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Governor Abbott, HHSC Announce \$210 Million In Federal Emergency Funding For Behavioral Health Services

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July 14, 2021 | Austin, Texas | [Press Release](#)

Governor Greg Abbott today announced the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is receiving more than \$210 million in federal emergency grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for mental health and substance use disorder services to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The State of Texas is committed to securing the resources and funding needed to address the challenges of substance abuse and mental health,” said Governor Abbott. “This federal funding will allow HHSC to enhance crucial programs and resources for Texans in need of substance abuse or mental health support, and I thank our partners at HHS for working with us to strengthen behavioral health services across the state.”

“The pandemic has created much higher demand for mental health and substance use disorder services across Texas,” said Sonja Gaines, HHS deputy executive commissioner for Intellectual and Developmental Disability and

Behavioral Health Services. “The federal emergency funding will allow us to address challenges associated with the impact of COVID-19 and help get Texans who need behavioral support on the road to recovery.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug overdose deaths hit the highest number on record in 2020 with opioids, primarily fentanyl, driving this unprecedented death toll. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recently awarded funding for two of HHSC’s block grants to advance mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services to improve individuals, communities, and public health. This funding was approved through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021. Part of Texas’ funding, \$135.6 million, is for substance use prevention and substance use disorder treatment and recovery support. The remaining \$74.5 million is for community mental health services.

HHSC is using the emergency funding to develop and implement more than two dozen mental health and substance use disorder initiatives, including: expanded access to both virtual and in-person treatment and recovery support services, housing initiatives, peer recovery support, overdose reversal education and campaigns aimed at reducing the onset of behavioral health issues.

Some funding will also go toward diversion services that allow mental health professionals to respond with law enforcement when someone needs mental health or substance use disorder treatment instead of jail or an emergency room.

For more information about resources available to Texans who are struggling with mental health issues and substance use, visit the [Mental Health and Substance Use webpage](#).

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