Management Development Program.** Develop and launch a comprehensive management development program to enhance leadership skills and foster professional growth. (June 2028)

How Goal 4 Supports Each Statewide Objective

Accountability

HHSC is committed to accountability in all its work, to ensure funding is spent efficiently and wisely. The Office of Audit and Compliance (OAC) provides assurance to HHS leadership and stakeholders by performing audit and consulting engagements. Implementation of OAC recommendations enhances HHSC accountability. OAC publishes an [Annual Internal Audit Report](#) each fiscal year.

Highlights for 2025-2029 include minimizing program fraud, maximizing data use, and investing in its people resources.

- Good quality data enhances the ability to create and monitor meaningful performance measures, motivating team members to achieve shared goals.
- Connected analytics enables data-driven decision making and creates a transparent environment where meaningful performance measures are created and monitored, and the workforce is informed, responsible, and motivated to achieve shared goals.
- The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is committed to fiscal responsibility of agency funds to strengthen and sustain the HHS workforce by ensuring HHSC provides competitive salaries for similar positions in the job market.
- Information Technology (IT) is accountable for evolving the HHSC information security program, including cybersecurity training, to ensure agency assets and citizens' confidential data are protected from emerging cyberthreats and other harm. IT reports the status and effectiveness of the

information security program at least annually to the HHS executive commissioner, as required by [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 202](#).

- The OIG focus on high-risk contracts protects against fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer funds and ensures that Texans receive the services they need.
- OIG's use of advanced data analytics is an innovative and efficient technique to protect against fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer funds and ensures Texans receive needed services.
- Increased identification of potential SNAP fraud by Integrity Support Services results in a corresponding increase in accountability to taxpayers by further reducing erroneous and/or fraudulent benefit issuances.
- The Management Development Program seeks to establish a robust accountability culture that empowers new managers to take ownership of their development, smooths the transition into leadership, and ensures sustained success.

Efficiency

All actions under Goal 4 support HHSC's commitment to continuous improvement and efficiency, ensuring it spends tax- and fee-payer money efficiently and wisely. For example:

- Protecting agency assets and client data from emerging cyberthreats and other harm keeps these resources available to support HHS business and ensures their functionality and integrity remain uncompromised.
- Collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to leverage and enhance existing technology is key to providing tools and resources to allow decision makers to make more informed decisions using available data. Data-driven decisions impact the work environment, support a high-functioning workforce, and promote efficiencies in business processes.
- Well-governed, good-quality data serves as a foundation for reporting automation, reducing cumbersome manual processes often necessary for the analytic support required for data-driven decision-making.
- Self-service data models empower workforce members to meet straightforward data demands efficiently and independently without relying heavily on dedicated data teams.

- HHSC continues to improve the procurement process through active involvement in the procurement planning phase through acquisition planning and statement of work development.
- OIG uses limited state resources efficiently by auditing contracts with the highest risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Using data analytics is an efficient use of state resources, allowing OIG to analyze large data sets of health care expenditures and service delivery information to identify trends and outliers. By focusing on the most concerning trends and outliers, OIG uses limited state resources on enforcement activities that maximize the recoupment of state funds.
- HSCS recognizes the impact a strong workforce has on effectively caring for those served, maintaining dedicated staff, and the overall healthcare system. Recruiting and retaining high-quality, talented staff is critical to ensuring vulnerable Texans have timely access to care.
- Increased identification of potential SNAP fraud maximizes agency resources by preventing erroneous and/or fraudulent benefit issuances before they occur. This reduces overall workload on frontline eligibility specialists and eliminates the need for costly recoupment efforts.
- The Office of Transformation and Innovation (OTI) helps identify and reduce waste through partnerships with HHSC client service programs and administrative areas.
- The Management Development Program will include a structured curriculum focused on foundational management skills such as change management and professional growth and align with organizational needs. Program effectiveness will be measured through participant feedback and post-training assessments. HHSC's commitment to efficiency ensures managers gain essential skills and experience a dynamic and agile professional growth journey.

