



THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS
THE TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

November 4, 2026
Meeting Notebook



**November 4, 2026
Commission Meeting Notebook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Tab
Agenda	1
Executive Committee, Commissioners & Collaborative Council	2
May 2026 Meeting Minutes	3
Budget	4
Report to the Commission	5
Court Liaison Pilot Program – Getting Started Guide	6

Tab 1
Agenda



**Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Commission Meeting**

November 4, 2026

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Embassy Suites by Hilton San Marcos
Hotel Conference Center
1001 E McCarty Ln, San Marcos, TX 78666

AGENDA

2:00	Welcome	Hon. Jane Bland Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III Hon. Rebeca Huddle Hon. Gina Parker
2:10	Executive Director Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget & Grants Report• Court Liaison Pilot Program• OCA Update• SIM Mapping• Summit Committee• Data Committee• SUD Committee• Rural Communities Committee• Texas AOT Collaborative• Collaborative Council Report• Legislative Research Committee	Kristi Taylor Patrick Passmore Kama Harris Jeffrey Tsunekawa Hon. John Specia, Jr Hon. Brent Carr Dr. Connie Almeida Hon. Roxanne Nelson Katherine Turner Dr. Emma Bramble Dr. Uche Chibueze Hon. Bill Boyce
3:30	Commissioner Reports	Hon. Jane Bland
5:00	Adjourn	Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III

Tab 2
Executive Committee,
Commissioners,
& Collaborative Council

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Executive Committee

Hon. Jane Bland, Chair

Justice

Supreme Court of Texas

Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III, Chair

Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Hon. Bill Boyce, Vice-Chair

Justice (Fmr.)

Fourteenth Court of Appeals

Partner

Alexander Dubose & Jefferson, LLP

Hon. Rebeca Huddle, Deputy Liaison

Justice

Supreme Court of Texas

Hon. Gina Parker, Deputy Liaison

Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Hon. Brent Carr

Judge

Adelanto Immigration Court

Hon. John J. Specia, Jr.

Judge (Ret.)

225th District Court

Partner

Anderson Cilfone

Megan LaVoie, J.D.

Administrative Director

Office of Court Administration

Commissioners

Magdalena Morales-Aina, L.P.C.-S.

Director

El Paso County Community Supervision
& Corrections Department

M. Connie Almeida, Ph.D.

Director of Behavioral Health

Fort Bend County Behavioral Health
Services

Hon. Devon Anderson

President & CEO

Justice Forward

Ricky Armstrong

Executive Director

Texas Commission on Jail Standards

Hon. Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt

Judge

449th District Court

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti

Associate Judge

Tarrant County Probate Court No. 2

Shandra Carter, L.C.S.W.-S.

Executive Director

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Hon. Camile DuBose

Judge (Ret.)

38th Judicial District

Michaelle Durham, M.D., M.P.H.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Hon. Alyse Ferguson

Of Counsel

Rosenthal Kalabus & Therrian

Associate Judge

Collin County Probate Court

Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore

Director

Collin County Juvenile Services

Hon. Matt Hand

Judge

Potter County Court at Law No. 2

Courtney Harvey, Ph.D.

Associate Commissioner for Mental Health Programs

Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Hon. Joan Huffman

Senator, District 17

Texas Senate

Trina Ita, M.A., L.P.C.

Deputy Executive Commissioner for Behavioral Health Services

Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Hon. David W. Jahn

Judge

Denton County Probate Court No. 1

Hon. Oscar J. Kazen

Judge

Bexar County Probate Court No. 1

Brenda Keller, L.C.S.W.-S.

Mental Health Department Director

Texas Veterans Commission

Adrienne Kennedy, M.A.

National Trainer

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Hon. M. Sue Kurita

Judge

El Paso County Court at Law No. 6

Beth Lawson, M.B.A.

Chief Executive Officer

StarCare Specialty Health System

Chief Mike Lee, M.A.

Director of Research & Development

Harris County Sheriff's Office

Hon. Elizabeth Byer Leonard

Judge

238th District Court

Hon. Pam Liston

City Attorney

City of Decatur

Associate Judge

Town of Fairview

Octavio Martinez, Jr., M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A.

Executive Director

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Hon. Stacey Mathews

Judge

277th District Court

Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum

Judge

Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Beth Mitchell, J.D.
Litigation Coordinator
Disability Rights Texas

Hon. Joe Moody
Representative, District 78
Texas House of Representatives

Hon. Brandy Mueller
Judge
403rd Criminal District Court

Hon. Roxanne Nelson
Justice of the Peace
Burnet County Precinct 1

Denise Oncken, J.D., M.B.A.
Bureau Chief (Ret.)
Harris County District Attorney's Office

Hon. Larry Phillips
Judge
59th District Court

Lee Pierson, J.D.
Mental Health Division Deputy Chief
Dallas County Public Defender's Office

Scott Schalchlin, M.Ed., J.D.
*Deputy Executive Commissioner for the
Health & Specialty Care System*
Texas Health & Human Services
Commission

Prof. Brian Shannon, J.D.
*Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished
Professor*
Texas Tech University School of Law

Eric Smith, M.S., M.S.W.
Founder
Eric W. T. Smith Consulting

Matt Smith, L.P.C.-S.
*Director of Statewide Youth Services
Continuum*
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Hon. Selena Solis
Judge
243rd District Court

Chief Stan Standridge
Chief of Police
San Marcos Police Department

Hon. Charles Stephens
Judge
Comal County Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Victor Villarreal
Judge
Webb County Court at Law No. 2

LaTrenda Watson, Ed.D
Director of Mental & Behavioral Health
Texas Education Agency

Hon. Cynthia Wheless
Judge
417th District Court

Steve Wohleb, J.D.
General Counsel
Texas Hospital Association

Hon. J.R. Woolley
Justice of the Peace
Waller County Precinct 2

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Wayne Young, M.B.A., L.P.C., F.A.C.H.E.

Chief Executive Officer

Texas Behavioral Health Center

April Zamora, M.Ed., L.C.D.C.

Reentry & Integration Division Director

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Collaborative Council

Jarvis Anderson

Chief

Bexar County Probation

Hon. Sheila Garcia-Bence

Judge

Cameron County Criminal Court No. 4

Kelsey Bernstein

Chief of Government Relations

Texas Council of Community Centers

Hon. Elizabeth Berry

Chief Public Defender

Concho Valley Public Defender's Office

Catherine Bialick, M.P.Aff.

Deputy Associate Commissioner

Office of Forensic Services &
Coordination, Texas Health & Human
Services Commission

Amanda Britton, M.Ed., L.P.C., N.C.C.

Virginia Brown, Ph.D., M.A.

*Research Scholar in Social Justice &
Population Health*

The Hastings Center

Hon. Sarah Bruchmiller

Judge

368th District Court

Sonja Burns

Mental Health Advocate

Angel Carroll

Principal Consultant

Angel Carroll Consulting Group

Hon. Jennifer Cates

Judge

Canyon Municipal Court

Uche Chibueze, Psy.D., A.B.P.P.

Assistant Director of Health Services

Harris County Juvenile Probation
Department

Hon. Brad Clark

Judge

Tarrant County Criminal Court No. 5

Armando Colombo

President & Chief Executive Officer

The Menninger Clinic

Hon. Adolfo Cordova

Judge

197th District Court

Bill Cox, J.D.

Director of Public Defense Improvement
Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Leah Davies, L.M.S.W.

Cause Programs Manager

CLEAN Cause Foundation

Colleen Davis, J.D.

First Assistant County Attorney

Burnet County Attorney's Office

Hon. Karen Diaz

Justice of the Peace

San Patricio County Precinct 4

Dana V. Drexler, J.D.

Deputy Division Director

Harris County Attorney's Office

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Cpt. Shawn Edwards

Program Director

Burleson Health Resource Center

Captain

Lavaca County Sheriff's Office

Hon. Drue Farmer

Board Chair

Texas Council of Community Centers

Rebecca Fowler

Director

Public Policy and Government Affairs

Mental Health America, Greater Houston

Eric Fox

Law Enforcement Liaison

Central Counties Services

Tucker Furlow, J.D.

Deputy County Administrator

Hays County

Lori Gallo, L.M.S.W.

Forensic Social Worker

Bexar County Managed Assigned

Counsel

Krishnaveni Gundu

Co-Founder & Executive Director

Texas Jail Project

Rachel Hampton, L.M.S.W.

Chief Mission Officer

Lone Star Justice Alliance

Lucy Hebron, J.D.

Judicial Education Program Manager

Texas Association of Counties

Hon. James C. Henderson

Judge

Grayson County Court at Law No. 1

Elizabeth Henry

Founder & Policy Strategist

Civic Strategies

Michaela Himes, J.D., M.T.S.

Senior Associate

Bourland, Wall & Wenzel, P.C.

Hon. Echo Hutson

Judge

Montgomery County Court at Law No. 4

Hon. Sandra Jackson

Judge

302nd District Court

Lee Johnson, M.P.A.

Chief Executive Officer

Texas Council of Community Centers

Windy Johnson

Program Manager, IGR

Texas Conference of Urban Counties

Hon. Rocky Jones

Presiding Judge

203rd District Court

Louise Joy, J.D.

Member

Reed Claymon, PLLC

Leah Kelly

Family Engagement Specialist

Texas System of Care

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Hon. Evelyn Keyes

Justice (Ret.)

First Court of Appeals

Sgt. Michael Krogmann

Crisis Intervention Team Sergeant

Round Rock Police Department

Hon. Kirsten Legore

Judge

Guadalupe County Court at Law No. 2

Jonathan Lemuel

Director of Forensic Services

Bluebonnet Trails Community Services

Scott LePor, D.O.

Medical Director

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Patricia Lerma, N.C.C., L.P.C.,

L.C.D.C.

Doctoral Student; Research & Teaching Assistant

University of Texas Health Rio Grande Valley

Katrina LeVert, J.D.

Assistant County Attorney

Fort Bend County Attorney's Office

Chris Lopez, J.D.

Assistant General Counsel

State Hospital, Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Mahgul Mansoor

Evaluation & Implementation Researcher

Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health

Hon. Lela Mays

Judge

283rd Judicial District Court

Rosie Medina, J.M.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

El Paso County Juvenile Probation Department

Kristin Meeks, J.D.

Senior Policy Analyst

Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Joanna Mendez, M.S.S.W., L.C.S.W.

Assistant Adjunct Professor

Steve Hicks School of Social Work, University of Texas at Austin

Kendall McKimmey

Chief of the Mental Health Division

Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office

Officer Brittany Moreno, M.A.

Mental Health Officer

Sugar Land Police Department

Kyle Morris

Assistant Criminal District Attorney

Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Jeffery Murray

Domestic Security Strategist
National Threat Assessment Center,
United States Secret Service

Hon. Rita Noel

Student Support Specialist
Denison Independent School District

Evan Norton, Psy.D.

Deputy Executive Director
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Patricia Ortiz, M.D.

*Assistant Professor, Psychiatry Clerkship
Director*
Texas Tech Health El Paso

Keely Petty, CPsy.D.

Training Coordinator
WestCare

Officer Terry Qualls

Crisis Intervention Coordinator
McKinney Police Department

Chris Ritter, J.D., M.Ed.

Chief Legal Counsel
State Bar of Texas

Trish Rivera

Rural Health Specialist
Texas Department of Agriculture

Michelle Romero, M.P.A.

Associate Director
Texas Medical Association

Melissa Schank, M.A.

Executive Director
Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers
Association

Jonas Schwartz, M.S.

Program Manager
Texas Workforce Commission

Melissa Shearer, J.D.

