

# All Texas Access Report

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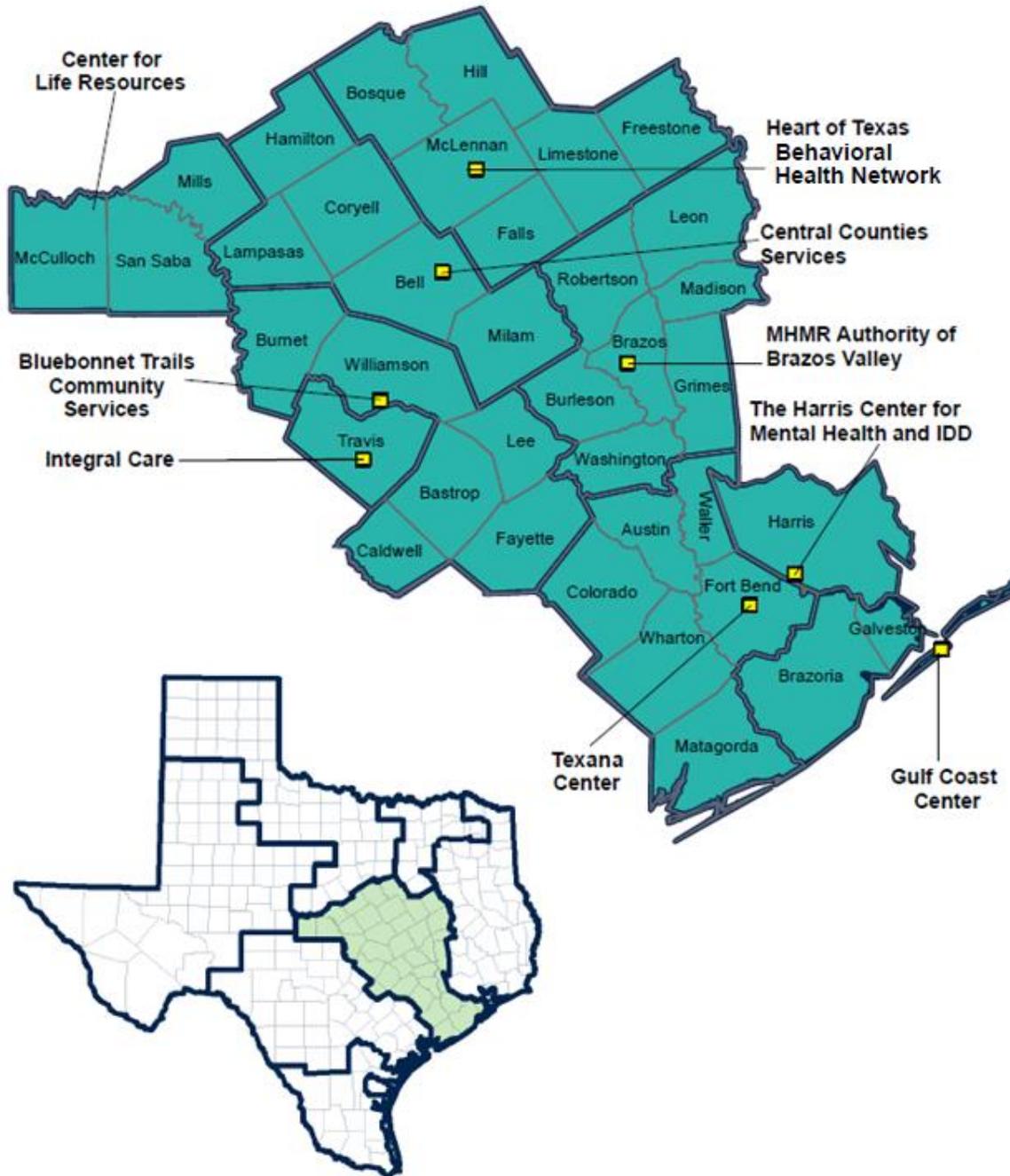
**Texas Health and Human Services  
December 2023**



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

# All Texas Access ASH Regional Group

Figure 28. Map of All Texas Access Austin State Hospital (ASH) Regional Group<sup>xxiv</sup>



## **Participating LMHAs**

- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services
- Center for Life Resources
- Central Counties Services
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network
- MHMR Authority of Brazos Valley
- Texana Center

Bluebonnet Trails Community Services participates in both the All Texas Access Austin State Hospital (ASH) and San Antonio State Hospital (SASH) Regional Groups. The Center for Life Resources participates in both the All Texas Access ASH and North Texas State Hospital (NTSH) Regional Groups.

