



**Texas System of Care**  
Achieving Well-Being for Children and Youth

# A Better Future for Texas Children

The Impact of System of Care



## Children's Mental Health Matters

One in five children and youth in the United States have a diagnosable mental disorder and an estimated 4.5 to 6.3 million children and youth suffer from a serious mental health condition (about 10 percent).<sup>i</sup> In Texas, this represents over 600,000 children, youth, and families impacted by mental health needs before age 18. The majority of these children (58 percent) do not receive mental health services,<sup>ii</sup> and many of the children and youth who do access services do

so through the education, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems.<sup>iii</sup> What is the consequence of failing to meet the needs of children, youth, and families with serious mental health challenges? Children with unmet mental health needs are at increased risk of

failing academically, becoming unemployed or homeless, abusing alcohol and drugs, and having chronic health and mental health conditions in adulthood. When families lack access to intensive, effective, community-based services, they are faced with seeking services in high-cost, restrictive settings, such as ERs and hospitals, residential treatment centers, and correctional facilities, sometimes by turning to the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. But effective community-based systems can be created to meet the needs of children and families.

**1 in 5**

children and youth in the United States have a diagnosable mental disorder

## A Framework for Community-Based Care

The system of care framework was designed to provide effective services and supports that enable children and youth with mental health challenges and their families to function well in their homes and communities and to lead productive lives. The concept is based on a philosophy that emphasizes services that are community-based, family-driven, youth-guided, individualized, coordinated, and culturally and linguistically competent. In 1992, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launched a competitive grant program, known as the Children's Mental Health Initiative, to translate this framework into system transformation and concrete services for children, youth, and families.

To date, SAMHSA has invested more than \$1.6 billion to 173 communities in all 50 states.<sup>iv</sup> Texas has received six community grants amounting to more than \$20 million invested in system of care. Over the past decade, the system of care approach has increasingly been adopted by behavioral health, child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and health systems serving young children, youth, and families.

**58%**

of Texas children and youth who need mental health services do not receive them

## System of Care Gets Results

A national, multi-site evaluation of the over 113,000 children served in the Children's Mental Health Initiative has demonstrated that the system of care framework is effective.<sup>v</sup>

System of care has been shown to:

- » Increase the behavioral and emotional strengths of children and youth;
- » Reduce behavioral and emotional problems;
- » Increase child and youth functioning;
- » Reduce anxiety in children and depression in adolescents;
- » Increase school attendance and school performance;
- » Reduce violent crimes, property crimes, and status offenses;
- » Reduce the use of alcohol and cigarettes in adolescent participants;
- » Reduce strain and stress for caregivers;
- » Reduce the number of children with multiple out-of-home placements; and
- » Avoid costs across child-serving systems by reducing inpatient services, residential treatment, and out-of-home placements.



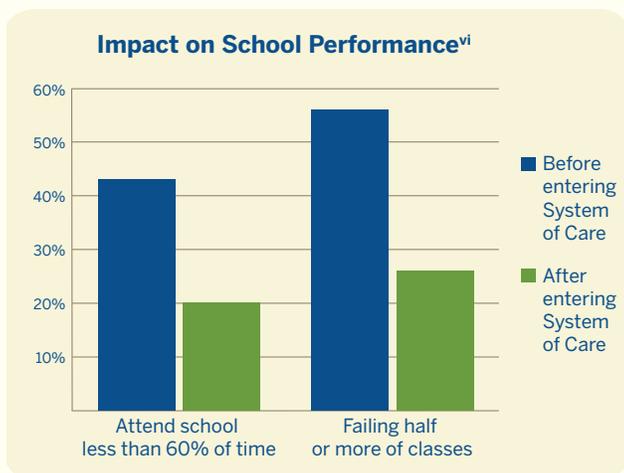
Many of these outcomes have been achieved through key reforms to the mental health system.

The Children's Mental Health Initiative has led to:

- » Stronger family and youth voice in system planning, oversight, and quality improvement;
- » Greater access to intensive, community-based services and essential supports, such as respite, therapeutic behavioral supports, and parent and youth peer supports;
- » Better access to culture-specific services and linguistically competent systems;
- » Increased use of evidence-based mental health services and supports; and
- » Redeployment of resources from high-cost, restrictive services to community-based and preventative services.

States that have adopted the system of care framework statewide have demonstrated:

- » Increased access to mental health services for children and youth;
- » Reduced use of residential care for children and youth;
- » Maximization of the effective use of state and federal resources; and
- » Reductions in the average annual cost for mental health services (New Jersey).



The comprehensive Texas System of Care strategic plan is available at [www.txsystemofcare.org/strategic-plan-to-expand-systems-of-care](http://www.txsystemofcare.org/strategic-plan-to-expand-systems-of-care)

## System of Care is Improving Lives in Texas

Six Texas communities have received cooperative agreements to implement the system of care framework. Some key findings from local evaluations follow.

The Children's Partnership in Travis County demonstrated:

- » Sustainability for more than 10 years after grant funding;
- » Fifty-five percent of the expenditures in Fiscal Year 2011 were flexible, blended funding;<sup>vii</sup>
- » In 2012, 71 percent of children and youth decreased their participation in delinquent behavior; and
- » Ninety-three percent of children and youth were able to remain in their community with no out-of-home placements.<sup>viii</sup>

