

## Partnering With the Local Mental Health Authority to Enhance Medical Education & Increase Access to Care

UT Tyler and Andrews Behavioral Health are working together to address behavioral health needs in East Texas

### PARTNERS IN IMPROVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Texas' teaching and public hospitals have an instrumental role in the state's health care system. From teaching and training future health care professionals to creating and deploying programs to address health care challenges in their communities, these hospitals are essential for meeting the broad and varied care needs of the state's growing population.

Although these hospitals are not dedicated behavioral health hospitals, their emergency departments are often the front door for those needing behavioral health care, and their shared mission of providing timely, cost-effective care means that many are taking on the responsibility of investing in behavioral health care programs and services. The significant human and financial investments in these programs are evidence of their commitment to being prudent financial stewards and to serving their communities.

This series profiles some of the innovative programs and services that Texas' teaching and public hospitals are deploying to make behavioral health care timelier and more accessible for Texans of all ages and from all walks of life — children, adolescents, adults, seniors, veterans, those with serious and persistent mental illness, the unhoused, and those involved in the criminal justice system. Most of these programs and services are in partnership with local community-based organizations, and all deeply reflect the community's priorities and needs. Many also have vital financial support from the Texas Legislature.

This series is by no means comprehensive, but the intent is to demonstrate the range and variety of teaching and public hospitals' innovation, leadership, and investment to addressing the state's many behavioral health care challenges.

### Improving Access to Behavioral Health Care in East Texas and "Growing Your Own" Psychiatrists

As the first medical school in East Texas and one with a mission to expand access to top-quality health care in the local communities of East Texas, **The University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler)** has a weighty role to educate and train future behavioral health professionals, including general psychiatrists, child and adolescent psychiatrists, and rural psychiatrists who have a deep understanding not just of pharmacological interventions but of the entire practice of behavioral health and can practice in a wide range of care settings.

Key to that holistic training is exposing residents and fellows not only to inpatient psychiatric care but to care provided in community settings, including Assertive Community Treatment



(ACT), mobile and crisis response, the Zero Suicide model, mental health first aid, and case management. ACT, for example, is a specific comprehensive, multi-disciplinary care model

provided only through community mental health centers. Working in community settings helps residents and fellows understand and integrate best practice care in a continuum of settings.

In addition to its medical education and training role, UT Tyler has taken on long-term responsibility for improving the health of the communities it serves. That means addressing the acute mental health crisis in the region. The 25-county region of more than 1 million people reports higher rates of suicide than the rest of the state and country. The per capita suicide mortality rate in five of the region's counties has risen 77 percent over the past 22 years, surpassing Texas' 46 percent increase.

In addition, the entire region has only 16 psychiatrists who provide outpatient care, and many of those psychiatrists also carry a teaching load and do not practice full-time. Significant shortages of other behavioral health professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors, also exist.

## Partnering With the Local Mental Health Authority

To increase care capacity and address the shortage of behavioral health professionals, UT Tyler and **Andrews Behavioral Health**, the local mental health authority, partner to provide training for UT Tyler's psychiatry residents and child and adolescent psychiatry fellows in community-based mental health models and practices. Residents and fellows complete a rotation for one full year at Andrews Behavioral Health, both seeing patients and participating in programmatic and operational activities.



The partnership is described by Dr. Cheryl McCullumsmith, the UT Tyler School of Medicine chair of the Robert M. Rogers Department of Psychiatry, as a “win-win for both organizations,” because it:

1. Augments Andrews Behavioral Health's capacity to care for more people.
2. Gives residents and fellows essential experience in and exposure to community mental health care, with the expectation that upon completing their training, many of these psychiatrists will pursue a career in community mental health care and stay in the region.

Program leaders strongly believe that the partnership and exposure to community mental health care are essential so that future psychiatrists have a holistic and in-depth understanding of the mental health care continuum and to increase the number of community-based psychiatrists.



## State Investment Key to Success

The partnership of UT Tyler and Andrews Behavioral Health is made possible by the **Community Psychiatry Workforce Expansion (CPWE) initiative** and the **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) initiative**, two of five initiatives within the Texas Children's Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC), created by Senate Bill 11 during the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019. In 2021, the Legislature allocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the Consortium to further expand its work. The Consortium funds four UT Tyler child and adolescent psychiatry fellows and the psychiatry rotation at Andrews Behavioral Health, in addition to multiple other behavioral health programs and initiatives.

The combination of the Consortium's support with UT Tyler's deep, system-wide commitment to grow its psychiatry training program, increase the number of psychiatrists locally, and improve mental health care access in the community is a powerful model to improve access to care and reduce the severe shortage of psychiatrists in East Texas.