Integral Care, The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, and the Gulf Coast Center participate in this group as ex-officio members.

## **All Texas Access ASH Regional Group Plan**

### **Jail Diversion and Community Integration**

#### **Bluebonnet Trails Community Services: 911 Integration and Triage Center**

Bluebonnet Trails Community Services (BTCS) implemented a 911 Integration Program in Williamson County. From February 2022 to February 2023, BTCS answered 1,884 calls to Williamson County's 911 dispatch seeking a mental health response. Of these calls, 273 required Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) response - and of those persons, 89 required co-response with law enforcement or emergency medical services (EMS). With a focus on diversion, the 911 Team diverted 171 persons from potential psychiatric hospitalization or incarceration.

BTCS also implemented a triage center in Williamson County in collaboration with local government. The Williamson County Diversion Center opened April 14, 2022, to triage adults experiencing an acute psychiatric crisis presenting to law enforcement in the community. In 10.5 months of operation, the Diversion Center served 731 persons, allowing law enforcement to quickly return to duty. Persons receive immediate assessment and evaluation by a medical and clinical team

followed by rapid care coordination to the appropriate level of care. Most persons triaged are received from law enforcement within the eight counties served by BTCS. Of those triaged and assessed, 23 percent returned home with a safety plan, 15 percent were referred to a less intensive program, and 62 percent were admitted to a private psychiatric hospital.

## **Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network: 911 Integration**

Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network (HOTBHN) received Mental Health Block Grant funding from HHSC to support embedding mental health professionals in the 911 call center that serves McLennan County. HOTBHN has named this project the Crisis Call Diversion Program. HOTBHN has met several times with police department dispatch staff from Waco, and they have also reached out to other LMHAs with similar programs. HOTBHN plans to begin ramp-up on the program in fiscal year 2024.

## **MHMR Center of Brazos Valley: Drop-Off/Peer Respite**

MHMR Authority of Brazos Valley (MHMRABV) received funding from HHSC from the Mental Health Block Grant to implement a triage center. The triage center will provide a location for law enforcement to transport a person for a crisis assessment and diversion from hospital emergency departments and jails. The triage center will be staffed with MCOTs, including peers, to provide crisis intervention and support services as appropriate to prevent admission to a psychiatric hospital. Currently, MHMRABV is in discussion with CHI St. Joseph Health (a local hospital) and Brazos County Health Department regarding space and location. The plan is to begin implementation in the beginning of fiscal year 2024.

## **Central Counties Services: Rural Crisis Response and Diversion**

The Rural Crisis Response and Diversion Project for Central Counties Services (CCS) provides real-time access and assessment between law enforcement in rural and remote areas—at the county and municipality level—and qualified crisis intervention specialists at the LMHA. This project provides additional training and guidance on mental health programming within law enforcement systems to improve handling of mental health crises within the community. CCS established a Law Liaison program and provided training to local law enforcement in their service area. From February 2022 to February 2023, 385 of 1513 (25 percent) mental health calls were handled by a mental health deputy or a mental health trained peace officer. 242 of the 1513

(16 percent) mental health calls resulted in the person in crisis being taken to an inpatient mental health facility for help. CCS hosted 56 meetings between their Law Liaison and rural county law enforcement agencies. Most of the discussions were about responding to mental health related calls in their respective jurisdictions and resources available to them. Some of the discussions were about specific mental health calls and how to respond to them. The CCS Law Liaison provided Mental Health Officer Courses and two Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) trainings for outlying counties as well as a TCOLE Mental Health training for jailers in Coryell County. From February 2022 to February 2023, CCS co-responded on 91 encounters. Only one percent of these encounters resulted in incarceration, 46 percent were referred to outpatient services, and 36 percent resulted in an inpatient admission.

## **Texana Center: Rural Crisis Response and Diversion**

The rural counties that Texana Center serves have identified timely mental health crisis response as a challenge that can result in the incarceration of people with mental health conditions. Texana provides training to law enforcement through two Law Liaisons in the Rural Crisis Response and Diversion Project. These liaisons interface with the law enforcement community, enhance co-response with mental health professionals and law enforcement, and use technology for remote evaluation. Texana Center is starting a pilot in Waller County, one of their smaller outlying counties, where one of Texana Center's staff will ride with a Crisis Intervention Team officer a few days a week. From February 2022 to February 2023, Texana Center successfully diverted 1,247 people from incarceration.

