

To: Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Subject: Stakeholder Comments Concerning Texas Health & Human Services Legislative Appropriations Request Submission

Date: November 19th, 2021

For those experiencing a behavioral health issue, **housing is often the cornerstone of treatment**. Without a safe, stable place to live, medication adherence and abstinence from substances can prove difficult. In addition, many who leave acute care treatment need a transitional period of housing and wraparound support to successfully reintegrate back into the community. Recovery housing options are geared towards those recovering from substance use disorder and can serve as either a transitional environment between treatment programs and regular housing or, for some individuals, be a permanent housing option.

SAMHSA recognizes two models as national best practices, both of which already are established in Texas--The National Alliance of Recovery Residences (**NARR**) and **Oxford House**. The NARR recovery housing model is organized through the statewide affiliate, Texas Recovery-oriented Housing Network (**TROHN**), which is not state supported, and Oxford House is currently state supported. The Oxford House Model is a democratically run, self-supporting, drug-free home structure. Each house serves six to fifteen individuals, and there are separate houses for men, women, and women with children. TROHN's objectives are to provide a safe sober living environment, certify recovery residences to the national standard, provide a grievance process (which Texas does not have), publish a directory of certified residences, and advocate for fair housing rights. Recovery housing certified under NARR are family-like, shared living environments free from alcohol and drugs, and are centered on peer support and connection to services to promote sustained recovery from substance use disorders. Quality recovery housing has a proven track record at preventing relapse and promoting long term recovery, with an estimated **\$29,000 in cost savings (per person)** when compared to a person living in the community with no recovery support.ⁱ

Oxford Houses are an important part of the continuum, but they are primarily targeted towards a level one population which requires less structure or support services. TROHN certified homes fill the needs of those who may benefit from varying levels of structure or support and complete the rest of the continuum by covering levels two through four. With TROHN and Oxford House already being established in Texas, and with the Health and Human Services Commission currently studying the expansion of recovery housing across the state per HB 707, the appropriations request we are recommending is a cost effective way to build capacity of quality recovery housing, while maintaining fidelity to evidence-based models. Additionally, there is a need for funding to ensure housing for people who are receiving medication assistance treatment (**MAT**).

With that being said, we would like to request the following funding items be included in the Texas Health & Human Services Legislative Appropriations Request as Exceptional Items:

- **\$4.8 million over the biennium**, to provide rental assistance to 2,000 people per year (persons moving into Oxford House/NARR recovery homes), at \$1,200 per person (estimate of total rent for each person for first 90 days in the facility).
- **\$2.4 million over the biennium**, to employ 20 Recovery Housing Navigators across the state (aligned with the 20 Regional Healthcare Partnerships), at \$60,000 each per year.

- **\$120,000 over the biennium**, to provide recovery housing certification to 50 houses per year, at \$600 per house, and 1 FTE to oversee the certification at \$60,000 per year.

We urge HHSC to consider and incorporate these critical funding items into your Legislative Appropriations Request to the Texas Legislature.

Sincerely,

Network of Behavioral Health Providers & RecoveryPeople/TROHN, and:

Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley
Association of Substance Abuse Programs (ASAP)
Austin Serenity MAT Recovery Homes
Avenue 360
Big Blue Eye Consulting, LLC.
Center for Recovery and Wellness Resources
Children's Defense Fund
Clarity Inc.
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Communities for Recovery
Fireside Recovery Sober Living
Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse
Franklin County Rural Health Clinic
Girls Empowerment Network
Harris County Public Health
Healthcare for the Homeless Houston
Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
House of Extra Measures
Houston Recovery Center
La Hacienda Treatment Center
Legacy Community Health
Lisa Ann Webb, LCDC
Mental Health Needs Council
Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Greater Houston
National Alliance of Social Workers (NASW) - Texas
Recovery Alliance of El Paso
Recovery Coalition of Texas
RecoveryATX
Santa Maria Hostel
Texas Association of Addiction Professionals (TAAP)
Texas Center for Justice and Equity
The Menninger Clinic
Thriving United
Woodlands Recovery Center

ⁱ https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Recovery-Housing-Issue-Brief_May-2017.pdf?dof=375ateTbd56