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**TEXAS PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE RAMPING UP PRO BONO SERVICES AS COVID-19
DRIVES INCREASED DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

*Psychologists Call on Gov. Greg Abbott, Department of State Health Services to Establish
Provider Database to Improve Access to Mental Health Care During COVID-19*

AUSTIN, TEXAS—Beyond the physical health and economic toll of the COVID-19 virus, the current pandemic is shining a light on the urgent need and increased demand for mental health services. To address the mental health care needs of uninsured and underinsured Texans, the Texas Psychological Association (TPA) today announced their members are ramping up the TPA Pro Bono Project: COVID-19.

Leveraging Gov. Greg Abbott’s recent executive order expanding access to telehealth and telemedicine, the TPA Pro Bono Project: COVID-19 will provide up to two hours of free mental health services to under or uninsured Texans.

“COVID-19 is placing an enormous amount of emotional, social and psychological strain on people all across our state. Now, more than ever, access to mental health care is vital,” said Megan Mooney, PhD, President of the Texas Psychological Association. “Texas psychologists stand ready to help.”

TPA is recruiting and organizing its membership of licensed psychologists to support the mental health care needs of Texans impacted by COVID-19. The telehealth or telephone delivery of mental health services helps to meet the needs of Texans while adhering to recommended social distancing guidelines.

“We’re grateful for Gov. Abbott’s commitment to improving health care access during this time of crisis by waiving regulations specific to telehealth and telemedicine and authorizing insurers to treat telehealth equally to in-person visits,” said Jessica Magee, Executive Director of TPA, representing the voices of more than 4,500 licensed psychologists and licensed psychological associates in Texas.

Read Texas mental health professionals’ recent letter to Gov. Abbott lauding expanded access to telehealth and telemedicine at <https://bit.ly/TPALetter1>.

TPA is also calling on Gov. Abbott and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to re-establish its database of mental health professionals, an initiative DSHS activated following Hurricane Harvey and the El Paso mass shooting.

“We hope the State of Texas will do all it can to ensure improved access to mental health services during this time of crisis,” Dr. Mooney said. “Other state governors, including New York, are taking similar steps to connect qualified mental health professionals with people in need of services.”

TPA members interested in providing pro bono services and under or uninsured Texans in need of mental health services can visit texaspsyc.org to learn more about the TPA Pro Bono Project: COVID-19.

Read the letter to Gov. Abbott calling for DSHS to re-establish its database of mental health professionals at <https://bit.ly/TPALetter2>.

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