

News Release

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MILLIONS IN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM GRANTS AWARDED

AUSTIN – Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Article II Subcommittee, led by Texas State Senator Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound, millions of dollars in state aid soon will be distributed to support new and ongoing mental health programs in communities throughout Texas.

"By partnering with communities throughout our state, we are providing sorely needed resources to help Texans struggling with mental illnesses that, left unaddressed, become the problem of our jails, burden our hospital emergency rooms or end in preventable tragedy," Senator Nelson said. "The funds we appropriated will help us eliminate waiting lists for community mental health services, increase services for veterans, address homelessness related to mental health issues, expand access to crisis services, and improve patient safety at our state hospitals."

The Legislature approved a \$298 million increase in funding for mental health services across several budget strategies including crisis services, state hospitals, and community services for adults and children. The Department of State Health Services is preparing to distribute 19 grants totaling \$24.5 million throughout our state to expand crisis intervention services, along with 18 grants worth \$10.7 million to provide rental assistance for homeless individuals who receive community-based mental health services through our Local Mental Health Authorities.

Grants heading to Senate District 12 include \$3.9 million to the Tarrant County MHMR to create a respite program for teenagers with mental illness who may pose a risk of harm to themselves or others, and \$470,000 to provide supportive housing to homeless clients. "These local programs will help children in crisis and will provide transitional housing in our community for mental health patients facing homelessness," Senator Nelson said.

In addition to the increases in funding, Senator Nelson also authored SB 58 to improve coordination of mental health services for Medicaid clients and SB 126 to allow the public to compare outcomes across mental health and substance abuse providers. Both bills go into effect on September 1, 2013.

SENATOR JANE NELSON represents District 12, including portions of Denton and Tarrant counties. She is chair of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and the highest ranking Republican in the Texas Senate.

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