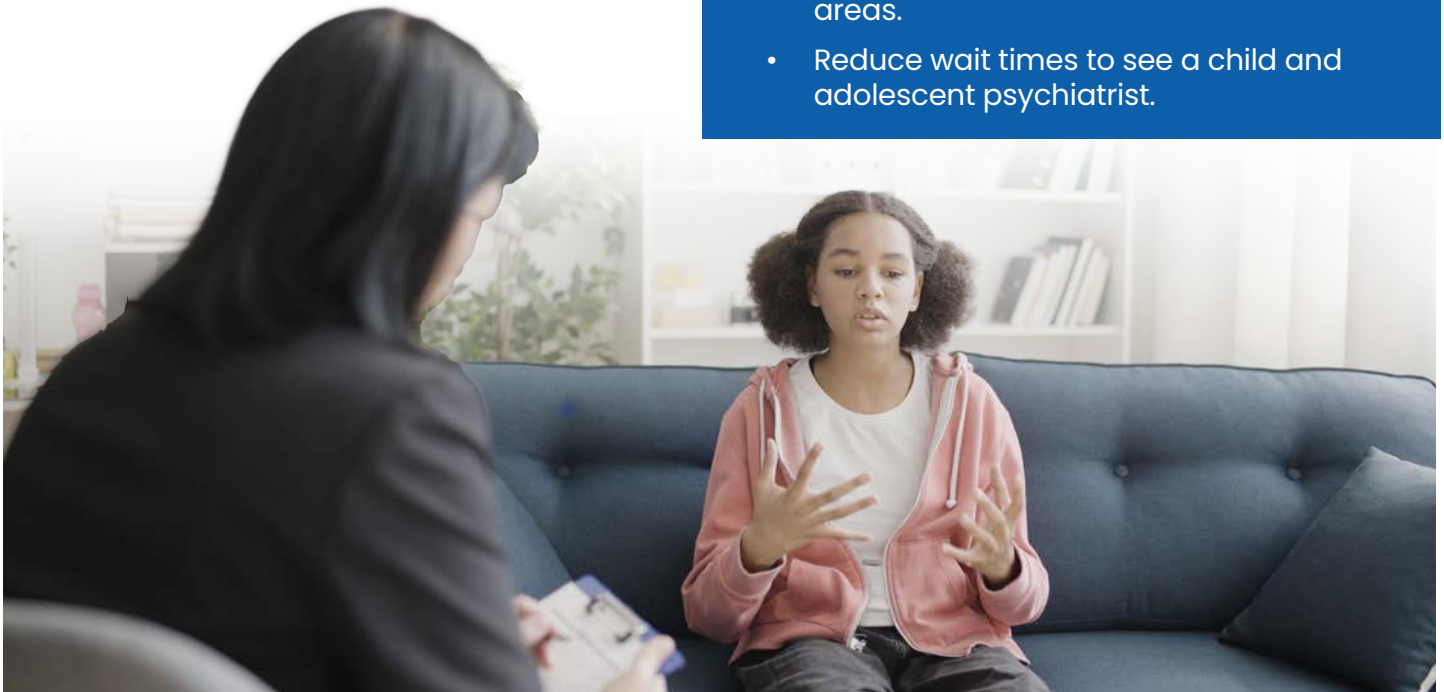
**The goal of the TCMHCC is to leverage the expertise and capacity of the state's health-related institutions of higher education to address urgent mental health challenges and improve the mental health care system for children and adolescents.**

### **The goals of the CPWE are:**

- Collaborate and coordinate with community mental health providers to expand the amount and availability of mental health care resources by developing training opportunities for residents and supervising residents at facilities operated by LMHAs and community mental health providers.
- Increase the number of Texas-trained psychiatry residents who work in the public mental health system upon completion of their residencies.

### **The goals of the CAP Fellowship Initiative are to:**

- Increase the ratio of child and adolescent psychiatrists to the child population.
- Reduce the number of designated mental health professional shortage areas.
- Reduce wait times to see a child and adolescent psychiatrist.





## About Andrews Behavioral Health



**Andrews Behavioral Health** is one of 39 local mental health authorities throughout Texas, providing services to treat mental illness and intellectual and developmental disabilities. This includes emergency crisis services, care for adults with severe mental illness, care for youth with severe emotional disturbances, treatment for substance use disorders, autism care services for children, Veteran's services and much more.

Andrews Behavioral Health serves five counties: Smith, Henderson, Rains, Van Zandt, and Wood. Andrews treats more than 12,000 people each year. Andrews is chartered to serve as the mental health authority for its five-county region, helping the organizations and individuals in East Texas work together in collaboration and coordination to solve mental health care challenges in the community.

## About UT Tyler



With a mission to improve educational and health care outcomes for East Texas and beyond, **UT Tyler** offers more than 90 undergraduate and graduate programs to nearly 10,000 students. Through its alignment with UT Tyler Health Science Center and UT Health East

Texas, UT Tyler has unified these entities to serve Texas with quality education, cutting-edge research and excellent patient care. Classified by Carnegie as a doctoral research institution and by *U.S. News & World Report* as a national university, UT Tyler has campuses in Tyler, Longview, Palestine and Houston.

## About THOT

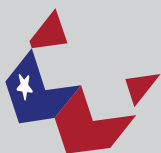
Founded in 1986, THOT is the principal voice and advocate for health systems that teach the next generation of health professionals and who are united in their commitment to support policies and funding that will ensure healthcare access to all Texans.

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