



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FOR THE 89th SESSION

TOP PRIORITY

Direct care providers are fleeing the system for easier jobs that pay a decent wage!

While, IDD support has always been a priority, this year is radically different.

Due to a combination of inflation and low reimbursement rates, providers cannot find staff to work for such low wages or make up the funding gap if they pay more than reimbursed. Over 225 group homes have closed across the state with over 100 more anticipated closures.

The Impact of Provider Closures on Jobs and Services

Up until now, the system has been able to absorb the closures. **Long-time providers are now sounding the alarm that they will not be able to operate if they do not get FAIR rates for staffing.** Buying down of the interests list will be pointless if there are no providers to support the services.

Those who are still open have 30-50% vacancy rates.

As an example, one of the largest providers in Dallas is at HIGH risk of closure. If they close, there is no agency available to absorb their 1000 clients. (They have taken over three other closed programs.) Their closure would cost 95 jobs directly, but also potentially, hundreds more who would not be able to keep their jobs if their family members with IDD did not have the support they need.

If more providers close as anticipated, the remaining will not be able to absorb the numbers needing services. The state will be forced to manage a severe crisis of no place for thousands of individuals. The cost for such crisis intervention will be MILLIONS more than the cost to provide fair market reimbursement rates.

ACTION NEEDED BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE:

Increase direct care staff reimbursement to same as state employee providers: \$19.16 / hour (FY24 appropriation plus guaranteed cost-of-living)

Increase nursing reimbursement to market rate (currently at 30% of actual cost)



Real Experts, Real Client, Real Results



WORKFORCE

Problem

- ➔ There is a severe shortage of qualified, credentialed mental health professionals and retention challenges deeply affect entry level positions to support the increasing mental health needs of the future.

Solutions

- ➔ The challenge is to connect students and adults from disadvantaged areas to behavioral health training programs and upwardly mobile careers.
- ➔ Target innovative partnerships and remove layers of bureaucracy by funding close to the point of delivery.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Problem

- ➔ Lack of affordable housing is chiefly responsible for the growing population of unhoused individuals.

Solutions

Continue to support affordable housing

- ➔ While not the driving factor, untreated mental health challenges exacerbate the issue.
- ➔ Rapid rehousing programs are essential as well as Permanent Supportive Housing of which Metrocare is one of the largest providers in Dallas County.



Metrocare's housing program provides affordable housing, wrap around services for those who need it and beautifies the neighborhood.