Fort Worth Community Solutions found:<sup>ix</sup>

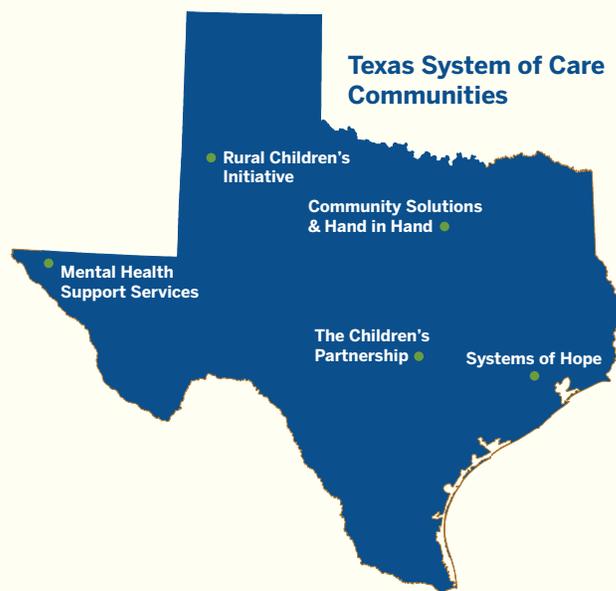
- » High-fidelity wraparound facilitation was provided to 86 percent of families;
- » Children and youth had fewer delinquent or self-harmful behaviors as a result of participation; and
- » Caregivers reported significantly less worry, anger, resentment, lost work time and financial hardship.

Harris County's System of Hope showed:<sup>x</sup>

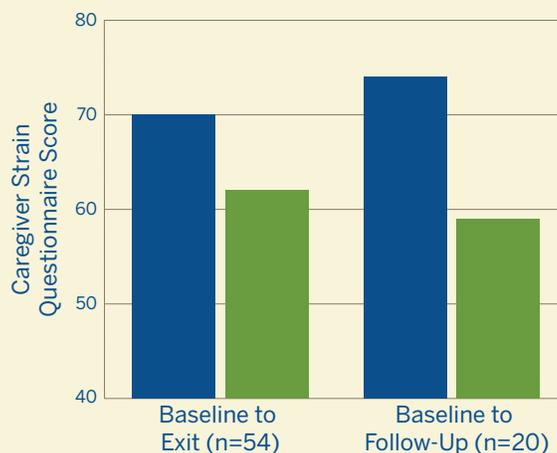
- » Caregivers and youth rated services and service providers as culturally and linguistically competent;
- » Individualized service planning (wraparound planning) can be done with high fidelity;
- » Caregivers report less strain related to the youth's behavioral health needs.

Tarrant and surrounding counties' Hand in Hand found:<sup>xi</sup>

- » Young children participating had increases in protective factors;
- » Young children had improvements in behavioral and emotional strengths;
- » Ninety-five percent of respondents felt that the service provider attended to the family's cultural needs.



### Caregiver Strain over Time



“ I never thought the way to fix a problem like ours would be to bring in extra people for a team, but it is working well. ”

Hand in Hand Participant

## A Statewide Approach in Texas

Based on the results shown across the country, SAMHSA launched a competitive grant program for state systems interested in expanding the system of care framework. With a grant to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas has worked with families, youth, and system stakeholders to develop a sustainable strategic plan to expand this promising practice across the state. Texas is exploring strategies to foster champions for children's mental health, develop infrastructure for workforce training, expand the use of evidence-based and promising practices, maximize service financing strategies, and support communities in system reform. Learn more about Texas System of Care at [www.txsystemofcare.org](http://www.txsystemofcare.org).



## Texas System of Care: A Shared Vision for Texas

### Mission

To strengthen the collaboration of state and local efforts to weave mental health supports and services into seamless systems of care for children, youth and their families.

### Vision

All Texas children and youth have access to high quality mental health care that is family-driven, youth-guided, community-based, culturally-grounded and sustainable.

### Partners

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (lead agency)

Family and Youth Representatives

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Texans Care for Children

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Texas Department of State Health Services

Texas Education Agency

Texas Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

The University of Texas at Austin, Center for Social Work Research

Via Hope

Texas System of Care Communities

Texas ASSET Expansion Communities

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<sup>i</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services. (2003). *Children & Families, Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and their Families Program. SAMHSA Portfolio of Programs and Activities.*

<sup>ii</sup> Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2007 National Survey of Children's Health, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved from [www.nschdata.org](http://www.nschdata.org).

<sup>iii</sup> Farmer, E.M.Z., Burns, B.J., Phillips, S.D., Angold, A., & Costello, J. (2003). Pathways into and through mental health services for children and adolescents. *Psychiatric Services*, 54(4), 60-66.

<sup>iv</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ( ). Fiscal Year 2013: Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. Available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/Budget/FY2013/SAMHSAFY2013CJ.pdf>.

<sup>v</sup> Stroul, B., Goldman, S., Pires, S., & Manteuffel, B. (2012). *Expanding systems of care: Improving the lives of children, youth, and families.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health.

<sup>vi</sup> Working Together to Help Youth Thrive in Schools and Communities: Systems of Care, National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day - May 7, 2009, Pub id: SMA10-4546, <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Working-Together-to-Help-Youth-Thrive-in-Schools-and-Communities-Systems-of-Care/SMA10-4546>.

<sup>vii</sup> Austin Travis County Integral Care (2011). *The Children's Partnership Quarterly MSO Report for the Board of Directors.*

<sup>viii</sup> The Children's Partnership (May, 2012). *The Children's Partnership Update. Unpublished newsletter.*

<sup>ix</sup> MHMR of Tarrant County (n.d.). *Community Solutions Results on Wraparound.* Available at <http://www.mentalhealthconnection.org/pdfs/cs-wraparound-outcomes.pdf>.

<sup>x</sup> Harris County System of Hope Evaluation Report 2005-2011.

<sup>xi</sup> Painter, K., Patterson, C., Perry, B., Brown, K., & Hoft, W. (n.d.). *Hand in Hand: Planting Seeds for Health Families Year Three Evaluation Report.* Available at <http://www.mentalhealthconnection.org/pdfs/hh-year-three-eval-report.pdf>.

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