Mental Health Division Director
Travis County Public Defender's Office

Mike Shirley, J.D.

Chief Prosecutor
Montgomery County District Attorney's
Office

Hon. Mike Smith

Judge
35th District Court

Sandra Smith, Ph.D.

Chief Programs Officer
One World Recovery Center

Cpt. Scott Soland

Captain of Jail Operations (Ret.)
Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

Ron Stretcher

Vice President of Systems Improvement
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Tressa Surratt, J.D.

Assistant Public Defender
Harris County Public Defender's Office

Hon. Nancy Tanner

County Judge
Potter County

Jennifer Toon

Executive Director
Lioness Justice Impacted Women's
Alliance

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Haley Turner, M.S.W.

*Deputy Executive Commissioner for
Community Services
Texas Health & Human
Services Commission*

Hon. Ryan Kellus Turner

*Executive Director
Texas Municipal Courts
Education Center*

Hon. Brian Keith Umphress

*County Judge
Jack County*

Sally Uncapher, J.D.

*Assistant District Attorney
Bexar County District Attorney's Office*

Shena Ureste

*Chief Executive Officer
Texana Center*

Krista Varney, L.M.S.W.

*Public Policy Coordinator
Texas Council on Family Violence*

Kyle Walker

*Legal Systems Manager
Ending Community Homelessness
Coalition*

Nicole Weaver

*YES Waiver Manager, Mental Health and
Substance Use Programs
Texas Health & Human Services
Commission*

Thea Whalen, J.D.

*Executive Director
Texas Justice Courts Training Center*

Hon. Deborah Wigington

*Judge
Comal County Court at Law No. 3*

Hon. Angela Williams

*Justice of the Peace
Williamson County Precinct 2*

Thomas Wilson, J.D.

*Assistant District Attorney, Civil Division
Smith County District Attorney's Office*

Jay Wooten, J.D.

*Chief Public Defender
Galveston County Misdemeanor Mental
Health Public Defender's Office*

Andrea Wright, M.D.

*Chief of Forensic Medicine
Office of Forensic Services &
Coordination, Texas Health & Human
Services Commission*

Hon. Michael York

*Justice of the Peace
Lee County Precinct 2*

Tab 3

Minutes from May 2026 Meeting

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
May 15th, 2026
10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Texas Law Center
1414 Colorado Street, Austin, TX 78701

Commissioner Attendees

Hon. Jane Bland, *Chair, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas*
Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III, *Chair, Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals*
Hon. Gina Parker, *Deputy Liaison, Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals*
Hon. Bill Boyce, *Vice-Chair, Justice (Fmr.), 14th Court of Appeals; Partner, Alexander Dubose & Jefferson*
Dr. M. Connie Almeida, *Director, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services*
Hon. Nelda Cacciotti, *Associate Judge, Tarrant County Probate Court No. 2*
Dr. Michelle Durham, *Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute*
Hon. Alyse Ferguson, *Associate Judge, Collin County Probate Court*
Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore, *Chief Probation Officer, Collin County Juvenile Probation & Detention Department*
Hon. Matt Hand, *Judge, Potter County Court at Law No. 2*
Dr. Courtney Harvey, *Associate Commissioner for Mental Health Programs, Texas Health & Human Services Commission*
Hon. Dave W. Jahn, *Judge, Denton County Probate Court No. 1*
Adrienne Kennedy, *National Trainer, National Alliance on Mental Illness*
Brenda Keller, *Mental Health Department Director, Texas Veterans Commission*
Hon. M. Sue Kurita, *Judge, El Paso County Court at Law No. 6*
Beth Lawson, *Chief Executive Officer, StarCare Specialty Health System*
Hon. Stacey Mathews, *Judge, 277th District Court*
Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum, *Presiding Judge, Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2*
Beth Mitchell, *Litigation Coordinator, Disability Rights Texas*
Magdalena Morales-Aina, *Director, El Paso County Community Supervision & Corrections*
Hon. Brandy Mueller, *Judge, 403rd District Court*
Hon. Roxanne Nelson, *Justice of the Peace, Burnet County Precinct 1*
Denise Oncken, *Mental Health Bureau Chief (Ret.), Harris County District Attorney's Office*

Hon. Larry Phillips, *Judge, 59th District Court*

Lee Pierson, *Chief of Mental Health Division, Dallas County District Attorney's Office*

Catherine Bialick for **Scott Schalchlin**, *Deputy Executive Commissioner, Texas Health & Human Services Commission*

Prof. Brian Shannon, *Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, Texas Tech University School of Law*

Eric Smith, *Founder, Eric W.T. Smith Consulting*

Steve Wohleb, *General Counsel, Texas Hospital Association*

Wayne Young, *Chief Executive Officer, The Harris Center*

Emily Eisenman for **April Zamora**, *Director, Rehabilitation & Re-Entry Division, Texas Department of Criminal Justice*

Welcome and Announcements

Justice Jane Bland opened the meeting and welcomed commissioners. She reflected on the success of the Commission's [recommendations in the 89th Legislative Session](#) and recognized the Legislative Research Committee for their work preparing recommendations for the 90th Legislative Session.

Judge Jesse F. McClure III thanked commissioners for their attendance and service to the Commission. He asked that Commissioners complete a survey indicating their preference regarding reappointment to the Commission. All Commissioner terms will end in December 2026, and the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas will appoint Commissioners in advance.

Judge Gina Parker briefed attendees on the Commission Meeting Notebook and highlighted the [Assisted Outpatient Treatment \(AOT\) Program Data Informational](#). She thanked those that contributed to the data collection and noted its use in a presentation to the Governor's and Lt. Governor's Office.

Executive Director Report

Kristi Taylor, Executive Director, introduced two new JCMH staff members:

Christine Busse, Data and Strategic Initiatives Manager, holds a Master of Social Work from UTSA and a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Neuroscience from St. Edward's University and is a Licensed Master Social Worker. She brings over six years of experience spanning policy, program oversight, and university research, most recently as a Policy Fellow at the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Texas. At JCMH, she will oversee the Court Liaison Pilot Program and lead outcome and performance data analysis for specialty courts and AOT programs statewide.

Kiley Phillips, Communications Manager, previously worked in government affairs and public relations in Washington, D.C. and in broadcast news. Her background includes strategic messaging, branding, digital engagement, and public policy. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science from Texas Tech University.

Ms. Taylor announced that, on May 5th, the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice held a hearing on an interim charge related to not guilty by reason of insanity (NGRI). In response, JCMH will build its [Summer Webinar Series](#) around this topic to provide education and support to the field. Commissioners with relevant experience were encouraged to share contacts and information with JCMH staff.

Ms. Taylor briefed attendees on the [JCMH Court Liaison Pilot Program](#), a four-year initiative funded by the Texas Legislature to establish court liaison positions in five counties. Court liaison collaboration addresses the mental health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental disability needs of justice-involved individuals by connecting courts with behavioral health and community service providers, strengthening

cross-system collaboration, and improving access to treatment and support services. The initial pilot in Grayson, Denton, and Smith counties was successful, with Grayson and Denton counties assuming full funding for their liaison positions after the grant period and Smith County transitioning the role into a Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) implementation position. The next cohort will have an enhanced emphasis on case-level data collection through a new data portal to better measure program outcomes. Applications for the current funding opportunity are due June 1st, with awards to be based on demonstrated need, community readiness, and a commitment to collaboration and data reporting. An update on related case-level data efforts through the Office of Court Administration for all specialty courts will be provided at a future meeting.

Collaborative Council Report

Kristi Taylor reported that the [Collaborative Council](#) held its first in-person meeting the previous day, during which members discussed their expertise, identified the most effective JCMH projects, and provided input on future directions, including emerging topic areas and potential new partnerships.

Dr. Uche Chibueze, Assistant Director of Health Services, [Harris County Juvenile Probation Department](#), shared that the Collaborative Council was energized by the in-person meeting and is excited to continue the meaningful work of the JCMH Committees to address current gaps in systems.

Budget Update

Patrick Passmore reviewed the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. He noted that actual expenses relative to appropriations appear low as of April 2026, due to the majority of mission-project spending occurring in the final quarter for the Annual Summit.

Mr. Passmore highlighted two line-item changes from the original budget. JCMH had initially anticipated retaining the Texas Tech Grant (\$25,000) but ultimately released it to a county in East Texas that applied for it. JCMH received an exceptional item from the Legislature to expand the Court Liaison Pilot Program (\$1,453,000) to five new counties. To ensure more meaningful data collection and comparability across counties, the expansion has been pushed back. The program now plans to begin distributing funds in September 2026, the first month of Fiscal Year 2027.

Staff Updates

Kama Harris, Assistant Director, reported that registration is officially open for the [9th Annual JCMH Summit](#), to be held November 5th and 6th, 2026, at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, Texas. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for the preceding day,

Wednesday, November 4th. She extended gratitude to the Court of Criminal Appeals for providing scholarship funding that enables attorneys and judges without alternate funding sources to attend. A scholarship application is now embedded in the registration portal. Commissioners, Collaborative Council members, and speakers are eligible for reimbursement by submitting reimbursement forms to Commission Accounting. Nonprofit organizations may submit resource booth applications through the registration portal. The call for speakers is open through May 26th, with priority topics including supporting people with IDD, court collaborations and specialty court programs, lived experience and family perspectives, advanced mental health law topics, and youth and early intervention. The [Summit Curriculum Committee](#) is scheduled to meet on June 26th.

Christine Busse reported that the [Data Committee](#) is revising its [2024 Best Practice Guide](#) to incorporate juvenile and IDD considerations and refine core data measures. The Committee is reviewing outcome data from mental health courts and AOT programs, informed by research from Dr. Elizabeth Hartzell at Sam Houston State University. Her analysis of over 1,000 participants across seven Texas mental health court programs found an overall graduation rate of approximately 63%, with housing, employment, and education identified as significant factors associated with successful graduation. The Committee will continue working to improve data collection for civil commitments, competency proceedings, emergency detentions, Article 1622 reporting, and the Court Liaison Pilot Program.

Ms. Busse reported that the [Substance Use Disorder Committee](#) has featured an educational series on the possibilities and practical limitations of chemical dependency warrants. Future focus will include intensive outpatient resources and innovations such as sobering centers.

Michael Garcia, Legal Assistant, reported that the [Rural Issues Committee](#) provided valuable input on the feasibility and need for regional behavioral health courts. JCMH is developing a proposed regional model and an application for federal funding through the Bureau of Justice Assistance to support a pilot program, with a target submission date of Spring 2027. The committee has identified transportation as a recurring challenge in rural communities and is exploring grants and expanded collaborations to bridge this gap.

Mr. Garcia reported that JCMH completed [SIM mappings](#) in Burnet County and Kaufman County in April and May, and that five SIM mappings remain available for communities interested in applying. JCMH is developing targeted SIM mappings focused on specific intercept points or follow-up mappings for communities that have previously participated.

Mr. Garcia reported that JCMH has processed orders for 615 [bench books](#), in addition to 500 distributed at last year's summit, and has distributed 150 code books. Copies remain

available for order through the [book order form](#) on the JCMH website. Additionally, JCMH staff are developing a Commission directory with updated contact information and areas of expertise to improve connectivity and collaboration among Commissioners and Collaborative Council members.

Kiley Phillips reported on recent [JCMH podcast episodes](#). The April episode of Reimagining Justice featured JCMH SIM mapping facilitators Dr. Lynda Frost and Doug Smith exploring the [SIM mapping process](#). The May episode featured Mary Allen King, former president of the Austin Bar Association, who discussed the [Crisis Assistance Program](#), which connects attorneys facing health crises with volunteer lawyers to temporarily manage their cases. JCMH also filmed portions of the Burnet County SIM mapping and will produce a behind-the-scenes video for the [JCMH YouTube channel](#).