Effectiveness

HHSC will continue to enhance effectiveness by focusing on the highest risk contracts, maintaining a strong, stable, and supported workforce, equipping team members with sufficient training, and ensuring that leadership has sufficient and reliable data to support decision-making. Specific gains to be realized in effectiveness include:

- Annual, agency-wide cybersecurity training and simulated cyberthreat campaigns ensure HHSC employees keep agency assets and client data safe.
- Data governance and data management increase consistency across data sets and data systems, allowing for connectivity and the enhanced ability to report on program services and outcomes.
- The availability of accurate data across HHS, variety of available data tools and access models, and automation tools supports and empowers employees to use data and make data-driven decisions, while minimizing cumbersome manual processes.
- COO supports and empowers HHS employees by providing access to data, tools, and resources that enable them to make more well-informed, data-driven decisions that drive strategies to plan for a sustainable, resilient workforce with a focus on continuous improvement.
- The OIG maximizes effectiveness in identifying fraud, waste, and abuse and recouping state funds by focusing on contracts with high-risk financial and programmatic provisions.
- Data analytics provides the most effective tools and techniques for gaining insight into provider behavior and allows OIG to focus enforcement activities on the most concerning trends and patterns.
- HSCS is committed to effectively fulfilling its core function of ensuring those being served receive care driven by evidence-based practices implemented in a culture of quality.
- Better contract management drives more effective service provision. Procurement and Contracting Services is developing a professional development program for contract managers that supplements the contract management certification program provided by the Texas Comptroller's Office and focuses specifically on understanding and managing HHSC contracts and meeting state and HHSC expectations. The professional development program is a collaborative effort with the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs.
- Through its Continuous Improvement Academy and Passport Program, along with projects designed to improve agency operations, OTI drives HHSC's focus on improving organizational effectiveness.
- The Management Development Program will incorporate dynamic modules focusing on fundamental management principles to enhance leadership skills that equip new managers with the tools necessary to drive effective change

management and foster professional growth. Managers will gain the knowledge and capabilities needed to navigate challenges, lead teams successfully, and contribute to their own and HHSC's success.

Excellence in Customer Service

HHSC encourages excellence in customer service through a variety of measures and will continue to search for ways to better serve internal and external stakeholders.

- Gathering data to develop implementation strategies to address salary disparities identified in those critical shortage and/or hard-to-fill positions promotes and supports HHS workforce efforts to continue to provide excellent customer service.
- Quality data helps improve client experience by facilitating earlier identification of issues or problems, streamlining service delivery, and monitoring outcomes.
- Connected analytics provides a single, holistic view of the clients HHSC programs serve, enables predictive insights for personalized customer service interaction and improves our ability to target client needs and concerns.
- HSCS continues to strengthen its workforce by hiring qualified, driven staff with the expertise and compassion needed to provide high-quality care. HSCS will maintain its dynamic workforce by providing staff with the tools and support needed to be successful in their jobs, while implementing strategies that promote health and wellness.
- Integrating a customer-centric focus into the Management Development Program will assist new leaders in prioritizing customer satisfaction in their decision-making and equip leaders with essential skills for excellent customer service through effective management, fostering outstanding customer experiences and cultivating a culture of excellent service throughout HHS.

Transparency

Many of the efforts described above support transparency within and across HHSC and the larger HHS. Specifically:

- Data governance and data management practices help the agency to make the best use of our data resources and to answer more complicated questions faster and with greater accuracy.

- Connected analytics enhance public trust and confidence in HHSC by offering transparency into how well we deliver services.
- The COO develops and disseminates quarterly reports to executive leadership to share pertinent information critical to the successful implementation of strategies that influence a high-functioning, efficient, and resilient workforce.
- The IT division tracks and reports compliance with annual cybersecurity training required by Texas Government Code, sections [2054.5191](#) and [2054.5192](#).
- The OIG submits reports to statewide leadership and publishes quarterly reports, audits, and inspections on this [Reports](#) page on the OIG website.
- The Management Development Program will foster a transparent and open communication environment.