## **Center for Life Resources: Mental Health Deputy**

Center for Life Resources (CFLR), in collaboration with their law enforcement partners, operates a Mental Health Deputy Program within Brown, Coleman, Eastland, and Mills counties. Collectively, all Mental Health Deputies served 807 people from February 2022 to February 2023. This success is largely due to the shared vision of community leaders to address the needs of people in the community experiencing mental illness. CFLR has developed contractual agreements with Brown, Coleman, Eastland, and Mill counties' sheriffs' offices, and seeks to engage people using the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). The shared vision focuses on increasing jail diversion, increasing access to appropriate community care, increasing access to local resources, and reducing recidivism rates for psychiatric hospitalization and local emergency room use. Due to the program's success, other counties are interested in collaborating with CFLR. CFLR is in the

process of expanding Mental Health Deputies through a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant in the three counties not currently funded (Comanche, McCulloch, and Mills). One of CFLR's local police departments is working with CFLR to receive training and provide additional municipal mental health deputy support. The successful collaborations with local law enforcement have successfully reduced barriers to care, cut down on recidivism rates, and lessened the need for local emergency department visits or placement in psychiatric facilities. CFLR also demonstrates a lessened need for use of force from a law enforcement perspective. CFLR faces some challenges, including finding an electronic health record software that can track all the varied pieces of data being collected. Expansion opportunities have been challenged by a lack of applicants from law enforcement and a lack of sustainable funds to support such activities.

## **Crisis Transportation**

The majority of rural-serving LMHAs in the All Texas Access ASH Regional Group traditionally have relied on law enforcement to transport people in crisis to inpatient settings. With workforce shortages affecting law enforcement and other demands on local government, relying on law enforcement alone for transportation has become increasingly challenging. Supporting the Williamson County Diversion Center, BTCS partners with a security company to provide transportation to local hospitals as well as other services. Offering transportation through crisis-trained security professionals ensures law enforcement officers do not need to return to the Diversion Center. From February 2022 to February 2023, 176 transports were provided by security professionals under contract with BTCS.

CFLR continues to face challenges of distance in terms of crisis transportation.

For several years, HOTBHN has contracted with a local security company to offer law enforcement agencies an option when it comes to crisis transportation. Through interlocal agreements, law enforcement agencies have the option to use the contract to provide crisis transportation so that officers can return to public safety duties more quickly.

MHMRABV pays stipends to current LMHA employees to provide out of region transportation when appropriate, in addition to negotiating with private psychiatric hospitals to transport as part of admission.

Texana Center faces significant challenges related to crisis transportation in the rural counties. They report that there are not enough law enforcement officers available to transport and provide public safety coverage.

Overall, transportation for people in crisis continues to be a challenge; however, the rural-serving LMHAs continue to find innovative ways to close this gap.

## **Therapeutic Respite for Children and Youth**

BTCS's 16-bed Youth Therapeutic Respite program opened in May 2022. During the first nine months of operation it served 134 children. In December 2022, BTCS began a partnership with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to ensure youth have a safe and therapeutic setting for recovery while seeking a more permanent living situation. Prior to December 2022, the average length of stay for children and youth referred to Youth Therapeutic Respite was 15.3 days. Following the contract with DFPS, the average length of stay is 21.4 days providing children and youth with uncertain placements more stability

Of the children served, 27 have been diverted from the juvenile justice system, 26 were diverted from private psychiatric hospitalization, and 7 were diverted from a state agency setting. Through the clinical strengths of this program, three youth waiting for admission to a residential treatment center were served until an opening at the more intensive level of care could be found.

## **Person in Service**

### **Step-Down Pilot Program**

HHSC contracts with BTCS to operate two step-down facilities Williamson County in collaboration with the state hospital system. The second step-down facility opened Spring 2023. These programs identify adults who have been in the state hospital for more than one year, readying them to return to their home community. The programs are supported by employment and housing specialists ensuring that people transitioning from long-term hospitalization build the skills for employment and develop the resources for sustainable housing plans.

Of the 23 people served between February 2022 and February 2023, five transitioned to the community. The five who transitioned made connections to employment and housing upon their return, as well as continued health care through the local Texas Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (T-CCBHC).