Legislative Update

Justice Bill Boyce, JCMH Vice-Chair and Chair of the [Legislative Research Committee](#), recognized the extensive work of the Legislative Research Committee in developing legislative proposals, including more than 20 meetings held over two and a half months. He thanked committee chairs Prof. Brian Shannon, Judge Brent Carr, Judge Pamela Liston, and Bill Cox for their leadership, and acknowledged Kama Harris's work coordinating the process.

Justice Boyce noted that the Committee voted on its recommendations on April 29th. Those recommendations would be reviewed by the Executive Committee, with further review by the Chief Justice and Chief Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, before going to the full Texas Judicial Council over the summer.

Professor Brian Shannon, Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, [Texas Tech University School of Law](#), briefed attendees on the approved proposals from the Legislative Research Committee.

Commissioner Updates

Lee Pierson, Chief of Mental Health Division, [Dallas County District Attorney's Office](#), reported that Dallas County has embedded a critical time intervention team within the Mental Health Division through an interlocal agreement with [MetroCare](#). The team includes four qualified mental health professionals and four peer support specialists who work directly with division attorneys. The program proved highly successful in its first year and federal grant funding was renewed. Dallas County is undertaking a county-wide effort to restructure how it handles mental health cases. Dallas County representatives attended a Decriminalizing Mental Illness seminar in Miami led by retired Judge Steve

Leifman and will bring the Miami team to Dallas on June 2nd through 4th to explore a broader deflection and diversion strategy.

Eric Smith, Founder, [Eric W.T. Smith Consulting](#), reported that he and Adrienne Kennedy are collaborating to elevate the parent and family caregiver perspective in the work of the Commission and the justice-mental health system. He noted that while physical supervision of individuals under AOT may be limited to a few hours per week, families and caregivers can provide critical insight across the many remaining hours. Mr. Smith observed that HIPAA is frequently cited as a barrier to receiving family information but clarified that HIPAA does not prevent families and caregivers from sharing information with providers.

Hon. Larry Phillips, Judge, 59th District Court, reported positive feedback on JCMH resources and tools at recent judicial conferences, where the Commission's bench books and online materials received enthusiastic reception. In Grayson County, a grant supported embedding mental health professionals as co-responders in the two largest cities and in the sheriff's department, available through approximately 10 p.m. daily. The pilot program in one city has proven highly effective at diversion. Judge Phillips shared a specific case example in which cross-system collaboration among the LMHA, law enforcement, their mental health emergency coordinator, the DA's office, and the court resulted in a comprehensive support plan for a high-utilizer with no prior guardianship, including securing utilities and arranging guardianship services. He praised the Court Liaison Program and its role in enabling this collaboration.

Steve Wohleb, General Counsel, [Texas Hospital Association](#), thanked Ms. Taylor for participating in THA's recent Behavioral Health Roundtable, where recurring themes included the need for a better continuum of care to address the revolving door, the impact of uncompensated care on the behavioral health system, and opportunities for greater collaboration among hospitals, law enforcement, and the judiciary. He raised concern about a trend in some counties of charging court costs and filing fees to private parties filing mental health applications. He noted that this practice burdens facilities with limited behavioral health reimbursement and that established reimbursement processes for unfunded or Medicaid patients remain unclear in some counties. He also flagged that a large private inpatient psychiatric facility in San Antonio has significantly curtailed operations, substantially reducing inpatient capacity in the region and affecting how patients under emergency detentions and involuntary commitment orders are navigated.

Wayne Young, Chief Executive Officer, [The Harris Center](#), announced that he will be transitioning to a new role as CEO of the Texas Behavioral Health Center, a 292-bed facility being opened in partnership with HHSC and UT Southwestern, and will also serve as Vice President of Behavioral Health Integration and Partnerships for UT Southwestern

Health System. At the Harris Center, major developments include: the near-term opening, in partnership with the City of Houston, of a 222-bed residential homeless services center designed as a therapeutic intervention environment rather than a traditional shelter; expanded state hospital step-down beds; preservation of the Youth Diversion Center through a partnership with PDCJ, DFPS, and Houston Juvenile Probation Department; development of a publicly viewable bed registry showing occupancy and availability across publicly funded facilities; a new transitional housing agreement with a criminal court judge for individuals who have been restored to competency; and a partnership with the Harris County District Attorney's Office to provide mental health support services to surviving family members of victims of violent crimes.

Beth Lawson, Chief Executive Officer, [StarCare Specialty Health System](#), announced that StarCare is nearly ready to open two new facilities in Lubbock: the expanded Sunrise Canyon Hospital, growing from 30 to 60 inpatient beds with legislative funding; and a new extended observation unit made possible by city and county American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. She noted that the organization has operated a diversion program for years, and the new building now provides appropriate space. StarCare extended an invitation to commissioners and council members to visit and tour the facilities. Ms. Lawson also highlighted the [Rural Texas Strong initiative](#), noting that Texas was the largest beneficiary of rural mental health services funding through the Rural Healthcare Transformation Act. She encouraged local mental health authorities and counties serving rural populations to explore funding opportunities through this initiative.

Adrienne Kennedy, National Trainer, [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), announced a collaboration with Magdalena Morales-Aina to adapt the [NAMI Provider training](#) program for the Texas judiciary. With approval from NAMI national, the program will be modified to align with legal and judicial taxonomy and will incorporate peer and family-peer presenters. The program, which typically runs four hours with three presenters, has been used across the country for nearly ten years but has never been adapted for the judiciary. Ms. Kennedy shared that she is in the process of obtaining training materials, with a goal of piloting the presentation in El Paso soon and presenting findings at the November summit. Ms. Kennedy also highlighted the recognition of anosognosia as an official diagnosis in the ICD-10, noting that it is not denial but a neurological condition in which the brain blocks awareness of illness. Approximately 50 percent of people with schizophrenia and 45 percent of people with bipolar 1 disorder experience anosognosia during crisis periods. She emphasized the importance of this concept for judges and practitioners navigating competency and commitment proceedings.

Magdalena Morales-Aina, Director, [El Paso County Community Supervision & Corrections](#), reported on her collaboration with Ms. Kennedy on the judicial adaptation of

the NAMI Provider Training. She also emphasized the need for specialized peer support navigators in the justice system who not only have a personal history with mental illness or substance use disorders and are in recovery, but who also understand the criminal legal system and can help others navigate it. She described this as an expansion of the existing peer support model to include forensics-specific expertise, drawing on the Sequential Intercept Map as a framework for understanding where peer navigation can be most impactful.

Hon. Matt Hand, Potter County Court at Law No. 2, reported on his participation in the Legislative Research Committee's specialty courts work group and working on a regional behavioral health court model. He noted that existing statute authorizes him to serve as a regional court, but implementation remains challenging due to transportation barriers for participants and probation staff. He praised Judge Carr's proposed model, which would allow a judge to travel to participating counties rather than requiring participants to travel, developed similar to the Child Protection Court model. He noted that this approach, paired with a mobile treatment team including the local mental health authority (LMHA) and social workers, could be a game changer for smaller counties with only a few potential participants.

Dr. Courtney Harvey, [Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#), announced that, effective June 1st, she will transition from Associate Commissioner for the Office of Mental Health Coordination to Associate Commissioner for Mental Health Programs. In this new role she will oversee community-based mental health services including children's mental health, adult mental health, crisis services, jail diversion and forensic services, behavioral health advisory committees, and specialized Medicaid programs. She also noted that HHSC underwent a broader organizational realignment, with behavioral health services and IDD/state hospital services now combined under a single division led by Jordan Dixon as Chief Behavioral Health, Disability and Aging Services Officer, with the goal of promoting continuum-of-care thinking internally.

Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore, Director of Juvenile Services, Collin County, reported on a TJJD juvenile liaison pilot program placing liaisons in juvenile departments through local mental health authorities. In 41 days, her county's liaison, a licensed therapist, had received referrals for 48 youth and families. The liaison connected the majority to services, conducted intakes directly in probation offices, and even helped families with private insurance connect to appropriate services. Judge Gore praised fellow commissioner, Judge Pamela Liston, for her presentations on JCMH at [Texas Municipal Court Education Center trainings](#). Judge Gore presented at one training when Judge Liston was unavailable and again at the State Bar's Juvenile Law Section Conference. Ms. Gore highlighted the [JCMH Innovations Map](#) as an essential tool she shares with new juvenile chiefs, noting that it consolidates local mental health authority contacts, housing

resources, and community supports that small departments often struggle to identify independently.

Dr. M. Connie Almeida, Director, [Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services](#), reported that Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services is conducting a data-focused reassessment of its programs, including competency evaluations, NGRI evaluations, conditional bond assessments, and Article 16.22 screenings. She emphasized the importance of understanding outcomes and not just outputs, noting a growing sense of burnout among clinicians who complete evaluations without learning how courts act on them. She noted that NGRI orders in Fort Bend County have increased from one or two annually to approximately three per month, reflecting statewide attention to the issue.

Emily Eisenman for **April Zamora**, Division Director, [Texas Department of Criminal Justice](#), provided updates on behalf of TDCJ. She gave legislative and re-organization updates and expressed excitement to hear from their partners about how the TDCJ's changes are impacting them.

Denise Oncken, Mental Health Bureau Chief (Ret.), Harris County District Attorney's Office, reported on several activities following her retirement. She is engaged with the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Foundation, where she successfully brought South Texas College of Law into a fellowship program focused on community mental health projects. She noted increasing law school engagement with mental health topics in the Houston area. She highlighted a music therapy program through the University of Houston's Moores School of Music as one example of innovative community-based mental health approaches. Ms. Oncken also reflected on her continued involvement in a women's organization in Colorado County that directs locally raised funds to mental health services, underscoring that many jurisdictions across the state still need significant help with mental health infrastructure.

Hon. Dave W. Jahn, Denton County Probate Court No. 1, reported joining JCMH staff at the Texas Association of Counties Conference in Bryan to present the Court Liaison Pilot Program to county judges, and received positive feedback. Denton County Probate Court has implemented a telepsychiatry model, with an in-person psychiatrist available two weeks per month and a telepsych provider two weeks per month, which has worked well and expanded psychiatric support for the AOT program. He noted that probate courts in Denton and Dallas County are collaborating with the North Texas Regional VA Medical Network to create a streamlined process for referring homeless veterans with incapacity issues into court-initiated guardianships. Judge Jahn also reported that JCMH was invited to provide input to the IDD Advisory Committee for the Texas Commission on Jail Standards on questions including the rights of individuals under guardianship while detained, mandatory guardianship database queries for criminal justice system actors, and notification and release procedures for individuals under guardianship.

Catie Bialick for **Scott Schachlin**, Deputy Executive Commissioner, [Texas Health and Human Services Commission \(HHSC\)](#), provided the following updates on state hospital and SSLC construction and the forensic waitlist:

Nine projects are currently under construction, impacting 1,007 beds. Upon completion, four grants will result in 332 additional mental health beds and a net increase of 717 HHSC-owned inpatient beds.

The Texas Behavioral Health Center of Dallas (292 beds: 200 adult, 92 pediatric) is expected to admit its first patients in September 2026. Panhandle State Hospital in Amarillo (75 beds: 50 forensic, 25 civil) has an anticipated first patient date of September 2027. The Terrell Center for Youth (30 beds for youth ages 13-17 in DFPS conservatorship with mental health, substance use, or IDD needs) is anticipated to admit first patients in September 2026. The Lubbock Psychiatric Center (50 maximum security beds) anticipates first patients in January 2028.

