

# 2019 Legislative Agenda



## WHO IS MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF GREATER HOUSTON?

Mental Health America of Greater Houston is a leader in creating change that enhances the mental health of our community through groundbreaking collaborations, education, and advocacy. MHA of Greater Houston seeks to replace misperceptions and misunderstanding about mental health with compassion and knowledge and remove barriers to treatment through systems- and public policy-change. Collaborations include the Center for School Behavioral Health, the Integrated Health Care Initiative, and the Veterans Behavioral Health Program.

## WHERE DID THESE BILLS COME FROM?

The Center for School Behavioral Health at MHA of Greater Houston ("The Center") serves as a living laboratory for incubating innovative, cost-effective and replicable best practices to improve the behavioral health of students. During the interim and in partnership with countless community stakeholders, The Center solidified support around policies of longstanding interest to the legislature and, more specifically, policies important for creating safe and supportive school environments for Texas' students.

**Mental Health America of Greater Houston is proud to partner with our legislative delegation to support the following legislation:**

### **Mental Health Research Collaborative: Effective, Efficient & Accountable School-Based Mental Health Programs**

**HB 906** (Joint Authors: Thompson, Senfronia | Phelan | Moody | Bonnen, Greg | Coleman / Coauthors: Bernal | Blanco | Ortega | Zwiener Sponsor: Powell / Cosponsor: Hall) | **SB 992** (Author: Powell)

This bill establishes a university-based, collaborative task force to study and evaluate certain state-funded, public school mental health programs and practices. This task force would serve to ensure these state monies are spent effectively and efficiently. The Texas Legislature is proposing to spend millions of dollars on school mental health programs. This bill will provide accountability for Texas' taxpayers.

**House Vote:** 113 Yeas, 30 Nays

**Senate Vote:** 29 Yeas, 2 Nays

**Signed by Governor Abbott 6/14/2019 & Effective Immediately**

### **Back to School: Transition Support for Justice-Involved Youth Returning to School**

**HB 2184** (Joint Authors: Allen | White | Wu | Phelan | Morales) | **SB 1155** (Author: Huffman)

This bill creates a pathway back to school for justice-involved youth by empowering school districts enrollment assistance to students through the creation of individualized transition plans. To the extent possible, an individualized transition plan must be developed within five instructional days following a youth's release from a disciplinary alternative education program, a juvenile justice alternative education program, a residential program or facility operated by-or-under contract with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, a juvenile board, or any other governmental entity.

**House Vote:** 123 Yeas, 21 Nays

**Senate Vote:** 31 Yeas, 0 Nays

**Signed by Governor Abbott 6/10/2019 & Effective Immediately**

### **Educator Training on Emotional Trauma, Grief, and Behavioral Health**

**HB 1623** (Author: Coleman)

This bill streamlines language within existing state code to ensure school districts have clear direction regarding training educators on how to recognize and respond to possible physical and emotional trauma suffered by students. In addition, this legislation encourages reporting of a school district's training numbers to the Texas Education Agency by allowing for the prioritization of reporting school districts and public charter schools to receive competitive grant programs for mental health services.

**Passed as an amendment to SB 11**

**Endorsed by affiliates across the state**



For questions or comments, please contact:

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