

RECOVERY DAY AT THE CAPITOL 2019

Policy Priorities

PREVENTION WORKS

An extensive, effective prevention infrastructure already exists in Texas and is built on evidence based interventions that address a wider range of potential problems beyond substance misuse. Alcohol and drug use among adolescents are typically part of a larger spectrum of behavioral problems, including mental disorders, risky and criminal behaviors, and difficulties in school. In addition, prevention goes beyond the traditional idea of kids in school and has application across the lifespan, and includes drug overdose prevention, physician prescribing education, prescription monitoring programs, etc.

Sustain and expand evidence-based substance use disorder prevention programs that emphasize risk and protective factors as part of a multi-tiered system of school supports that foster positive school climates and the social, emotional and behavior needs of all students.

- **HB 18 (Price) Companion SB 913 (Watson)**, relating to the mental health of public-school students in training requirements for certain school employees, curriculum requirements, counseling programs, education programs, state and regional programs and services and healthcare services for students.
- **HB 19 (Price) Companion SB 914 (Watson)** relating to mental health and substance use resources for certain school districts.
- **HB 1293 (Price) Companion SB 435 (Nelson)** relating to recommendations by local school health advisory councils regarding opioid addiction education in public schools.

Reduce opioid and other drug overdoses.

Available evidence suggests that fear of arrest is a common barrier to calling 911 during an overdose and fear of police involvement can lead bystanders to delay or forgo making that call, increasing risk of overdose death. Good Samaritan Laws provide limited immunity to drug charges arising from evidence found at the scene of an overdose and are associated with reductions in overdose death.

- **SB 305 (Watson) Companion HB 2432 (Raney)** relating to a defense to prosecution for certain offenses involving possession of small amounts of controlled substances and other prohibited drugs, substances or paraphernalia for defendants seeking assistance for a suspected overdose.

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that can quickly and safely reverse the potentially fatal effects of an opioid overdose. Targeted distribution programs seek to train and equip individuals who are most likely to encounter an overdose with naloxone kits, which they can use in an emergency to save a life.

- **SB 340 (Huffman) Companion HB 1449 (King)** relating to the creation of a grant program to assist Law enforcement agencies with the purchase of opioid antagonists



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TREATMENT IS EFFECTIVE

Substance misuse and addiction causes a range of medical, justice, and social consequences that drive costs across the state budget and jeopardize the health and safety of Texans and their families. Research demonstrates a return on investment of \$7 for each \$1 spent on treatment services. It is more cost effective to strengthen the infrastructure and increase capacity than to continue to pay for the consequences of untreated addiction.

Stabilize and Strengthen the Treatment Infrastructure in order to expand access to quality substance use disorder treatment

The state-funded provider base has been stretched thin by years of delivering services for a rate that does not cover costs. Over recent years, fifteen providers have closed their doors or dropped their state contracts due to low state reimbursement and insufficient reimbursement is a barrier to attracting new Medicaid providers and applicants for publicly funded treatment. A rate adjustment is needed to ensure there is a ready and able provider network to continue providing current service levels and to lay the groundwork for a much-needed capacity expansion and improved access to treatment.

- **HB 1 (Zerwas) and SB 1 (Nelson)** General Appropriations Act
Support Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Exceptional item #21 for a Substance Use Disorder treatment rate adjustment

Opioid overdoses are cited as major contributors to pregnancy-associated deaths and is the leading cause of maternal death in Texas. Recent studies indicate that deaths from opioid overdoses decrease during pregnancy but increase in the 12 months following birth. Low-income women lose their Medicaid coverage eight weeks after giving birth leaving new moms susceptible to opioid cravings and relapse during postpartum depression. Expanding Medicaid include women up to 12 months post-partum can increase access to treatment and care coordination, reducing the likelihood of overdose.

- **HB 1110 (Davis) Companion SB 147 (Rodriguez)** related to the Medicaid eligibility of certain women after pregnancy.
Similar bills HB 411 (Thiery), SB 750 (Kolkhorst), SB 307 (Watson)



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RECOVERY SUPPORT IMPROVES OUTCOMES

Increasing access to recovery support services for persons with substance use issues and their families

- **HB 1465 (Rep. Moody) relating to a study on expanding recovery housing**, directs the Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop a report that evaluates the opportunities, challenges, and needs to expand recovery housing and to identify and evaluate state and federal regulations relevant to recovery housing. Recovery housing is a vital resource within the continuum of care, improving abstinence, mental health, employment, and monthly income as well as decreasing criminal justice involvement.
- **HB 1613 (Rep. Moody) Companion SB 1807 (Rodriguez) relating to the provision of recovery community organization services under Medicaid**, builds upon the 85th Session's "Peer Support Bill", which unanimously passed both the House and Senate. Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) are nonprofits, governed by the local recovery community, and deliver peer services with fidelity. Texas RCOs are known as national through leaders, helping develop national standards and accreditation.
- **HB 1758 (Rep. White) relating to a grant program and interagency review of resources to support and sustain a network of five (5) recovery community organizations in rural counties of less than 100,000 in population**. This bill also directs a broad base of state agencies to identify available resources under their control that may be used to support and sustain recovery community organizations throughout this state.
- **SB 717 (Sen. Lucio) companion HB 1414 (Craddick) relating to property tax exemption for charitable organizations that provide a meeting place and support services for organizations that provide assistance to alcoholics or their families regardless of their ability to pay**. Tax exemption can lower barriers to the services that provide public benefit, and Section 11.18(d) of the Tax Code currently provides ad valorem tax exemption to charitable nonprofits that provide a list of specific services. Adding addiction recovery support meetings and services to the list of exemptions, the State will increase access to cost effective services.