The Terrell State Hospital Replacement Hospital (275 beds, 150 forensic) has an estimated move-in of November 2027. Wichita Falls State Hospital Replacement Hospital (225 beds) has an estimated move-in of spring 2028.

The San Antonio State Hospital Geriatric MSU expansion anticipates first patients in March 2027. Rio Grande State Center new maximum-security unit anticipates first patients in September 2027.

As of May 14, 2026, the forensic waitlist stood at 1,606 individuals, down from a peak of 2,555 in November 2022. The average wait for a maximum-security unit bed is 218 days; the average wait for a non-maximum security unit bed is 182 days.

HHSC's jail in-reach program is now available statewide without a formal application process. Counties may contact HHSC at any time for assistance with complex forensic cases, waitlist management, data, or expedited admissions. HHSC will be publishing a landing page on its website. Two studies will be published soon: one focused on length of stay and barriers to discharge from state hospitals, and one evaluating outpatient and jail-based competency restoration program implementation.

Scott LePor for **Shandra Carter**, Executive Director, [Texas Juvenile Justice Department \(TJJD\)](#), described the ongoing challenge of prescription medication continuity when youth move between facilities, noting that even with legal requirements in place, physician autonomy, formulary differences, and 340B pricing constraints create practical barriers. He reported that the TJJD, with new funds from the Legislature, are proceeding

with new facility builds, and ground-breaking is expected in fall 2026 and completion is anticipated in spring 2029. Both facilities are 104-bed, one for highest-acuity mental health needs and one for highest levels of violent behavior. Dr. LePor noted a significant increase in acuity in mental health needs and medical needs. He praised TJJD Executive Director Shandra Carter for the significant organizational transformation underway, including evidence-based re-entry and probation reforms led in part by newly hired Assistant Director Matt Smith. He noted that TJJD is on track to break its record for new diversions.

Brenda Keller, Department Director, [Texas Veterans Commission \(TVC\)](#), introduced herself as the new TVC representative to JCMH. Ms. Keller is a mental health provider and was an active-duty mental health provider in the Air Force for ten years. She remains in the Air Force Reserve. She noted that recent legislation now requires all jails to verify veteran status and report to TVC, creating greater awareness of the volume of veterans being arrested daily across Texas. TVC currently has approximately 60 veteran peer support coordinators embedded in mental health facilities statewide. Ms. Keller noted a growing need for peer support coordinators who specialize in justice-system navigation, and that TVC is exploring developing specialty justice-focused peer support roles for veterans in jails.

Dr. Michelle Durham, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, [Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute \(MMHPI\)](#), introduced herself as the new MMHPI representative to JCMH. Dr. Durham is an adult/child psychiatrist and continues to practice clinically. She described Meadows as a nonpartisan, independent organization working at the intersection of policy and programs. She highlighted two areas of work: partnership with TJJD and community stakeholders on regional continuum of care mapping and implementation planning; and the [Behavioral Health Emergency Response Initiative](#), a three-year statewide initiative with partners in multiple counties and other states focused on improving police and community responses to behavioral health crises. Dr. Durham also noted her clinical forensic work, particularly on co-occurring disorders and addiction, and expressed enthusiasm for contributing to the Commission's work.

Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum, Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2, reported that through connections made at the Commission, she has partnered with [Justice Forward](#), led by JCMH Commissioner Devon Anderson, to strengthen the Fort Bend County Veterans Court. Since inheriting the court three years ago with four participants, the program has grown to graduate 42 veterans. Justice Forward participates monthly and provides financial support for program needs the county cannot fund through its own budget. Judge McCollum also reported that the juvenile system hired a new chief psychologist, Dr. Tonya Martin, and that Fort Bend County recently opened a juvenile vocational center as an additional pathway for youth who may not be on a traditional

academic trajectory. Fort Bend County operates approximately 12 specialty courts and is assessing whether those programs are appropriately scaled and targeted.

Hon. Brandy Mueller, Judge, 403rd District Court, reported on a specialty docket for young adults ages 17 to 24 in the adult criminal justice system, characterized by high judicial supervision, intensive case management, and requirements for work or school participation. A significant challenge is identifying emerging mental health conditions, such as early-onset psychosis, in this population before they escalate. Travis County has multiple specialty courts and often must decide how best to align defendants with the most appropriate program. Judge Mueller noted growing public safety concerns around violent defendants with mental health indicators and the challenge of managing these cases within existing court structures.

Beth Mitchell, Litigation Coordinator, [Disability Rights Texas](#), reported that Disability Rights Texas recently concluded a six-state trial before a federal court judge examining the constitutional time limit between a finding of incompetency to stand trial and admission to a state hospital. The trial record and post-trial findings have been submitted and a decision is pending, with likely appeals to follow. She noted the trial may result in approximately a 30-day time limit. Ms. Mitchell also described ongoing work around private psychiatric hospitals, including cases of individuals voluntarily seeking care who are not committed but are also not permitted to leave, representing potential unlawful detention. She flagged that the Attorney General is also examining some insurance billing issues for instances in which individuals stayed in institutions beyond their time periods. She expressed support for the Commission's proposed legislative provision on court supervised community-based living plans for defendants with IDD who are found incompetent to stand trial, unlikely to be restored, and who no longer meet inpatient civil commitment criteria, noting the need for a judicial oversight mechanism.

Hon. Alyse Ferguson, Associate Judge, Collin County Probate Court, reported that she recently assisted in opening a long-term care facility for individuals needing mental health resources and rehabilitation offering a step-down option from hospitals or jail for those not yet able to live independently. A second facility for women is scheduled to open in June.

Hon. Roxanne Nelson, Justice of the Peace, Burnet County, reported that Burnet County recently completed a JCMH-funded SIM mapping workshop. The county identified four priorities: establishing a behavioral health leadership team (approximately 35 community members have signed up); developing alternatives to a diversion center given rural staffing limitations; addressing housing and homelessness; and pursuing a mental health court. The county is part of a four-county district sharing a public defender's office and probation department, making it a viable candidate for a regional court program. Judge Nelson also provided an update from the Substance Use Disorder

Committee, noting that the committee is exploring use of chemical dependency warrant mechanisms and resources to connect individuals to treatment before justice involvement.

Hon. Stacey Matthews, 277th District Court, highlighted the collaborative nature of the Commission and the impact of members sharing knowledge and resources across the state. She reported that Williamson County completed a randomized controlled trial of its Transformative Justice Docket, a total diversion program for young adults ages 17 to 24, believed to be the first randomized controlled trial in criminal justice in the country or internationally. Results were recently received and were highly positive. She noted that approximately 97 percent of participants have significant mental health or substance use issues and that the program achieves dismissal, which carries significant systemic benefits.

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti, Associate Judge, Tarrant County Probate Court No. 2, reported that Tarrant County's AOT program lost its funding but, through JCMH connections to HHSC, secured a grant to restart the program in September. She noted the silver lining of being able to rebuild and improve the program. She is exploring using the AOT program as a diversion mechanism from the criminal justice system under CCP 16.22 and is coordinating with the new Chief of the Mental Health Unit at the Tarrant County District Attorney's office to develop procedures. She also shared experience with NGRI commitment hearings from her prior role as mental health magistrate.

Prof. Brian Shannon reinforced that improving the law will only achieve its full impact if sufficient community-level and statewide services are in place to serve individuals with mental illness. He encouraged commissioners to communicate this message to their legislative contacts and reminded attendees that JCMH, as a commission, cannot lobby but that commissioners as individuals can and should advocate. He referenced the emergency detention roundtable report and encouraged all to read it.

Announcements

Sonja Burns, Mental Health Advocate, reminded attendees about [Rider 56](#), emphasizing that it recognizes the need for a higher level of care between hospital-level treatment and community-based services. She noted that while there has been significant discussion around AOT, there remains a population with complex behavioral health needs that requires more intensive support than community services alone can provide. Ms. Burns expressed her hope to work with Commission members before the next legislative session to advance this effort, stressing that addressing the needs of this highest-need population is essential to reducing homelessness and improving outcomes.

Meeting Adjourned

Judge Jesse F. McClure thanked attendees for their time and reminded them of the next Commission meeting on November 4th and the JCMH Annual Summit, November 5th-6th, at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, Texas.

Tab 4
Budget

Judicial Commission on Mental Health FY2026

October 2026 Financial Report

FY2026 Available Funds

FY2026 JCMH Funding	
FY2026 Appropriation - 13011	\$ 3,071,096
Texas Tech Grant - Training	\$ 25,000
FY2026 Funds Available	\$ 3,071,096

FY2026 Budget vs. Actuals

	Actual	Budget	Balance
Operating	\$ 873,627	\$ 969,909	\$ 0
Commission Projects	\$ 254,636	\$ 654,587	\$ 299,951
Scholarships	\$ 140	\$ 10,000	\$ 0
Grants	\$ 0	\$ 1,453,500	\$ 1,453,500
Total	\$ 1,128,403	\$ 1,634,497	\$ 299,951

Financial Status as of January 2026

FY2026 Funds Available	\$ 3,071,096
Expenditures to Date	\$ (1,128,403)
FY2026 Fund Balance	\$ 1,942,693
Budgeted Expenditures Outstanding	\$ (299,951)
FY2026 Unobligated Funds	\$ 1,642,742

Judicial Commission on Mental Health

September 2026 - August 2027

FY2026 Funding

Total FY2026 Current Assets	\$	1,942,693.00
Total FY2026 Liabilities	\$	299,951.00
FY2026 UB Estimate	\$	1,642,742.00

FY2027 Funding

FY2027 Base Appropriation	\$	1,617,493.00
FY2026 - UB	\$	1,642,742.00
Contract: TIEMH SIM	\$	80,000.00
FY2027 Available Funds	\$	3,340,235.00

FY2027 Budget

	Budget
Operating	1,078,766.80
Commission Projects	
Contract: Data Portal for Texas Counties	25,000.00
Contract: Legal Curriculum Development	20,000.00
Contract: Legal Process & Case Outcomes Data Collection	100,000.00
Toolkits Printing (Civil, Criminal, Data, SUD)	10,000.00
Regional & Annual Conference Participation TCJ	40,000.00
Contract: Data Portal Creation for Court Liaison Pilot	30,000.00
JCMH Summit	310,000.00
Juvenile Justice Bench Book	27,000.00
Mental Health Bench Book	46,000.00
Mental Health Code Book	22,000.00
Innovations Map/Website	20,000.00
SIM Mapping	120,000.00
Total Commission Projects	\$ 770,000.00
Grants	
Court Liaison Pilot Expansion	1,453,500.00
Total Grants	\$ 1,453,500.00
Scholarships	
JCMH Judicial Education Scholarships	5,000.00
Total Scholarships	\$ 5,000.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 3,307,266.80

FY2027 Available Funds	3,340,235.00
FY2027 Proposed Budget Expenditures	3,307,266.80
FY2027 Unobligated Funds	\$ 32,968.20

Tab 5

2026 Report to the Commission



TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

November 4, 2026

www.texasjcmh.gov

Report of the Executive Director

The mission of the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health is to engage and empower court systems through [collaboration](#), [education](#), and [leadership](#), thereby improving the lives of individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. The following report will provide an overview of the projects the JCMH has undertaken to further these objectives.

