



## 2015 Policy Priorities

### *Prioritize prevention as a primary role in health and human services*

Today's advanced knowledge of prevention has the potential to transform the health and well-being of Texans. The human and financial benefits of preventing a problem before it exists or intervening before it becomes worse are obvious. Unfortunately, a reactive approach to health and well-being has been typical. Missed opportunities for making prevention an integral part of care, for coordinating prevention services, and for developing and funding a vision for prevention in Texas has resulted in bloated, highly expensive health and behavioral health services with skyrocketing costs and with people demonstrating more complex medical and behavioral health needs at a younger age. Opportunities abound to promote mental and physical health. However, a true commitment to a paradigm shift that places prevention first is needed. The following priorities provide an outline of how Texas can achieve improved health, well-being, and safety of Texans:

- 1. Develop a coordinated prevention system that reflects the needs of Texans through interagency coordination**
  - a. Survey agencies currently providing prevention services to determine gaps in prevention services and overlap of prevention services
  - b. Identify and remove programmatic barriers to coordination
  - c. Develop accountability standards that require programs to coordinate services
  - d. Fund and sustain a statewide planning and integration process
  - e. Create a unified public health message
- 2. Align prevention, intervention, and treatment services**
  - a. Create a continuum of prevention by addressing prevention in non-traditional settings
  - b. Identify and remove barriers to integration
  - c. Develop accountability standards to demonstrate service coordination
- 3. Integrate services for individuals with co-occurring developmental disability and mental health needs**
  - a. Provide individualized services that meet the unique needs of individuals with co-occurring developmental disabilities and mental health needs
  - b. Screen individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities for mental health needs
  - c. Ensure access to adequate provider networks with specialized knowledge in these conditions
  - d. Identify and remove barriers to service for individuals with co-occurring developmental disability and mental health needs
- 4. Ensure the health and human services workforce will meet the growing needs of Texans**
  - a. Mandate certification and licensing boards to require training in co-occurring disorders, underserved populations, and prevention.
  - b. Require continuing education for licensed professionals in intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental health, and cultural competency
- 5. Develop a strategy to increase the health and human services workforce in underserved areas**
  - a. Develop targeted incentive programs for underserved areas through the use of scholarships, student loan repayment assistance, and state grants
  - b. Provide interstate credentialing for individuals relocating to Texas with relevant licenses and certifications related to health care and human services
- 6. Maintain an independent Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities to ensure prevention in Texas is a priority**