Redundancies and Impediments

1. Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Sections 46B.071

Service, statute, rule, or regulation:

- [Texas Code of Criminal Procedure \(TCCP\), Section 46B.071](#).
- Competency Restoration Services (CRS) reserved for felonies only (includes Inpatient Competency Restoration at State Hospitals, Outpatient Competency Restoration, and Jail-Based Competency Restoration).

Why the service, statute, rule, or regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations:

Overreliance on CRS leads to increasing waitlist demands for inpatient, outpatient, and jail-based competency restoration programs. Currently, 11.56 percent of individuals on the state's forensic waitlist have a misdemeanor level offense.

Agency recommendation for modification or elimination:

Would require changes to TCCP Sections 46B.0711 and 46B.072 and beyond.

Individuals charged with an alleged misdemeanor time out within one year of their arrests (if they remain in custody). The compelling interest to prosecute these cases may also be low. These individuals would be better served by diverting them into treatment modalities to address their mental health needs as opposed to awaiting in jails for competency restoration, thus reserving competency restoration efforts for alleged felonies, reducing the overreliance on competency restoration services, and effectively decreasing waitlist numbers.

Estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change:

Decreased demand for CRS would allow for more efficient use of CRS resources and supplies and shorten waitlist numbers and jail bed days while diverting individuals to the appropriate level of care.

2. Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Sections 46C.251(d) & 46C.256

Service, statute, rule, or regulation:

- [TCCP, Section 46C.251\(d\)](#).
- [TCCP, Section 46C.256](#).

Why the service, statute, rule, or regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations:

The court-mandated post-acquittal evaluation and treatment of individuals found not guilty by reason of insanity requires a state hospital inpatient commitment, determination of the proper disposition of the acquitted person, and a court hearing on such disposition no later than the 30th day after the date of acquittal. Most admissions do not currently occur within 30 days post-acquittal. Furthermore, the current 30-day time frame is largely insufficient for the acquitted person's treatment team to complete the required diagnostic, prognostic, and discharge duties, to include the TCCP Section 46C.252 report to the court, oftentimes leading to the subsequent default order of commitment to inpatient treatment or residential care under TCCP Section 46C.256 for up to an additional 180 days.

Agency recommendation for modification or elimination:

Amend TCCP Section 46C.251 to extend the initial commitment period from the current 30 days after acquittal to 90 days after admission to provide more time to assess the person and complete a meaningful report to the court.

Amend TCCP Section 46C.256 to reduce the second commitment period from 180 days to 90 days due to the extended period associated with the proposed amendment to the initial commitment period in TCCP Section 46C.251.

These changes would shorten the overall commitment period from 210 to 190 days, provide additional time for a thorough evaluation and lessen the overall burden on individuals.

Estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change:

Allows for state hospital treatment teams to properly evaluate and treat the individual and complete their diagnostic, prognostic, and discharge duties and lessen the potential for acquitted individuals being committed longer than clinically necessary.

3. Texas Education Code, Section 29.316

Service, statute, rule, or regulation:

- [Texas Education Code \(TEC\), Section 29.316.](#)

Why the service, statute, rule, or regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations:

TEC Section 29.316 directs the Texas Education Agency (TEA), HHSC, and Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) to collaboratively gather and monitor data on the language acquisition of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) or Deafblind (DB) and are eight years old and younger. The report, *Annual Statewide Report on Language Acquisition for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Deafblind 0-8 Years of Age*, is published on the HHSC website.

Through a memorandum of understanding between HHSC and TSD which provides the foundation for fulfilling the requirements of the law, TEA has the primary responsibility for data collection and reporting. TEA does not require any data from ECI for this report, and ECI staff are not involved in drafting the report. The statute results in unnecessary redundancies for HHSC and TEA.

Agency recommendation for modification or elimination:

Remove references to HHSC ECI from TEC Section 29.316.

Estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change:

Removing HHSC ECI from TEC Section 29.316 will result in workload cost savings for HHSC ECI and TEA.

4. Texas Health and Safety Code, Sections 532A.001 and 552.002

Service, statute, rule, or regulation:

- [Texas Health and Safety Code \(THSC\), Section 532A.001.](#)
- [THSC, Section 555.002.](#)
- Related rules.

Why the service, statute, rule, or regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations:

In Fiscal Year 2021, the Rio Grande State Center separated into two facilities. Half of the facility remains the Rio Grande State Center serving the state hospital population. The other half became Rio Grande State Supported Living Center (SSLC). The Rio Grande SSLC is not currently listed in the statute.

Under HSC Section 594.014, before a resident may be transferred to a proposed specialty home, they must be offered a hearing to review the transfer. The resident or legally authorized representative has 30 days to request an initial hearing as well as an additional 30 days after the initial hearing to file an additional appeal with no timeline by which the hearing for the secondary appeal (which is handled outside of HHSC) must take place. Waiting for a hearing postpones access to specialty services and can extend the resident's time in crisis.

The SSLCs are experiencing a changing population with more forensic admissions. Mexia and San Angelo SSLCs serve more than just forensic populations and both centers also struggle with staffing challenges due to their locations in rural Texas. Mexia and San Angelo SSLCs are often far from a resident's county of origin making it more difficult for families and friends to visit. Since all forensic admission must be admitted to Mexia or San Angelo first, this has created a bottle neck and Mexia has admissions scheduled approximately a year out.

Agency recommendation for modification or elimination:

Amend THSC, Section 532A.001 to identify Rio Grande SSLC with the other SSLCs and make conforming changes to other chapters including the repeal of the mention of "the ICF-IID component of the Rio Grande State Center."

Establish specialty homes in statute and provide the opportunity for the resident or legally authorized representative to request an appeal within seven days to ensure that proper treatment is rendered expediently.

Amend THSC, Section 555.002 to allow HSCS to use their expertise to identify and designate homes or units on additional SSLC campuses as forensic units. Designated units will be chosen based on available resources to meet the specific needs of residents under forensic commitments and where job markets can better support the staffing needs of these individuals. This may also allow residents to live in centers closer to their families, thus supporting their natural support network. This could also advance admission dates for some individuals.

Estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change:

These changes would correct the list of SSLCs in statute, allow for transfer and shorted appeal times to expedite care, and allow flexibility and more options for placement and expedite care by adding or changing designated forensic SSLCs.

5. Texas Health and Safety Code, Sections 241.004(3), 532.001(b), 552.0011(8), 571.003(9)(A), and 577.002(a)

Service, statute, rule, or regulation:

- [THSC, Section 241.004\(3\)](#).
- [THSC, Section 532.001\(b\)](#).
- [THSC, Section 552.0011\(8\)](#).
- [THSC, Section 571.003\(9\)\(A\)](#).
- [THSC, Section 577.002\(a\)](#).
- Related rules.

Why the service, statute, rule, or regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations:

Significant investments by the legislature to redesign the state hospital system necessitate updates to statute to include new facilities and align statute with the current state hospital landscape.

Agency recommendation for modification or elimination:

Amend THSC, Section 552.002(a)(2) to include state hospitals owned by HHSC and operated through partnerships with health-related institutions (HRIs), include additional state hospitals currently under construction, and to list the North Texas Wichita Falls and Vernon campuses as separate state hospitals.

Amend THSC, Sections 241.004(3), 532.001(b), 552.0011(8), 571.003(9)(A), and 577.002(a) to reference back to the definition of state hospitals in 552.002(a)(2) for consistency.

Estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change:

These recommended changes would:

- Clarify applicable statutes and rules on state hospitals operated by HRIs.
- Clarify the roles and authority of Health and Human Services-Provider Investigations and the OIG in state hospitals operated by an HRI.
- Provide opportunity to divide the North Texas State Hospital into its respective campuses, Wichita Falls and Vernon.