Collaboration

The JCMH has many initiatives developed to bring together experts to solve systemic problems. The JCMH Texas AOT Collaborative is an example of multidisciplinary stakeholders working together to increase awareness and support for both existing and newly established Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs. Below are descriptions of the JCMH committees as well as other collaborative efforts of the JCMH.

1. Commission

Commissioners guide and direct the JCMH staff with the benefit of their wide range of experiences and responsibilities. The Commission sits three times a year, collaborating to promote best practices and improve the administration of justice for those with mental health, substance use, and IDD needs. Commissioners also participate in additional collaborative events on occasion and serve three-year renewable terms (most recently appointed or reappointed on January 1, 2024).

2. Collaborative Council

The Collaborative Council keeps the JCMH updated on emerging issues in the field. During Collaborative Council meetings, the 90 plus members can learn about new initiatives and share their organization's conferences, projects, and best practices from around the state. The Collaborative Council met in person on May 14th and virtually on October 15th. They will also have an opportunity to network at the 9th Annual Summit. More information and meeting materials can be found on the [JCMH website](#).

3. JCMH Bench Book Committee

The JCMH Bench Book Committee has been chaired by Judge Camile DuBose. The Committee developed the first edition of the Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law Bench Book in 2018. Following the 89th Legislative Session the Committee published its 5th Edition in print and [online](#). Copies were distributed at the 8th Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health. At this time, over 1,000 copies of the 5th Edition of the Adult Bench Book have been distributed statewide. The committee will reconvene in the spring/summer of 2027 to begin writing the 6th Edition of the Bench Book.

4. Juvenile Bench Book Committee

The Juvenile Bench Book Committee is chaired by Judge Cynthia Wheless. The Committee launched the Texas Juvenile Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law Bench Book (commonly called the Juvenile Bench Book) in 2020. Following the 89th Legislative Session the Committee published its 4th edition in print and [online](#). Copies were distributed at the 8th Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health. At this time, over 800 copies of the 4th Edition of the Juvenile Bench Book have been distributed statewide.

5. Summit Curriculum Committee

The Summit Curriculum Committee, chaired by Judge Brent Carr, advises on speakers and curriculum for the Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health. The Committee works to ensure that the presentations promote the JCMH mission and are at the forefront of this dynamic legal field. The Committee met on June 26, 2026, to evaluate nearly 80 proposals submitted to the 9th Annual Summit and discuss this year's curriculum.

6. Legislative Research Committee

JCMH Vice Chair Bill Boyce chairs the Legislative Research Committee (LRC), which creates legislative proposals to improve the administration of justice and submits them to the Texas Judicial Council. Professor Brian Shannon leads the Criminal Mental Health Law and Civil Mental Health Law/Emergency Detention Workgroups along with the drafting subcommittee. Hon. Pamela Liston leads the Early Identification Workgroup, Hon. Brent Carr leads the Specialty Court Workgroup, and Bill Cox leads the Juvenile Workgroup. The Legislative Research Committee submitted their Report to the Texas Judicial Council on June 1, 2026, for their review.

7. Texas Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Collaborative

The Texas AOT Collaborative formed when the Treatment Advocacy Center asked Texas leaders to help guide the statewide AOT work. JCMH Executive Director, Kristi Taylor, co-chairs the Collaborative with Senior Staff Attorney, Emma Bramble. The Collaborative meets quarterly, with meetings that include an educational component as well as opportunities to share ideas for new projects and discuss issues arising in AOT programs across Texas. The Collaborative recently learned about the AOT Evaluation Project in Harris County and two other Texas counties. A speaker from Indiana presented to the Collaborative on Indiana's AOT Program Initiative. The Collaborative will meet virtually in early 2027.

8. Substance Use Disorder Committee

Judge Roxanne Nelson chairs the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Committee. Building on JCMH's existing toolkits and the Committee's prior work, the SUD Committee has begun developing a SUD 101 resource that will provide Texas judges with practical guidance when hearing cases involving substance use disorders. As part of this effort, the Committee will also develop a SUD 101 bench card and a SUD-focused Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) map to help judges identify and navigate available services and resources at each intercept.

The Committee also plans to continue exploring intensive outpatient resources and other innovative approaches, including sobering centers.

9. Forms Committee

The Forms Committee, chaired by Judge Dave Jahn, was established in December 2021. Tasked with examining common mental health forms, the Committee sought to produce a set of standardized forms that could be used in any county in the state. The Forms Committee met regularly and developed over 60 [forms](#) related to mental health, which are available on the JCMH website. The Supreme Court Advisory Committee specifically considered seven forms related to mental health and approved these forms for use under Rule 10 (g) of the [Texas Rules of Judicial Administration](#), a rule that prohibits the rejection of these seven forms based on the form itself. The Committee reconvened in 2025 to edit and approve the JCMH-Approved Forms after the most recent legislative session, which are awaiting approval.

10. Data Committee

The Data Committee, chaired by Dr. Connie Almeida and Chief Rosie Medina, is developing a second edition of the *Best Practice Data Guide to Texas Mental Health Court Program Data Collection and Use*. The Committee is refining the Guide's core data measures and broadening its focus beyond mental health courts to support any court, with or without a specialty program.

The second edition will be structured across the Sequential Intercept Model and will incorporate veteran, juvenile, and intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) considerations. It will also include standardized definitions aligned with those of the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and SAMHSA, along with guidance on Texas mandatory reporting requirements.

Recent efforts have focused on reviewing outcome data from mental health courts and assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) programs, identifying key success factors such as housing and employment, and addressing gaps in current data systems. Ongoing work includes improving data collection and use in areas such as civil commitments, competency proceedings, emergency detentions, Article 16.22 reporting, as well as ensuring the Committee's recommended measures inform the Court Liaison Pilot Program data portal.

11. Rural Communities Committee

The Rural Communities Committee (previously, the "Rural Issues Committee"), chaired by Judge Brian Keith Umphress of Jack County, is focused on strengthening justice in rural Texas through increased awareness of mental health services, collaboration, and effective policy. The Committee held their most recent meeting on September 23, 2026. This meeting included updates on the Texas Department of Emergency Management's First Responder Peer Support Network App, JCMH's efforts to start a regional mental health

court program in West Texas, and the efforts to revamp the Committee with a name change and webpage revisions. The Committee is currently focused on determining goals for the upcoming calendar year (2027) and has set their meeting dates for January 20, 2027, April 28, 2027, and September 8, 2027.

12. JCMH Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is comprised of Justice Jane Bland, Judge Jesse McClure III, Justice Rebeca Huddle, Judge Gina Parker, Justice Bill Boyce, Judge John Specia, Judge Brent Carr, Megan LaVoie, and Kristi Taylor. It meets at least quarterly, or more if needed, to advise on JCMH operations, projects, and policy.

Education

The JCMH creates specialized training, resources, and tools for judges, attorneys, court personnel, and other stakeholders.

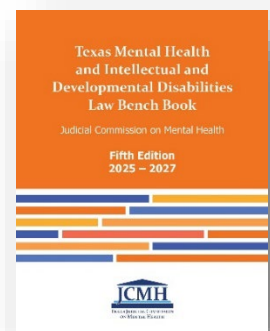
1. Ninth Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health

The 2026 Summit will take place on November 5-6, 2026, at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, Texas. As in prior years, the Summit will offer a web simulcast for attendees who were unable to travel in person. This year, the JCMH received a significant number of speaker proposals. The Ninth Annual Summit will highlight lived-experience experts, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and successful, replicable programs related to best practices. Registration is open and now includes judge and attorney scholarships and resource booth applications.



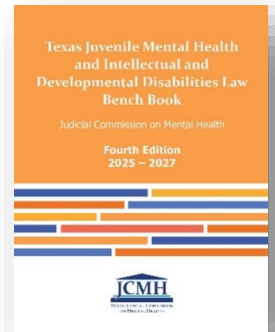
2. Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law Bench Book

The Bench Book is a 364-page book for Texas judges hearing cases regarding persons with mental illness and/or IDD. Each section contains applicable statutory processes, relevant best practices and guidance, and cross-references to mandatory forms. The 5th edition of the Bench Book added updates from the 89th Legislative Session and additional charts and procedural clarifications. Copies were distributed at the 2025 Judicial Summit on Mental Health. Print copies of the Bench Book and all other JCMH publications can be ordered by completing this [form](#) or sending an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov, and a digital version of the 5th Edition is available on the JCMH website.



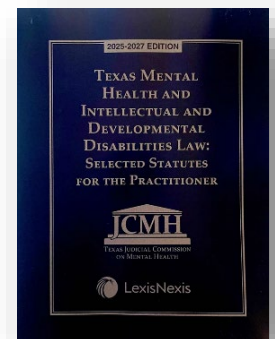
3. Texas Juvenile Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law [Bench Book](#)

The Juvenile Bench Book is a 223-page book for Texas judges hearing cases regarding youth and adolescents with mental illness and/or IDD. Each section contains applicable statutory processes, relevant best practices and guidance, and suggested forms. Copies of the 4th edition of the Juvenile Bench book will be distributed at the 2026 Judicial Summit on Mental Health. Print copies of the Bench Book and all other JCMH publications can be ordered completeing this [form](#) or sending an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov, and a digital version of the 4th Edition is available on the JCMH website.



4. Mental Health [Code Book](#)

The JCMH, building on the work of Chris Lopez at HHSC, created the *Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law: Selected Statutes for the Practitioner*, a collection of Texas statutes related to mental health and IDD in one convenient volume. JCMH staff has updated this reference following the 89th Legislative Session and published the 2025-2027 version with LexisNexis. Print copies of the Code Book and all other JCMH publications can be ordered completeing this [form](#) or sending an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov, and a digital version of the Code Book is available on the JCMH website.

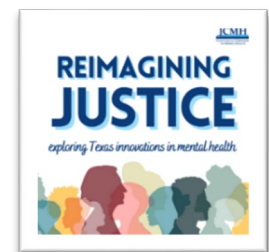


5. JCMH [Website](#)

The JCMH website offers resources and information to support collaboration between the judicial and mental health systems. It features information about initiatives including [mental health courts](#), training programs, and [technical assistance](#) tools. The site provides access to [publications](#), including reports and guides, and promotes events like the annual [Judicial Summit on Mental Health](#). Additionally, users can explore resources related to mental health law, treatment courts, and specific programs like the County Mental Health Law Plan.

6. Podcast

In 2023, JCMH launched its podcast called: [Reimagining Justice: Exploring Texas Innovations in Mental Health](#). Each month, we highlight a program or practice that other counties can learn from and replicate. So far, 41 episodes have been released. The September episode featured Bill Cox, Director of Public Defense Improvement, and Kristin Meeks, Senior Policy Analyst with the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC). The episode discussed TIDC's Public Defender Offices, regional programs and initiatives, support for rural counties, funding and resources available to communities interested in developing similar programs. Our October episode featured Dr. Anandita Oberoi, PhD, and her work using chess as an intervention in juvenile detention centers,



including a pilot project with the Fort Bend Juvenile Detention Center. The episode explored how chess can support executive functioning among youth, how the pilot came about, and what researchers hoped to learn from the program.

8. Legislative Materials

The JCMH prepares tools and resources regarding mental health and IDD legislation. You can find summaries of the bills passed in the 89th legislative session from JCMH proposals on the JCMH website. The Legislative Research Committee submitted their Recommendations Report to the Texas Judicial Council on June 1, 2026, for consideration.

