

TEACHING  
HOSPITALS  
of TEXAS

## New State Psychiatric Hospital Takes Shape in First-of-its-Kind Partnership With UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW)

New state psychiatric hospital in Southwestern Medical District will include first medical-psychiatric unit and other unique services within the state hospital system

### 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.

### Gaps in Inpatient Psychiatric Capacity for North Texas Motivates Support for New State Psychiatric Hospital

A 2014 study commissioned by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) identified significant gaps in the availability of psychiatric inpatient beds across the state, specifically finding that Texas needed to completely replace five of its existing eight state psychiatric hospitals and add 1,000 inpatient beds over the next 10 years. In response, the Texas Legislature in 2017 directed HHSC to develop a plan to replace the aging hospitals and expand capacity following a three-phased approach, and it appropriated an initial \$300 million to start the project.



HHSC's resulting 2017 Comprehensive Plan for State-Funded Inpatient Mental Health Services<sup>1</sup> included a request for funding to partner with two academic institutions to begin pre-planning for construction of new psychiatric hospitals in underserved parts of the state. Two new hospitals were proposed for the Panhandle region of the state and the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metroplex. While there is a psychiatric hospital in Vernon in far North Texas, it provides statewide maximum security inpatient psychiatric services only. DFW, unlike Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and other major metro areas of similar population, has no state psychiatric hospital to serve its regional catchment area. The closest state hospital to DFW is in Terrell, about 30 miles east of Dallas.

Since 2017, the state has appropriated more than \$2.5 billion in funding<sup>2</sup> for the replacement, renovation, and expansion of its psychiatric hospitals with the goal of adding approximately 670 new inpatient psychiatric beds across the state.

### **The New Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern Combines State-of-the-art Care Delivery Models, Hospital Design, and Education and Research Opportunities**

In the first-of-its-kind partnership, HHSC, UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW), and Dallas-based Children's Health came together to fund and operate the state's newest psychiatric hospital in Dallas, The Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern (TBHC-UTSW). The 87th Texas Legislature appropriated \$282.5 million to fund the construction and design of the adult wing of the facility, with an additional \$102 million appropriated by the 88th Texas Legislature to complete construction. In addition, Children's Health donated \$261 million to support the construction of the pediatric wing. Under this partnership, UTSW will have responsibility for all facility operations, including staffing.

With the groundbreaking of The Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern in December 2022, the adult wing is estimated to be completed and receiving patients in December 2025 and the pediatric addition by Summer 2026, pending legislative appropriations to HHSC for operations support. When completed, the new facility will be the largest stand-alone psychiatric hospital in the state, with 292 beds — 200 for adults and 92 for children and adolescents. Seventy-five of the adult beds will be dedicated to the forensic population.

In its Comprehensive Plan for State-Funded Inpatient Mental Health Services, HHSC stated its intent to partner with academic partners for the new psychiatric hospitals because they "can open doors to research and philanthropy, or otherwise leverage community resources in ways currently inaccessible to the state health and human service agencies." UTSW's plan for the new hospital will realize this expectation, creating a national model for partnership and behavioral health excellence, integrating research, training and education, and evidence-based care and design that will bring best-in-class psychiatric care to DFW and to Texas. Appropriate resourcing and enhanced investment are essential to supporting evidence-based innovation and improved patient care.



<sup>1</sup> <https://mmhpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/HHSCComprehensiveStateHospitalPlan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/about/process-improvement/improving-services-texans/changes-texas-state-hospitals>

The UT Southwestern design team sought input from patients, families, behavioral health providers, and other community stakeholders to create the blueprint for the new facility so that it will be best-in-class. They also learned from award-winning hospitals across the country to ensure the new facility's design and physical footprint would maximize recovery and enhance therapeutic and training activities. The new hospital will have individual patient rooms and bathrooms, large windows to enhance exposure to natural light, and gardens, courtyards, and other open-air areas to allow ample access to nature and green spaces.

