



TEACHING
HOSPITALS
of TEXAS

Texas' Teaching Hospitals are Partners in Improving Behavioral Health Care

Increasing access to timely diagnosis and treatment for children and adolescents

Challenge:

One in three Texas children experience a mental health disorder each year, and 350,000 experience a severe mental health need. During the pandemic, more children and adolescents are experiencing mental health crises, resulting in hospital emergency department visits. Yet, the availability of timely, appropriate mental health care is lacking. The primary challenge is the shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists. There are only 745 child and adolescent psychiatrists in the state, which has a pediatric population of more than 7.4 million. In addition, most of the state's psychiatrists practice in the large urban centers. Eighty percent of Texas counties have no child and adolescent psychiatrists.



Innovation:

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler is one of 12 regional hubs serving the statewide Child Psychiatry Access Network (CPAN). CPAN is one of the health system's initiatives through the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC), created by the 86th Texas Legislature to leverage the expertise and capacity of the state's health-related institutions of higher education to address pediatric mental health challenges.

CPAN provides pediatricians and other primary care providers free consultations with child psychiatrists and therapists. The goal is to equip families' primary health care professionals with tools and guidance to effectively manage behavioral health challenges and ensure children get needed interventions more quickly. Statewide, as of October 2022, CPAN had completed more than 13,000 consults and served more than 12,000 patients.

The CPAN team at UT Tyler supports primary care providers in 25 counties in Northeast Texas, and includes:



Three child and adolescent psychiatrists.



Two licensed professional counselors.

UT Tyler also participates in the Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHAT) initiative through the TCMHCC. Through this program, UT Tyler Health Science Center behavioral health providers deliver tele-behavioral health care in schools to identify and assess behavioral health needs and provide mental health services. Students can access up to five free sessions with therapists, and the TCHAT team works to connect students with external care as needed. The program currently covers 35 school districts in the region and is continuing to expand.



Next Steps:

Increasing the supply, availability, and geographic distribution of child and adolescent psychiatrists and other pediatric behavioral health specialists is critical. This long-term commitment is needed to ensure that the supply of professionals is sufficient to meet the needs of a growing pediatric and adolescent population.

Growing and collaboratively leveraging needed behavioral health expertise, such as that provided by UT Tyler's child and adolescent psychiatrists, providers, and systems, is one innovative strategy to address serious behavioral health challenges. Continued and enhanced investments in programs like CPAN and TCHATT that help meet immediate needs is important. Texas' Children's Mental Health Care Consortium is a national leader, and the level of support among the state's medical schools is unprecedented. Continued support and investment are needed.

Because many of the costs associated with improving access to behavioral health care, such as outreach and community coordination, are not traditionally reimbursable services covered by payers, continued state funding is critical.



About THOT

THOT is the principal voice and advocate for health systems that teach the next generation of health professionals and who are united in their commitment to support policies and funding that will ensure healthcare access to all Texans.

THOT members' shared commitments include:

- **Supporting access to care for all in our communities, with a special focus on vulnerable populations.**
- **Providing and coordinating essential community health services, such as trauma and disaster management.**
- **Preparing for the future by training tomorrow's healthcare providers and supporting health research and health care transformation.**

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