## **Outpatient Competency Restoration**

BBTCS, CCS, and CFLR are all participants in the Outpatient Competency Restoration (OCR) rural expansion. These unique programs provide access to community psychiatric care for those who have a mental health condition and are found to be incompetent to stand trial. People referred to OCR services usually have misdemeanor charges and are not a danger to others and can be safely treated on an outpatient basis. BTCS served 18 people in their OCR program from February 2022 to February 2023. BTCS is in the process of establishing a Jail-Based Competency Restoration (JBCR) program embedded in the Williamson County Jail. This program was initiated toward the end of fiscal year 2023.

As of March 2023, OCR is no longer a program CCS operates. The main barrier for this program to operate successfully was a lack of housing resources, making it difficult to justify releasing someone on bond to participate in OCR services. During the time CCS had an OCR program, four people were served. One person was declared not likely to restore to competency, one had his bond revoked due to non-compliance, and four people were successfully restored to competency.

CFLR served nine people from February 2022 to February 2023 in OCR and JBCR. CFLR began operating an OCR program in fiscal year 2022. This process required meetings and networking with local leaders, courts and attorneys, as well as jail and probation entities. This process also proved more difficult than originally anticipated, as screenings were completed on 18 people, with only four qualifying for outpatient competency services. Various factors have led to a relatively low percentage of people who were being referred to qualify for OCR. Some of the factors include violent or otherwise risky crimes with the nature of the charges increasing the risk of re-offense and danger to the community, lack of adequate secondary support for the person to be released to outpatient care, or the court would not permit a person to be released on bond from jail due to fear of re-offense. CFLR observed that 77 percent of people referred were screened out based on these factors.

This challenge led to increased conversations with local leaders and HHSC to establish JBCR services in Brown and Eastland counties. Through planning, review of successful programs, and collaboration with numerous partners, CFLR received approval to proceed with JBCR. This process has allowed CFLR to expand services in the jail setting to help meet the needs of people who may otherwise wait for inpatient competency services. CFLR plans to continue enrollment into both OCR

and JBCR and plans to explore other options for providing mental health treatment in county jails.

## **Housing and Employment Recovery Investments**

BTCS partners with Community Resource Centers (CRC) in Marble Falls and Liberty Hill. Each CRC offers multi-family housing with a multi-agency complex in the center of the housing. The multi-agency complex provides access to health care, employment, and other social services. Additional CRC complexes are under consideration in Taylor and Smithville. As of May 2023, 38 persons receiving services through BTCS at one of the campuses have also been connected to employment either through BTCS supported employment specialists or on the CRC campus.

CCS has two employment programs: one for adults participating in mental health services and one for adults participating in substance use services. Referrals are received from CCS clinics and from Cenikor and West Texas Counseling Center in Temple. CCS has memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with both agencies to provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for those with an opioid addiction. Currently, CCS' employment programs are serving 15 people. Combined, CCS' employment programs have the capacity to serve 30 people at a given time. One of CCS' programs, the Supportive Housing Rental Assistance (SHR) Program, provided rental assistance to 42 people between September 2022 and April 2023. In March 2022, CCS obtained a grant from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to help people secure housing. This grant allows CCS to cover expenses such as pet deposits, moving expenses, safety deposits, and landlord incentives. The landlord incentive program is designed to increase the chances of people with poor rental or credit history, or a criminal background be more successful in securing housing while also having an advocate and resource in navigating housing. The program funded through TDHCA has served 57 people as of May 2023.

CFLR developed a partnership with Brown County Home Solutions using SHR Program funds to purchase four emergency shelter beds. These emergency shelter beds can be used by people currently participating in CFLR services who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. CFLR expressed homelessness continues to be a growing concern in the area as previously housed people are losing their housing.

HOTBHN recently underwent a major reorganization in their housing department, combining housing services for both adolescents and adults into one program with a single program director. HOTBHN created program manager positions to oversee both housing and homelessness services. HOTBHN is continuing to explore funding for housing services.

During fiscal year 2022, MHMRABV served 72 people using state supportive housing dollars. MHMRABV also coordinates with the local homeless coalition to provide housing options for people participating in MHMRABV services. MHMRABV is attempting to further integrate their supportive housing program with supporting employment services. With the assistance of a SAMHSA grant, MHMRABV expanded outpatient substance use disorder (SUD) services.