The new state-of-the-art psychiatric facility will be located in the Southwestern Medical District that includes UTSW's main campus, an intentional decision to ensure its proximity to acute care hospitals, including UT Southwestern Clements University Hospital, Parkland Health, and Children's Health, to allow for easier transfer both for patients experiencing a psychiatric crisis and for patients experiencing both medical and psychiatric needs. In a first for the state's psychiatric hospital system, the new TBHC-UTSW facility will have the only adult and pediatric Medical-Psychiatry units (MPUs) in the system. MPUs, also known as Complexity Intervention Units (CIUs), are designed to deliver optimum hospital care to patients who have co-occurring medical and psychiatric needs.

Available for individuals over the age of three needing inpatient psychiatric treatment, the facility will serve the DFW metroplex, Denton County, and Collin County for adult and pediatric patients, and Tarrant County for pediatric patients. The region covers more than 6.5 million individuals. No diagnosis or exclusion criteria will be applied, and all treatment and therapies will be tailored to individual patient needs. In addition to inpatient capacity, the

facility will have one adult and one pediatric Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) for individuals stepping down from inpatient care but still needing intensive sustained support and therapy. With PHPs, the Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern expects to reduce the length of inpatient psychiatric stays in the community – freeing up beds more quickly – and reduce the likelihood of readmissions.

**“When it is completed, this new facility will represent the best of academic medical education, research, treatment, and architecture and design. It will both serve the community and be a national model for other states needing to address the serious shortage of psychiatric capacity in a compassionate and evidence-based way.”**

**Dr. Hicham Ibrahim**

UT Southwestern associate vice president and chief medical officer of ambulatory services and professor of psychiatry and ambulatory services

Before opening the hospital, UTSW must hire and onboard more than 1,200 FTEs to provide high-quality, evidence-based care, along with a complete executive and administrative team, making staffing nearly as ambitious as other facets of the new hospital. When fully operational, needed personnel will include operations and clinical staff running the gamut from behavioral health technicians to nurses, social workers, psychologists and therapists,



advanced practice providers (APPs), and psychiatrists. This workforce will also create more opportunities for teaching and training, particularly in high-demand behavioral health professions.

In addition to providing essential psychiatric care, The Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern will provide a training ground for a modern mental health workforce, including nurses, social workers, psychologists and therapists, APPs, and psychiatrists. For example, UTSW is currently one of three medical schools in the state equipped to train physicians for forensic psychiatry and trains more residents in the field of psychiatry than any other program in the country. The new behavioral health hospital will provide additional training opportunities and exposure to different therapy and treatment modalities.

In addition to its role in training future behavioral health care professionals, UTSW is one of the country's preeminent research centers for the study, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health and addictive disorders. Its Department of Psychiatry ranks in the top 10 nationally for National Institutes of Health funding and receives additional research support from other sources, including philanthropies and pharmaceutical companies. Integrating the care capacity of the new hospital with UTSW's research expertise will give state psychiatric hospital patients access to UTSW's clinical trials and accelerate the development of improved models of care and treatment for the betterment of all Texans with psychiatric disorders.

### About UT Southwestern Medical Center

#### UT Southwestern Medical Center

Located in Dallas, UT Southwestern Medical Center, one of the premier academic medical centers in the nation, integrates pioneering biomedical research with exceptional clinical care and education. The institution's faculty includes many

distinguished members, including six who have been awarded Nobel Prizes since 1985. The faculty of more than 2,800 is responsible for groundbreaking medical advances and is committed to translating science-driven research quickly to new clinical treatments. UT Southwestern physicians provide medical care in about 80 specialties to more than 105,000 hospitalized patients and nearly 370,000 emergency room cases and oversee approximately 3 million outpatient visits a year.

### About THOT

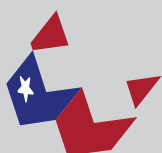
Founded in 1986, THOT is the principal voice and advocate for health systems that teach the next generation of health professionals and who are united in their commitment to support policies and funding that will ensure healthcare access to all Texans.

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