9. Presentations to Partner Organizations

JCMH leaders have been featured speakers at national and statewide events. JCMH staff have also been invited to speak on mental health topics, specialty courts, and collaborative leadership at many conferences and events in the past few months:

- October 20th, 2026, Christine Busse guest lectured on program evaluation and measuring outcomes of justice-system initiatives at the University of Texas School of Social Work for the Dynamics of Organizations and Communities course.
- October 20th, 2026, Katherine Turner and Emma Bramble presented “Where Systems Meet: SIM Mapping as a Bridge Between Juvenile Justice and Mental Health” at the Juvenile Justice Association of Texas Conference.
- October 7th, 2026, Kristi Taylor presented “Law and Mental Health: Applying an Ecodevelopmental Framework to Youth Probation” at the 2026 Criminal Justice Mental Health Conference.
- September 30th, 2026, Katherine Turner presented “Working with Clients with Mental Illness: *Practical Tools for Legal Professionals*” at the State Bar of Texas Paralegal Division – Texas Advanced Paralegal Seminar (TAPS).
- August 18th, 2026, Kristi Taylor led a Judicial Round Table hosted by the American Probation and Parole Association.
- August 18th, 2026, Kama Harris and Katherine Turner presented “Brief Mental Health Laws and Mental Health Bonds” at the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) – Quarterly Indigent Defense Coordinators Meetup.
- July 14th, 2026, Kama Harris presented virtually on “Emergency Detention Laws” for the Justice Court Training Center.
- June 30th, 2026, Kama Harris presented “Mental Health Laws You Need to Know” at the Regional Public Defender Office’s Summer Training Conference.
- June 11th, 2026, Kristi Taylor and Kama Harris presented “Emergency Detention in Texas: Law, Practice, and Cross-System Coordination” at the Texas Council of Community Centers Conference.
- May 11th, 2026, Kama Harris presented “JCMH Tools & Resources” at the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center’s South Texas Regional Judges Conference.



- April 23rd, 2026, Kama Harris presented “Court Pathways for Individuals with Mental Illness” on the HHS JBCR/OCR Monthly Technical Assistance call.
- April 15th, 2026, Kristi Taylor presented “Mental Health Data Across the Court System” for the Joint Committee on Access and Forensics.
- April 14th, 2026, Kristi Taylor spoke on two panels titled “Relevant Legislative Changes 2019-2025” and “It Takes a Village – Behavioral Health Frontline Response Conversation” for Texas Hospital Association.
- April 1st, 2026, Daniela Jimenez Chisolm presented “Texas Civil Commitment and Assisted Outpatient Treatment” for the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center – El Paso.
- March 26th, 2026, Kama Harris presented “Mental Health Laws Every Pretrial Officer Should Know” at the Texas Association of Pretrial Services Conference.
- March 24th, 2026, Daniela Jimenez Chisolm presented “Integrating Psychiatry Trainees into the Court System” at the Texas Association of Specialty Courts Annual Conference.
- March 18th, 2026, Kristi Taylor presented “Mental Health Law” to a group of students from Rice on alternative spring break.
- February 25th, 2026, Daniela Jimenez Chisolm presented on the JCMH Court Liaison and on Sequential Intercept 3 with a Housing Focus for the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health.
- February 18th, 2026, Hon. David Jahn, Daniela Jimenez Chisolm, and Michael Garcia presented “An Overview of JCMH and Mental Health Law” to undergraduate students at the Texas A&M University Pre-Law Society.
- February 18th, 2026, Hon. David Jahn and Daniela Jimenez Chisolm presented on the JCMH Court Liaison Program at the 68th Annual V.G. Young School for County Commissioners Courts at the request of the Texas Association of Counties.
- January 23rd, 2026, Kama Harris spoke on two panels at the JCMH facilitated Travis County Mental Health Magistration Training.
- January 22nd, 2026, Kristi Taylor presented on Rural SIM Mapping as a part of technical assistance for the Rural Texas LMHAs/LBHAs.
- January 21st, 2026, Kristi Taylor provided a lecture introducing Mental Health Law to law students at the University of Houston Law Center.

To request a JCMH staff member to speak at your event, please complete the [speaker form](#) on our website.

Leadership

The JCMH recognizes that judicial leadership is essential to furthering our mission and supports statewide and local initiatives to provide courts with the tools and resources they need.

1. Court Liaison Pilot Project

The 89th Legislature appropriated \$1.4 million to expand the Court Liaison Pilot Program, and Brown, Burnet, Hays, Hopkins, and Tom Green Counties were selected for the second cohort through a competitive application process. The grant period runs from September 2026 through August 2030.

This cohort builds on the program's first phase, which began in Fall 2021 in Denton, Grayson, and Smith Counties. Those coordinators focused on identifying individuals with mental illness charged with nonviolent misdemeanor offenses and connecting them to appropriate treatment. Their encouraging results led the Legislature to expand the program.

Since awarding the grants, JCMH staff have guided each county through onboarding, beginning with a kickoff webinar. Staff developed a *Court Liaison Getting Started Guide* that walks new liaisons through the foundational Texas mental health laws they will work within, including civil commitment, early identification, competency restoration, and specialty courts, all mapped across the Sequential Intercept Model. For each area, the Guide outlines what information to gather, which local stakeholders to engage, and what system data to analyze. Staff also created a First 90 Days resource that sets goals and success markers for each liaison's first three months.

All five counties have hired liaisons and are forming local advisory committees. Liaison training began in October 2026, and JCMH staff provide ongoing training and support through monthly trainings and regular check-ins with each liaison. Staff have also prepared guidance to help counties share information appropriately across the mental health, substance use, criminal and civil systems.

The JCMH has also partnered with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health to build a data collection portal and dashboard. Staff developed a standardized set of data measures so all five counties track impact and outcomes the same way, while each county retains ownership of its own data. The long-term goal is a tool any Texas county can use.

2. Summer Webinar Series

In June, July, and August of this year, JCMH hosted a three-part webinar series covering the Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity defense in Texas.

Part 1, "NGRI Basics," took place on June 24, 2026. It provided foundational information about the NGRI verdict. The session covered Texas's legal definition of insanity under Chapter 46C of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the distinction between insanity at the

time of the offense and competency to stand trial, which are often conflated in practice. It also addressed the constitutional underpinnings of the defense, the burdens of proof, and the procedural path of a case from pretrial through verdict. It closed with public safety considerations and the pathways that follow an NGRI finding. Presenters were defense attorney Krista Chacona, forensic psychiatrist Dr. Maureen Burrows, and Associate Judge Nelda Cacciotti of Tarrant County Probate Court No. 2, who is also a JCMH Commissioner.

Part 2, “Life After an NGRI Finding: Inpatient Commitment and Treatment,” took place on July 15, 2026. It addressed the phase after a verdict. Speakers from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) explained the agency’s statutory authority and responsibilities, the goals and structure of treatment, and the roles of risk assessment and court-ordered medication. They also covered the legal standards for length of commitment, and an attorney specializing in this area addressed the hearing processes governing continued detention. The session highlighted the challenges of rural access to forensic inpatient beds and previewed the discharge process, including eligibility for the outpatient management program (OMP) and violence risk assessment. Presenters were HHSC leaders Dr. Jennie Simpson, Dr. Andrea Wright, Dr. Carla Galusha, Ashleigh Walton, and Omar Sandoval, all with HHSC.

Part 3, “Outpatient Conditional Release, Monitoring, and Public Safety,” took place on August 26, 2026. It examined oversight after inpatient discharge. This session covered the scope and limits of ongoing court jurisdiction, the structure and conditions of conditional release, review hearing standards, and the thresholds for revocation. They also discussed coordination among courts, local mental health authorities, probation, and treatment providers, as well as victim notification requirements. The panel addressed the tension between liberty and public safety and the supervision challenges that arise when treatment resources vary widely across the state. Where available, data and outcomes on conditional release populations were presented to inform future policy. Presenters were Judge Leon Grizzard (Ret.), prosecutor Lee Pierson, defense attorney Krista Chacona, Chief Probation Officer Maggie Morales, and Jennifer Brashear of Andrews Behavioral Health.

Each installment was approved for 1.5 continuing legal education hours. This year’s series drew over 1,000 attendees, cumulatively, and the recordings are on the JCMH website.

3. Technical Assistance for Courts and Communities

JCMH continues to provide Technical Assistance services, including connecting judges with experts and peers, and assisting in the creation of treatment court programs. JCMH started a new Technical Assistance Request tracking system in June 2026. Since then, JCMH has fielded fifty requests, ranging from simple requests for form pleadings to more intensive requests for roundtable discussions.



JCMH also provides free of cost Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping Workshops to communities. The newly improved 2026-27 SIM Mapping application is available on the JCMH website. We now offer specialized SIM Mappings, including Workshops focused on Transitional Aged Youth, Substance Use Disorders, and Juveniles. The following communities have been accepted into the SIM Mapping Workshop program for the 2027 Fiscal Year:

- El Paso County (Transition Aged Youth) workshop was completed on October 14, 2026.
- Hays County (Adult) workshop was completed on for October 28, 2026.
- Llano/Blanco Counties (Adult) workshop scheduled for November 12, 2026.
- Comanche County (Adult) workshop scheduled for December 3, 2026.
- Tarrant County (Youth/Juvenile) and Hopkins County (Adult) have also been accepted and will host their workshops early in 2027.

JCMH is partnered with TIEMH to facilitate six SIM Mapping Workshops per fiscal year for HHSC. JCMH can conduct up to twelve SIM Mapping Workshops per fiscal year.

4. Innovations Map

The County Resources and Innovations in Mental Health Map ([Innovations Map](#)), first published in 2022, was redesigned in 2024 to emphasize juvenile resources and to highlight notable milestones and innovations at both the local and statewide levels. The map is currently being re-evaluated for ways to increase reach and impact. Please contact JCMH staff if you have updates on resources in your community or an innovative practice you would like to highlight.

Tab 6

Court Liaison Pilot Program

Getting Started Guide



COURT LIAISON

Getting Started Guide

A reference document on foundational Texas mental health laws:

Competency Restoration

Early Identification

Civil Commitment

Specialty Courts

The Sequential Intercept Model

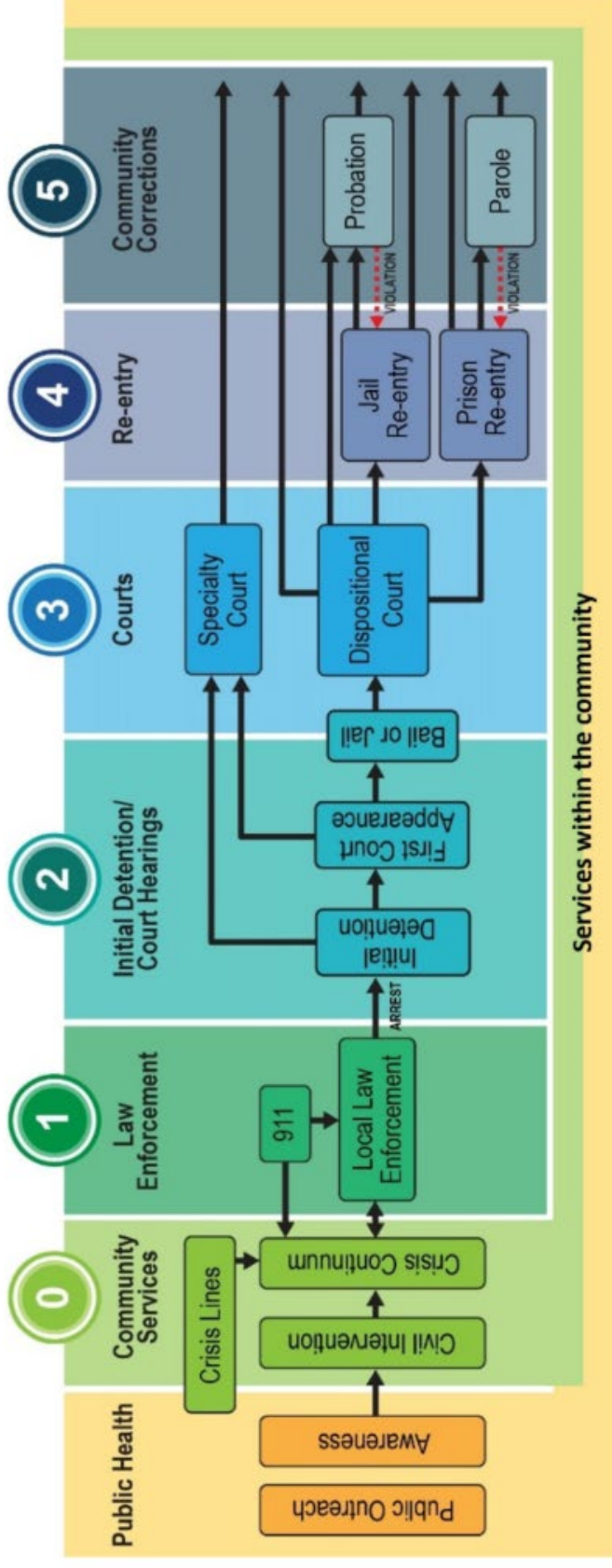
SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