Texana Center faces challenges related to housing and employment in their rural counties. There is extremely limited affordable housing in good condition and limited employment.

## **Develop Best Practices for Rural Remote Evaluation**

The CCS Law Enforcement Liaison assisted MCOT in issuing tablet computers to rural law enforcement to allow for more timely access to MCOT. As of April 2023, 11 of the 17 law enforcement agencies in CCS rural counties received their tablets. Two rural hospitals have also been issued tablets to assist them in accessing MCOT. This also assists rural law enforcement as they work with hospitals during a mental health crisis.

Through Rural Crisis Response and Diversion grant funding, Texana Center deployed tablets to local law enforcement and ERs. This resource made significant improvements in timeliness of crisis assessments.

## **Workforce**

### **Access to Physical Health Services**

All the LMHAs in the All Texas Access ASH Regional Group continue to maintain their Texas Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (T-CCBHC) certification and work toward more comprehensive integration of medical and behavioral health.

BTCS partners with Texas A&M School of Nursing (TAM-SON) in rolling out a three-year Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant award supporting a nurse pipeline for rural areas. TAM-SON students receive training at BTCS

locations in Giddings, La Grange, Taylor and Jarrell. TAM-SON advanced practice registered nurses support each clinic ensuring services may be provided to children and adults at these rural locations through in-person and virtual services. Between February 2022 and February 2023, the partners made primary health care available to 207 children and 310 adults. These services include immunization programs, sports physicals, check-ups and medication reviews, ensuring the physical health services and outcomes inform the integrated treatment team. Based on the demonstrated experience of the integrated health system, during spring 2023 the BTCS clinic in La Grange was certified by HRSA as a Rural Health Clinic. This designation offers a financial sustainability plan for the thriving rural clinic in Fayette County.

CCS has community health workers that focus on outreach and help people access behavioral health and medical services. From September 2022 to April 2023, the team helped 50 people link to substance use services, 134 people link to mental health services, and 62 people link to medical services. They also distributed 93 opioid overdose kits.

HOTBHN has established a new unit dedicated to care coordination. Through a Texas CCBHC expansion grant, HOTBHN established a team that helps ensure referrals made by HOTBHN mental health professionals to other community resources are successful for people participating in services. HOTBHN is expanding integrated medical and behavioral health into some of their outlying counties. Through a T-CCBHC expansion grant, HOTBHN has contracted with a rural primary health provider to bring integrated care into one of their rural counties.

Texana Center provides primary care screening required by T-CCBHC. In addition, Texana has a primary care clinic in Rosenberg available for people participating in LMHA services throughout their service area. The program is limited to people who are uninsured, are indigent, or who have a low income.

## **Collaboration**

### **Strategic Collaborations with Community Partners**

The LMHAs in the All Texas Access ASH Regional Group have made progress in collaborating with community partners. In fiscal year 2023, BTCS participated in the Community Engagement Pilot affirming and establishing partnerships in Bastrop, Fayette, Gonzales, and Lee Counties. Through the pilot, partners such as public libraries, housing coalitions, local clergy, food banks, and health care providers

helped provide access to services for people prior to any potential mental health crisis. Also, in partnership with Williamson County EMS Community Health Paramedics, BTCS conducts follow-up care for people who may benefit from substance use treatment. BTCS Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors (LCDs) receive referrals from EMS Community Health Paramedics related to persons receiving Narcan in the community. Each person receives a follow-up contact from a BTCS LCDC connecting the person with treatment services provided through BTCS or other local provider selected by the person.

For the period of February 2022 to February 2023, 94 persons were referred to BTCS, where 100 percent received a follow-up contact, 25 persons accepted substance use treatment through BTCS, and 13 persons were connected to external providers. BTCS serves as the 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline backup answering center supporting the five primary call centers responding to 988 calls from Texans, effective May 1, 2023.

In collaboration with the federal Department of Defense, CCS assisted with the creation of a Crisis Intervention Team that operates on Fort Cavazos. The Fort Cavazos Crisis Intervention Team uses MCOT and other local mental health resources to help people in crisis. CCS also provided two Mental Health First Aid courses, one for the newly created Fort Cavazos Crisis Intervention Team and the other for CCS staff. CCS also established a co-responder program to respond with law enforcement on mental health calls received by the Temple Police Department.

