

Protecting Consumer Mental Health Through AI Safeguards



Background

Licensed mental health professionals bring ethical reasoning, clinical judgement, and accountability to therapeutic counseling services. Software cannot replicate these human faculties. Technology should stay a supportive tool in a licensed professional's hands, never a substitute for the professional.

Dangers of Automated Mental Health Care

No Accountability

An app owes a user nothing. A licensed social worker owes a client assessment, confidentiality, and a standard of care a licensing and governing board can enforce.

Over Reliance and Harm

Chatbots are designed to affirm users to keep the conversation going while obtaining sensitive consumer data, not to recognize suicidality, abuse, or psychosis and act on it.

Unlicensed Diagnosing

Diagnosing requires professional training and education, clinical judgement, and accountability that only licensed clinicians can provide.

Products marked as AI companions and “therapists” are already in Texans’ hands - unlicensed and unsupervised. A wrongful-death lawsuit in Florida alleges a 14-year-old died by suicide after months with an AI companion app, and a widely reported incident involved a Google chatbot issuing direct death threats to a student. Clinicians now describe **AI-associated psychosis**: immersive interactions that blur reality and reinforce distorted thinking in vulnerable users.

How Should Texas Respond

Define the Line

Define who may deliver psychotherapy in Texas and limit AI to only administrative and supervised support.

Require Disclosure

Clients must be told, verbally or written, when they are interacting with software rather than a clinician.

Enforcement

Currently, this is seen as a misdemeanor, but it is up to the Legislature to determine stronger enforcement actions to companies not in compliance.

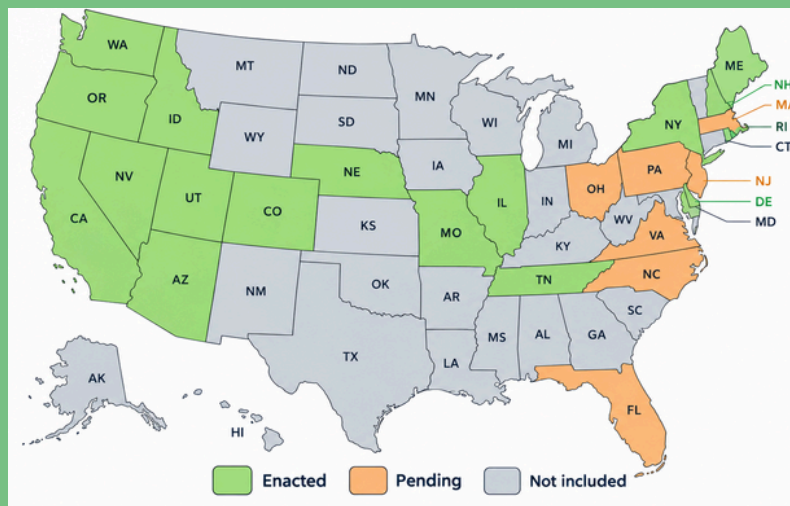
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nasw
National Association of Social Workers
TEXAS CHAPTER

AI May

- # AI May Not

- With Bipartisan Support, 17 States Have Enacted AI Provisions With 7 states Pending:**



Sources:

1: CBS News. (2025). Google settles lawsuit over Florida teen's suicide linked to Character.AI chatbot. CBS News.

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