

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3088

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Hearing Date: April 14, 2021 8:00 AM

Sean Walker

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Austin, TX

ISSUE

Many rural communities in Texas are hesitant to apply to the Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) grant programs due to high matching percentage costs. HB 3088 would reduce matching thresholds, giving more communities the ability to apply for grants from the Community Mental Health Grant Program, Mental Health Grant Program for Justice-Involved Individuals, and Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program. In addition, the bill would eliminate some funding restrictions on Healthy Community Collaboratives (HCCs).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lower grant programs' match thresholds to enable communities to more affordably fund initiatives which help individuals with mental health/substance use conditions, justice involvement, and veterans.
- Protect future funding for HCCs by easing potential requirements for full self-sustainment. This will promote the reintegration of individuals back into their communities.

BACKGROUND

HHSC administers several grant programs aimed at improving the mental health and wellness of Texans, including the Community Mental Health Grant Program, Mental Health Grant Program for Justice-Involved Individuals, and Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program. HCCs connect public and private entities so that Texas can reintegrate adults with mental health/substance use conditions or housing issues into their communities. Current HCCs include the City of Dallas, Haven for Hope in San Antonio, Integral Care in Austin, and My Health My Resources of Tarrant County in Fort Worth.

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health has worked closely with our partners in rural communities, and we can attest that a primary concern is affordability issues of matching grant requests from HHSC's programs. HB 3088 (Coleman, 87th) would change the match thresholds to reduce the cost burden for the Community Mental Health Grant Program, Mental Health Grant Program for Justice-Involved Individuals, and Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program. Changes to the matching percentages would be based on the populations of counties in which collaboratives are serving. A report on the success of the matching grant program would be submitted every even-numbered year, a change from the existing language requiring it to be submitted annually. HB 3088 would also eliminate the seven-year timeframe that HCCs currently have to become self-sustaining before allowing HHSC to reduce funding. In addition, the bill would allow HCCs to leverage in-kind contributions/funding from private contributors or local governments, excluding state and federal funds.

CONCLUSION

By reducing match thresholds for grants, Texas would support grant programs that provide services to individuals with mental health/substance use conditions, are justice-involved, and to veterans and their families. The state could also support HCCs by easing funding restrictions. These grant programs and HCCs are vital to providing services for people transitioning back into their communities.

Rexine Howell

none

San Marcos, TX

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I support this bill.

Christine Bryan, VP, Information Technology and Public Policy

Clarity Child Guidance Center

San Antonio, TX

Clarity Child Guidance Center is in full support of HB 3088. Clarity is a non-profit providing inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services to children ages 3-17. Clarity's patient census is comprised of 70% low-income, state-supported children through Medicaid, CHIP, STARHealth, STARKids and low-cost contracts with area local mental health authorities.

The community mental health grants developed in the 85th Legislative Session have been a great resource for partners and collaborators in developing innovative resources and covering gaps in mental health needs. Bringing down the match allows this great opportunity to other areas of the state and only makes sense. On behalf of our kids and families, we ask you please support HB 3088.

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

I support this bill, as it would expand services across the state and would allow for local program initiation. Perhaps future legislation could proscribe a increasing match percentage over time, or also include in-kind good and services as partially meeting the matching requirement. Leveraging in-kind match would foster partnerships.