HOTBHN was recently awarded a planning grant from Episcopal Health Foundation to co-locate social workers in medical clinics in their outlying counties.

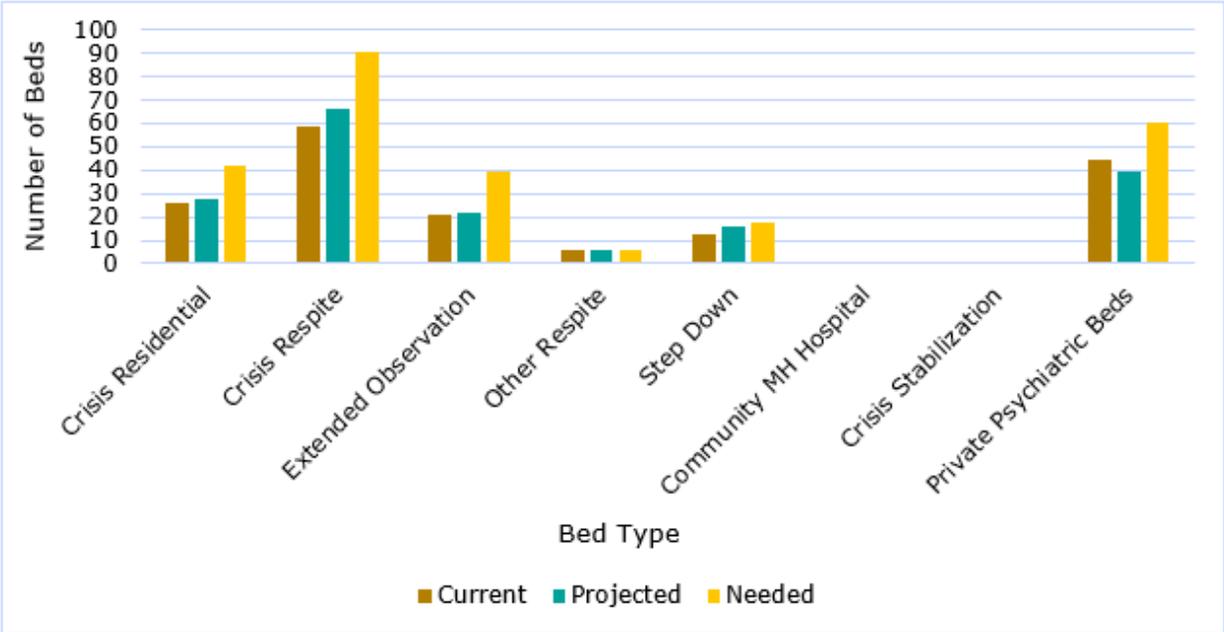
MHMRABV developed a collaboration with their local Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to co-locate primary healthcare in their largest county. During the second quarter of fiscal year 2023, MHMRABV scheduled 255 primary healthcare visits for people participating in services, with approximately 133 people completing the visit. MHMRABV also hired a healthcare navigator using SAMHSA grant funds to coordinate healthcare referrals and ensure linkage and follow-up. Through a collaboration with Texas A&M University Medical School, MHMRABV anticipates residents will begin rotating in their healthcare clinics in June 2023.

The Health and Behavioral Wellness Council of Greater Colorado Valley in Colorado County, which is part of Texana Center's service area, successfully raised funds to establish a mental health deputy to serve the county.

# Estimates: Number of Inpatient and Outpatient Beds

Each rural-serving LMHA or LBHA in the regional group submitted information about the outpatient and inpatient beds currently available and projected changes over the next two years. LMHAs and LBHAs also reported how many beds they need to adequately serve their community. Refer to the [All Texas Access Implementation](#) section of the report for additional explanation of the chart below.

**Figure 29. All Texas Access ASH Regional Group Bed Capacity<sup>xxv</sup>**



**Table 25. All Texas Access ASH Regional Group Bed Capacity**

	Current	Projected in Two Years	Needed in Two Years
<b>Crisis Residential</b>	26	28	42
<b>Crisis Respite</b>	58.4	66.4	90.4
<b>Extended Observation</b>	21	21.6	39.4
<b>Other Respite</b>	6	6	6
<b>Step Down</b>	12.8	16	17.6
<b>Community MH Hospital</b>	0	0	0
<b>Crisis Stabilization</b>	0	0	0
<b>Private Psychiatric Beds</b>	44.4	39	60.2