

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** February 8, 2017  
**To:** All NTBHA Stakeholders  
**From:** Carol Lucky, CEO  
**Re:** Urgent Legislative Update

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The transition from NorthSTAR to North Texas Behavioral Health Authority (NTBHA) included bridge funding for mental health services in the amount of \$8.4 million a year to cover the costs of continuing to serve people without insurance who were served under the prior system. The bridge funds allowed services to continue uninterrupted through the 1/1/2017 transition and the 8/31/2017 end of the current fiscal year. Continuing to serve our contractual target of 29,181 people per year will require continuity of funding (\$8.4 million a year or \$16.8 million for the biennium). Unless this funding is restored to the 2018-19 budget, **at least 5,735 people (4,531 adults and 1,204 children) receiving community mental health services will no longer be able to receive services** and will move to a waiting list effective 9-1-2017.

Given population growth, the gap in funding is likely higher now, but NTBHA is confident that it can maintain current service levels with continued mental health funding of \$8.4 million annually. This critical funding was not included in the HHSC LAR and is not included in any current budget proposals of which NTBHA is aware. The LBB budget developed for the House includes funding to eliminate waitlists (Rider 54), but NTBHA does not know if the LBB factored in the expected NTBHA waitlist when developing that funding estimate.

The entire six county service area has pulled together during the past several months to ensure our transition from NorthSTAR was effective and did not negatively impact consumers. The NTBHA counties all contribute local match funds and provide significant support, including funding specifically for the transition work. It has been a very challenging process. But, all required services were in place effective 1/1/2017 and very few consumers have experienced any disruption to services. NTBHA is transforming into an evidenced based, data driven service delivery system that focuses on open access to services and on improved outcomes for consumers and our communities. Maintaining \$8.4M annually in bridge funding for FY 2018 and FY 2019 is critical to ensuring that 5,735 adults and children continue to receive the mental health services that they need.