



DPC Issue Brief

*...promoting progressive public policy
for Texans with disabilities.*

Title: Children's Mental Health Services within the Department of State Health Services (DHS)

Background: The 78th legislature enacted House Bill 2292 which consolidated many state agencies into one. The Department of State Health Services became the new agency responsible for mental health services. This reorganization eliminated the Children's Mental Health Unit. Without this Unit, there is not clear accountability to ensure children's mental health services/behavioral health services and policy receives adequate focus within the larger mental health/behavioral health service delivery system.

Recommendation: The Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) recommends that the Texas Legislature to direct the Department of State Health Services by a rider to re-establish a children's mental health unit and should require that the Department publish quarterly child mental health services data reports in order to ensure that children's mental health services/behavioral health services and policy receives adequate focus within the larger mental health/behavioral health service delivery system.

Contact information: Monica Thyssen , 7800 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 171-E, Austin, Texas 78757, Telephone: (512) 454-4816, Facsimile: (512) 323-0902, email: mthyssen@advocacyinc.org.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: *Statewide Members:* Advocacy, Incorporated, Brain Injury Association of Texas, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Epilepsy Coalition of Texas, The Institute for Disability Access/ADAPT, Lone Star Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Mental Health Association in Texas, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Texas, National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Texas, Texas Advocates, Texas AIDS Network, Texas Association of Centers for Independent Living, Texas Association of the Deaf, Texas Center for Disability Studies/ Texas Technology Access Project, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, Texas Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Texas Legal Services Center, Texas Mental Health Consumers, Texas State Independent Living Council, Texas State Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, Council for Families for Children, United Cerebral Palsy of Texas, The Spina Bifida Association of Texas, Inc., and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Texas. *Local Members:* Epilepsy Foundation Central & South Texas. REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living – Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton, Corpus Christi Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Goodwill of Central Texas and Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living

Allies: Children's Mental Health Consortium