

TEXAS HOUSE PANEL
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
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I. THE CRISIS IN TEXAS!

- 14.6% of youth (age 12-17) report suffering from at least one major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year.
- Major depression among Texas youth increased 73% between 2015 and 2022.
- 73.1% of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment.
- Texas High School students attempts at suicide increased 35% between 2009 and 2019.
- About 20% of all Texas children have a mental health disorder (MHD).
- 10% of children have an MHD that significantly interferes with daily life.
- Due to mental illness, one in six school-aged youth experiences impairments in life functioning, including impacts on academic achievement. (TEA)
- The number of students experiencing mental illness increases as young people grow older. (TEA)
- Suicide attempts among children in Texas have increased. Calls to the Texas Poison Control Network for suspected suicide among teenage girls jumped nearly 50 percent between 2019 and 2021.
- According to student surveys in PK-12 and university institutions, mental health issues such as anxiety, fear, and depression are directly impacting students' academic success.

II. THE TASKS BEFORE US!

- Addressing the challenges of availability and accessibility of mental health resources for children in rural school districts across South Texas and the state.
- Partnering with South Texas school districts, community agencies, university stakeholders, and other educational entities, the Rural Mental Health Institute will strive to be on the forefront of research and innovative responses to the mental health needs of rural communities in South Texas.
- Forming research-based partnerships and collaborations with those state, regional, national, and international entities who are committed to enhancing the mental health within underserved and under-represented rural populations.

III. THE RESPONSE FROM TAMU-KINGSVILLE!

- We are the first in the nation to offer a Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling with an emphasis in rural mental health.
- We are the only university in the nation to have a 12-hour transcribed certificate in Community, Crisis Response, and Rural Mental Health.
- 85.3% of our mental health counseling graduates have a job within one year.
- We have active and ongoing collaboration with universities in Scotland, Canada, and Australia regarding how those countries are addressing rural and remote mental health.
- In July 2022, TAMUK officially established the Rural Mental Health Institute with a multi-mission purpose to 1) educate leaders in the subject of rural mental health, 2) develop partnerships with South Texas school districts to holistically support student success, 3) advocate for healthy rural populations, and 4) drive forward a robust research agenda that seeks collaborative input from scholars across the globe.