

## Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

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### Kyle V. Mitchell —Testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 822, May 6, 2019

**84(R) SB 55 (Nelson)** directed the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish an innovative grant program, known as the **Texas Veterans + Family Alliance (TV+FA)**, to support community mental health programs that provide and coordinate mental health services and treatment for Texas veterans and their families.

- **TV+FA** provides **grants** to existing or developing **community collaboratives** to fund the delivery and coordination of mental health and supportive services.
- Since the 84th Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature has appropriated **\$20 million per biennium** to the grant program. Communities must **match** these grant dollars on a **dollar-for-dollar basis**, demonstrating their commitment to meeting the mental health needs of veterans and their families.

The **85th Texas Legislature** expanded this innovative funding model to other populations through the creation of **two new mental health grant programs**.<sup>1</sup> These new grant programs differed from 84(R) SB 55 in two important ways:

- Both grant programs set a **lower match requirement for rural areas** given the challenge of identifying match in those areas. For these new grant programs, communities only had to match state grants *in an amount equal to 50 percent of the grant amount if the community mental health program is located in a county with a population of less than 250,000*.
- Neither grant program required HHSC to have a qualified nonprofit or private entity to serve as the **administrator** of the grant program. The administrator requirement was useful as HHSC initially implemented TV+FA, but this was phased out in 2017.

**86(R) SB 822 (Nelson)** aligns the requirements of TV+FA with those of the two new mental health grant programs established by the 85th Texas Legislature.

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<sup>1</sup> **85(R) SB 292 (Huffman, Nelson, and Schwertner)** created the **Mental Health Grant Program for Justice-Involved Individuals** to reduce recidivism rates, arrests, and incarceration among people with mental illness as well as reduce the total waiting time for forensic commitment of people with mental illness to a state hospital.

**85(R) HB 13 (Price)** created the **Community Mental Health Grant Program** to support community programs that provide mental health care services and treatment – and coordinate mental health care services with other transition support services – for people with mental illnesses.