Contents

- 1. Texas Mental Health Law:** *Understanding the Sequential Intercept Model*
- 2. Civil Commitment:** *Tex. Health & Safety Code Chs. 571-74*
- 3. Early Identification Law:** *Tex. Code Crim. Proc. Art. 16.22*
- 4. Competency Restoration:** *Tex. Code Crim. Proc. Ch. 46B*
- 5. Specialty Courts:** *Tex. Gov't Code Ch. 125*

Texas Mental Health Law: Understanding the Sequential Intercept Model

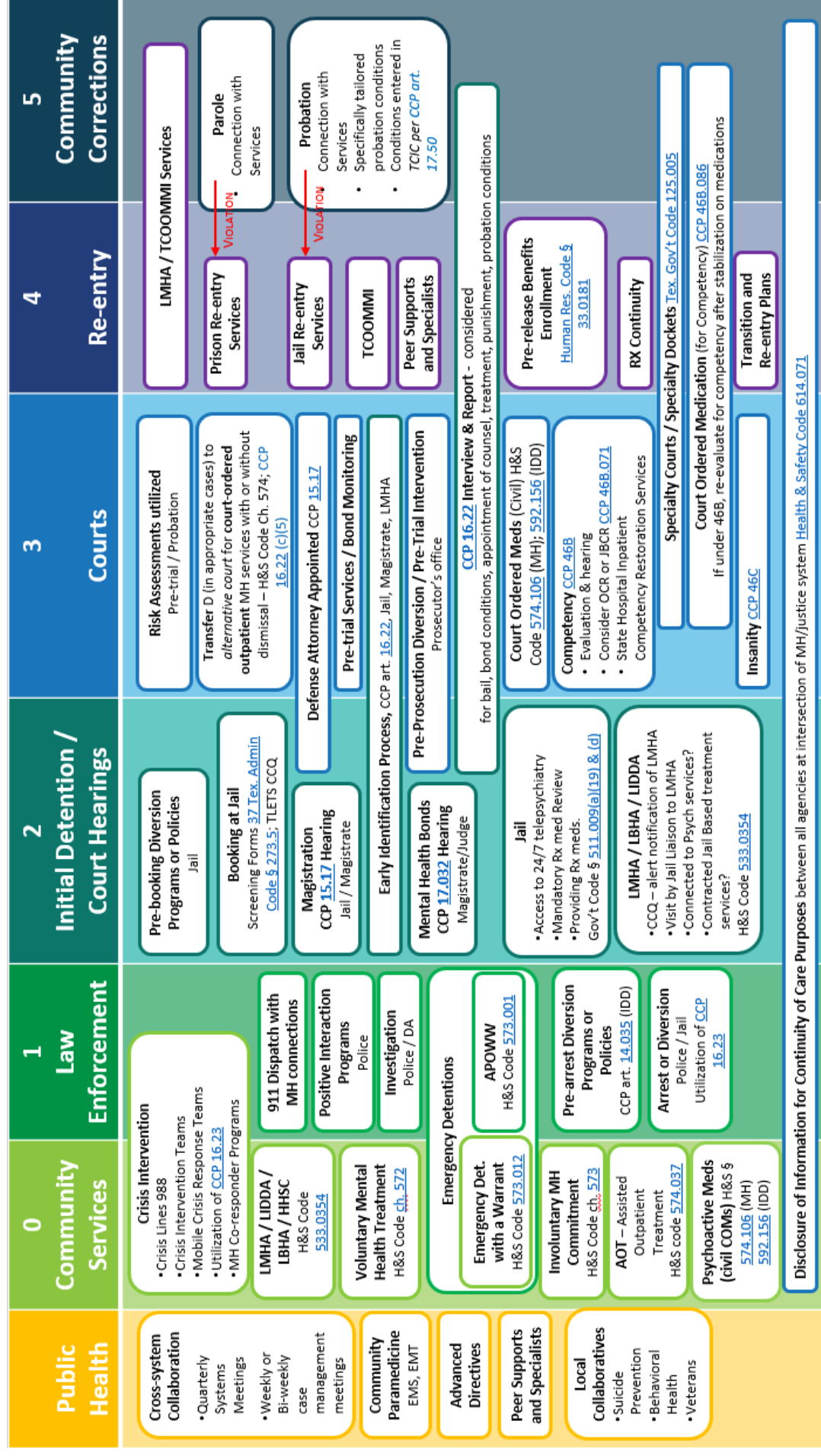
The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)



The Sequential Intercept Model — Public Health through Community Corrections

The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) was developed by Mark R. Munetz, M.D., and Patricia A. Griffin, Ph.D., in partnership with SAMHSA’s GAINS Center, and is used nationally to map how people with behavioral health needs move through the criminal justice system across six intercepts. This model was developed as a “conceptual framework for communities to organize targeted strategies for justice-system involved individuals with behavioral health disorders.”

Texas Mental Health Law across the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)



JCMH Core Competencies Chart

The chart above places the Texas Mental Health laws and best practices a Court Liaison will encounter onto the SIM framework — it's the big picture the rest of this guide fits inside.

ONGOING LIAISON REQUIREMENTS WHILE IN THE PILOT PROGRAM

- **Host Advisory Committee meetings** at least quarterly through the duration of the program to assist in guiding the creation and implementation of the pilot program and the new court liaison role within these systems. *Full list of required and suggested participants listed below in section titled “identify point people at each intercept.”*
- **Data reporting** using the REDCap Data Dashboard:
 - Monthly during the first 6 months of program implementation.
 - Quarterly thereafter, once data collection processes are established.
- **Check-in meetings** with JCMH:
 - Weekly during the first month of program implementation.
 - Monthly during the second through the sixth month of program implementation.
 - Quarterly thereafter.
- **Participation in training** and technical assistance provided by JCMH and/or TIEMH.
- **Quarterly expenditure reports**
 - Contact Finance Manager, Patrick Passmore, for reporting template and guidance at Patrick.Passmore@txcourts.gov.
- **Semi-annual grant reports** every 6 months
 - E.g. Reporting period Sept. 1, 2026–Mar. 1, 2026; due one month after on April 1, 2026.
 - See grant reporting template on <https://texasjcmh.gov/programs-and-initiatives/court-liaison-program/>.

REFERENCE MATERIAL TO START

- [JCMH Videos](#) explaining what a SIM mapping is and examples from other counties.
- [JCMH SIM Mapping Workshop — request a workshop for your county](#)

INITIAL INFORMATION TO GATHER

- Identify which judge(s) are directly over your program.
- Identify if you have a mentor for the program. Will they be attending the JCMH classes and TIEMH Technical Assistance classes?
- Has your county completed a JCMH Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping workshop? If so, where is the report, and when was it last updated?
- Which intercept(s) does the Court Liaison position primarily sit in, and where are the handoff points to adjacent intercepts?
- Is there already a cross-system stakeholder meeting shown at the Public Health level (quarterly systems meetings, weekly/bi-weekly case management meetings) happening in our county, and who convenes it?
- Do we have an identified point of contact at each of the six intercepts (0–5)? *See the next section for more details on this question.*

IDENTIFY POINT PEOPLE AT EACH INTERCEPT

- LMHA/LBHA/LIDDA leadership
- County Judge / Commissioners' Court
- Sheriff / Jail Administrator
- TCOOMMI contact
- Local advisory committee participants:
 - Required:
 - Lead judge (designated to provide direct judicial oversight of the liaison and convene stakeholders)
 - Local Mental Health or Behavioral Health Authority (LMHA/LBHA) representative
 - Optional advisory committee participants:
 - Probate judge or representative
 - Additional Judge or Court Coordinators
 - Person who entity who performs 16.22 interviews within the jail
 - Sheriff or jail administrator representative
 - District Attorney / County Attorney
 - Public Defender / Defense Bar Representative
 - Pretrial Services Department Representative or Individual
 - Community Supervision and Corrections Department (probation) representative
 - Hospital emergency department leadership representative
 - Local law enforcement agency leadership representative
 - Commissioner's Court Representative
 - Director/Leadership Mobile Crisis or Crisis Response Model
 - Director/Leadership for fire, paramedic & EMS
 - Peer support, family advocacy organizations, or a person with lived experience navigating your county's mental health and justice systems
 - Local housing authority representative
 - Reentry services provider or coordinator

IDENTIFY SYSTEM DATA

- Whether a SIM map or report already exists for our county, and how current it is.
- Which intercepts currently lack a named liaison or point of contact.
- Where handoffs between intercepts break down, for example: referrals made at jail release that never result in a completed contact, 16.22 reports that arrive after disposition, people released before a commitment hearing is arranged.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL — WHEN YOU ARE READY FOR A DEEPER DIVE

- JCMH's [Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law Bench Book](#), a 300+ page guidebook that walks you through every Mental Health Law in Texas.

Civil Commitment

Applicable Laws: Texas Health & Safety Code Chapters 571–74.

- [Ch. 571](#) – General Provisions, definitions.
- [Ch. 572](#) – Voluntary Mental Health Services.
- [Ch. 573](#) – Emergency Detentions. This includes detentions with a warrant from a judge or apprehensions by a peace officer without a warrant (APOWW), and admission into a hospital.
- [Ch. 574](#) – Court Ordered Mental Health Treatment. This includes orders of protective custody (OPCs) and commitment hearings.

QUICK LEGAL OVERVIEW

Involuntary Civil Commitment moves through three broad stages: (1) Emergency Detention (crisis response and transport for examination); (2) an Order of Protective Custody/OPC (holding a person safely while a commitment hearing is arranged); and (3) the Commitment Hearing, which determines inpatient or outpatient services, and temporary or extended duration.

REFERENCE MATERIAL TO START

- [JCMH County Mental Health Law Plan — Class 1: Civil Commitment \(training slides covering Emergency Detention, OPC, AOT, and Court-Ordered Medications\)](#)
- [JCMH Emergency Detention Flow Chart](#)
- JCMH’s [Texas Mental Health Law Bench Book](#) starting at section 5.4 (Civil Mental Health Law, Emergency Detention with a Warrant) and section 6.2 (Emergency Detention by Peace Officer).

INITIAL INFORMATION TO GATHER

- Which judge(s) in our county have probate jurisdiction? Do those judges handle civil commitment matters? Can/do any other judges in our county have the authority to sign emergency detention warrants? *Texas Health & Safety Code § 574.021*
- Where are Applications for Court-Ordered Mental Health Services and Motions for an Order of Protective Custody (OPC) filed in our county?
- Does our county have an Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program or court?
- Is there an accessible list of crisis services and direct contacts for courts and stakeholders in our county?

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE

- Judge with probate/mental health commitment jurisdiction
- County or District Attorney’s civil/mental health division; the person who coordinates applications and hearing witnesses
- LMHA employees: determine who handles crisis responses, and who, if anyone, coordinates Certificate of Medical Examinations (CME), the OPC process, or testifies at civil commitment hearings

- Hospital/ER staff who handle Emergency Detentions, preliminary examinations, CMEs, Applications for Court Ordered Treatment, Testifying at hearings
- Law enforcement — practices for detentions with and without a warrant

SYSTEM DATA TO ANALYZE

- Number of Emergency Detentions initiated in the county per year (with warrant vs. without warrant/APOWW)
- Number of Orders of Protective Custody (OPCs) requested, granted, and denied
- Whether the statutory preliminary-examination and OPC timelines are being met
- Number of temporary (up to 90 days) vs. extended (up to 12 months) inpatient or outpatient commitment orders issued
- Number of AOT applications filed and orders issued

REFERENCE MATERIAL — WHEN YOU ARE READY FOR A DEEPER DIVE

- [JCMH Civil Commitment Forms](#)
- [JCMH Mental Health Law Plan Checklist \(Civil Commitment section\)](#)
- [Texas AOT Practitioner's Guide](#)
- [JCMH Video Library, Summit Archives by Topic](#), under the Civil Topic Section

Note: Civil commitment (Health & Safety Code Chs. 573–74) is a separate legal track from criminal competency commitment under the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 46B (Subchapters E & F). A person can move through either, or both types of commitments, depending on their circumstances. Don't conflate the two processes when talking with stakeholders.

Early Identification Law

Applicable Law: Code of Criminal Procedure Article 16.22

QUICK LEGAL OVERVIEW

Article 16.22 requires that individuals booked into county jail be screened for mental illness and intellectual/developmental disability (IDD), and that a magistrate order a professional interview and written report when reasonable cause is found. The report can then be used by the court for bail, bond conditions, competency proceedings, specialty court referral, and more.

REFERENCE MATERIAL TO START

- [JCMH 16.22 Guide](#)
- JCMH's [Texas Mental Health Law Bench Book](#) starting at section 7.1.
- [JCMH Mental Health Law Plan Checklist \(Early Identification section\)](#)

INITIAL INFORMATION

- Who screens individuals at booking? Is the mandatory screening form being completed for every intake?
- Is jail staff checking the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS) Continuity of Care Query (CCQ), and is a positive alert routed to the LMHA/LIDDA? *Per Health & Safety Code § 613.013*
- When a positive Continuity of Care Query (CCQ) alert occurs at jail booking, is the LMHA notified, and does the LMHA know who is responsible for receiving that notification?
- Are magistrates notified of credible information suggesting mental illness or IDD, and do they order the 16.22 interview when reasonable cause is found?
- Who conducts the 16.22 interview and prepares the written report in our county (LMHA, LIDDA, or another qualified professional)?
- Is the statutory deadline for completing and returning the 16.22 report being met?
- Are the reports getting sent to all required parties? (Trial Court, State, Defense, Sheriff/Jail Medical Records, Personal Bond/Pretrial Office)
- Are our District and County Clerks reporting the number of completed reports to the Office of Court administration in our monthly data reports?

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE

- Magistrate(s) responsible for reasonable-cause determinations and ordering the 16.22 interview
- Jail intake/booking staff who complete the initial screening
- LMHA/LIDDA or contracted qualified professional who performs the 16.22 interview and drafts the report
- Each group who should be receiving 16.22 Reports (Trial Court, State, Defense, Sheriff/Jail Medical Records, Personal Bond/Pretrial Office)

- County/District Clerk, both may be responsible for reporting the number of 16.22 Reports to the Officer of court administration

SYSTEM DATA TO ANALYZE

- Number of jail screenings resulting in a reasonable-cause finding for mental illness or IDD per month/year.
- Number of 16.22 reports completed within the statutory deadline, versus late
- How 16.22 reports are actually being used by the court once received
 - Mental health personal bond consideration (Code Criminal Proc. Mental health personal bond consideration (Code Crim. Proc. Art. 17.032)
 - Resuming or initiating competency proceedings (Code Criminal Proc. Resuming or initiating competency proceedings (Code Crim. Proc. Ch. 46B)
 - Referral to a specialty court or docket

REFERENCE MATERIAL — WHEN YOU ARE READY FOR A DEEPER DIVE

- [JCMH County Mental Health Law Plan Early Identification Training Video](#)
- [JCMH Video Library, Summit Archives by Topic](#), under the *Early Interventions Section*

Note: *The Article 16.22 report can be considered for multiple purposes at once—bail, bond conditions, appointment of counsel, competency proceedings, specialty court referral, and sentencing—so early, complete screening has ripple effects across the whole case.*

Competency Restoration

Applicable Law: Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 46B

QUICK LEGAL OVERVIEW

Competence to stand trial means that a defendant is mentally able to participate in the criminal case against them. A defendant cannot be tried unless they are able to understand what is happening in court, communicate with their attorney, and help prepare their defense. Similarly, a court cannot accept a guilty or no-contest plea unless the defendant is mentally competent and is entering the plea freely and voluntarily.

Competency restoration is the process of providing treatment and education to help a defendant who is incompetent regain the ability to understand the court process and assist in their defense.

Competency restoration is not the same as comprehensive mental health treatment. The primary goal of competency restoration is to help a defendant regain the ability to understand the court proceedings and assist in their defense so that the criminal case can move forward. In contrast, comprehensive mental health treatment focuses more broadly on improving a person's overall mental health and well-being.

REFERENCE MATERIAL TO START

- JCMH's [Texas Mental Health Law Bench Book](#) starting at section 8.7.
- [JCMH Video — Competency Restoration Class](#)

INITIAL INFORMATION

- Who keeps track of the people on the county's competency restoration (CR) waitlist?
- How does the state hospital (SH) communicate with our county (postal mail, email)? Is there a point person for SH Communications? Should it now be the liaison?
- Has our county participated in the [HHSC Jail In-Reach Learning Collaborative](#)?
- Who is our county's point of contact at the State Hospital, and has that contact been sent an annual letter with their name, email, fax, and phone?
- Does our county have a process to ensure defendants have their current, necessary psychiatric medications while they wait?
- Does our court coordinate with the probate court to start medication orders immediately, while the person awaits transport to the State Hospital?
- Does our county use the outpatient competency restoration program option, or is inpatient restoration the only path currently used here?

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE

- Judge(s) who handle CR cases (felony and misdemeanor)
- Defense Bar - what are their issues with the CR process currently?
- State - what are their issues with the CR process currently?
- Jail - what are their issues with the CR process currently?
- State Hospital forensic coordinator/liaison, if our county has a direct contact
- LMHA - regarding outpatient competency restoration capacity, if that option is available in our area

SYSTEM DATA TO ANALYZE

- Number of people on our county's CR waitlist
 - Divided by MSU (Maximum Security Unit) and non-MSU
 - Divided by felony and misdemeanor
- Number of people in the state hospital (SH) from our county
- Number of people in the SSLC from our county
- Number of people in our jail who have returned from Competency Restoration Services (CRS) but are not competent again. Determine if they are waiting to go to SH again, civil commitment, or something else?
- Number of people receiving court-ordered medication while waiting in jail.
- Information and data from HHSC (Health and Human Services Commission) that they have on our county regarding 46B.
- Average wait time from commitment order to State Hospital admission, and how that has trended over time. HHSC may have this specific data on your county.

REFERENCE MATERIAL — WHEN YOU ARE READY FOR A DEEPER DIVE

- [Eliminate the Wait](#), a toolkit that helps each profession make sure they are doing everything they can before putting people onto the CR waitlist
- [HHSC Texas Competency Restoration Guide \(updated March 2024\)](#)
- [JCMH Mental Health Law Plan Checklist \(Competency Restoration section\)](#)

Specialty Courts

Law: Government Code Chapter 125 (Mental Health Court Programs)

QUICK LEGAL OVERVIEW

Mental Health Courts are one of several types of specialty (treatment) courts that connect participants with community-based mental health treatment through individualized treatment plans and ongoing judicial monitoring. Counties with a population of 200,000 or more are required to establish a mental health court program and register with the Office of Court Administration (OCA), though not all counties of that size currently have one running.

REFERENCE MATERIAL TO START

- JCMH County [Mental Health Law Plan Specialty Courts Video](#) - walks through the laws and best practices for Specialty Courts in Texas
- JCMH's [Texas Mental Health Law Bench Book](#) starting at section 8.2.
- All Rise, [Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#) (Jan. 2026). All Rise's Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards represent decades of research on treatment courts, criminology, and behavioral health. The standards distill this research into actionable best practices, providing a comprehensive blueprint to enhance outcomes across all treatment court models.

INITIAL INFORMATION

- Does our county meet the 200,000-population threshold that requires a registered mental health court program under Gov't Code Ch. 125?
- Does our county currently operate any specialty/treatment court (mental health court, veterans court, etc.), and is it registered with OCA?
- Who would make up a multidisciplinary team here — judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, supervision officer, and LMHA case manager, at minimum?
- What screening or risk-assessment tool(s) does our jurisdiction already use that could identify eligible participants?

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE

- Judge interested in leading or expanding a specialty court
- Prosecutor's office and defense bar/public defender — buy-in for the required nonadversarial approach
- Pretrial, probation, or parole supervision officer
- LMHA case manager
- Sheriff's office or jail medical staff (helpful, though not a required team member)

SYSTEM DATA TO ANALYZE

- Estimated size of the potentially eligible target population in our county
- Existing specialty courts in our county or region and their OCA registration status
- Funding currently accessed vs. available

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL — WHEN YOU ARE READY FOR A DEEPER DIVE

- [JCMH Toolkits page \(specialty court funding toolkits\)](#)
- [How to Create a Mental Health Court](#) Webinar
- [JCMH — The 10-Step Guide: Creating a Texas Mental Health Court Program](#)
- [JCMH Treatment Courts Collaborative — technical assistance for judges starting or growing a program](#)
- [Documents organized by topic](#) on the JCMH website. The Specialty Court tab will have the most pertinent information.
- [JCMH Podcast Episodes](#), applicable episodes include:
 - [Downtown Austin Community Court](#)
 - [Panhandle Regional Problem Solving Court](#)
 - [Justice Forward](#) Program (Nonprofit that directly supports adult specialty courts)
 - [Trauma-Informed Courtroom](#) with Judge Betancourt (Juvenile)
 - [GEMS Program and Juvenile Mental Health Court](#) (Girls Empowerment Mentoring Support Program)
- Videos
 - JCMH [Video Library](#) - See the videos under the *Specialty Courts and Dockets tab*
 - JCMH County [Mental Health Law Plan Specialty Courts Video](#) - walks through the laws and best practices for Specialty Courts in Texas
 - [How to Create a Mental Health Court](#) Webinar

Note: See OCA's list of *registered mental health court and juvenile mental health court programs statewide* ([OCA List of Registered Specialty Courts](#)). It is worth checking the current list for your county and neighboring counties.

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