

TEXAS STATE  
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*Changing the Face of Mental Illness in the State of Texas*

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MEADOWS  
MENTAL HEALTH  
POLICY INSTITUTE



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***When every person in our state, and in our nation,***

looks upon those with mental illness and sees the potential of individuals and not the disease, we will know we have reached our goals for systemic improvement in behavioral health care.

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This annual report is dedicated to the people of Texas who have a mental illness and to our community partners, supporters, and staff who are working diligently to change the face of mental illness in the State of Texas.

# *Our History, Mission, and Vision*

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The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute grew out of the Meadows Foundation's commitment to improving the health and welfare of all Texans with a special focus on mental health care. After three years of research and strategy development, the Meadows Foundation generously provided the lead grant to establish the Policy Institute as an independent nonprofit organization in 2014.

Our mission is to develop and support policies and programs that allow Texans to obtain effective mental health care when and where they need it. The Policy Institute works at the local, regional, and statewide levels to analyze mental health systems, share best practices, eliminate discrimination and stereotypes surrounding mental illness, and promote efficient, accountable care. It is our vision that Texas be a national leader in treating people with mental health needs.



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## Message From Our CEO

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Our first full year of operations was exhilarating, exhausting, and exceptionally fruitful. We worked on many projects in many places while also recruiting partners and hiring the staff needed to push priorities forward.

Among our significant successes, the Legislature passed several behavioral health reforms that our staff helped develop. We launched projects with mental health advocates and agencies in every region of Texas and started a program to help train future behavioral health policy leaders. We are grateful to all the individuals, institutions, and groups that helped us accomplish so much so quickly.

I was honored to serve as founding CEO for the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and am delighted now to introduce its new leader, Andrew Keller, PhD. We searched the nation for a CEO, but realized the most qualified, capable candidate already worked here. Andy Keller assumed his new position in January 2016. I will continue to serve on the Institute's board.

As founding CEO, I have a unique perspective on the history of this organization. It is an unusual entity: a privately funded agency dedicated solely to improving mental health care in one state. It is a profoundly important cause, but not a flashy or popular one. The people who had the vision to create this Policy Institute share a remarkable compassion for and commitment to the people of Texas. I would like to thank our founding sponsors, the Meadows Foundation, Inc. and the Lyda Hill Foundation, and our board of directors, a terrific group of civic, businesses, and health leaders from across the state led by Dr. Octavio Martinez.

We have achieved much in our first year, but now we must translate policy reform into real change inside health clinics, state hospitals, jails, and juvenile facilities. We remain committed to our goal: ensuring that all Texans can access effective mental health care when and where they need it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Luce".

**Tom Luce**  
Founding Chief Executive Officer

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## Message From The Chairman

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We are in the hardheaded hope business at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. We know that most people with mental illness can recover — if they receive timely diagnoses, effective treatments, and appropriate supportive services. That’s the hope part.

The hardheaded part is our commitment to continuously chip away at the policies, practices, and beliefs that prevent Texans, especially low-income Texans, from accessing the care they need. We won’t give up until we succeed.

As executive director of the 75-year-old Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, I’m pleased to have a new partner in the effort to improve behavioral health services in Texas. As chairman of the Policy Institute’s board, I credit the leadership of former CEO Tom Luce, and his expert staff, for accomplishing so much since the Institute opened in 2014.

These two organizations complement each other. The Hogg Foundation has decades of experience as a funder and a deep understanding of how the mental health landscape has evolved in Texas. The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute is young, strong on analytic intelligence, and focused on systemic change.

The Institute tackles perennial issues, such as integrating primary and behavioral health care, using the latest research about best practices. The Institute can also determine whether reforms are working by analyzing outcomes and comparing them to other treatments and results from other communities. It’s a rigorous, data-driven strategy that remembers real people — our friends, our neighbors, our children — suffer when they receive haphazard, insensitive, or ineffective mental health care.

One of the most persistent challenges to improving care for mental illness is the stigma surrounding it. This stigma is as real a barrier to treatment as the statewide shortage of psychiatrists. To help bring change, the Institute has launched “Okay to Say,” a campaign using social media, the web-based Mental Health Channel, and traditional media to raise awareness about mental illness and recovery. We have hope; “Okay to Say” is a way to share it.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "O. Martinez, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

**Dr. Octavio N. Martinez, Jr.**  
Chairman of the Board

# Our Thanks To Our Supporters

**The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute is honored** to work alongside many public and private agencies that are as passionate as we are about improving behavioral health care and changing the face of mental illness in Texas.

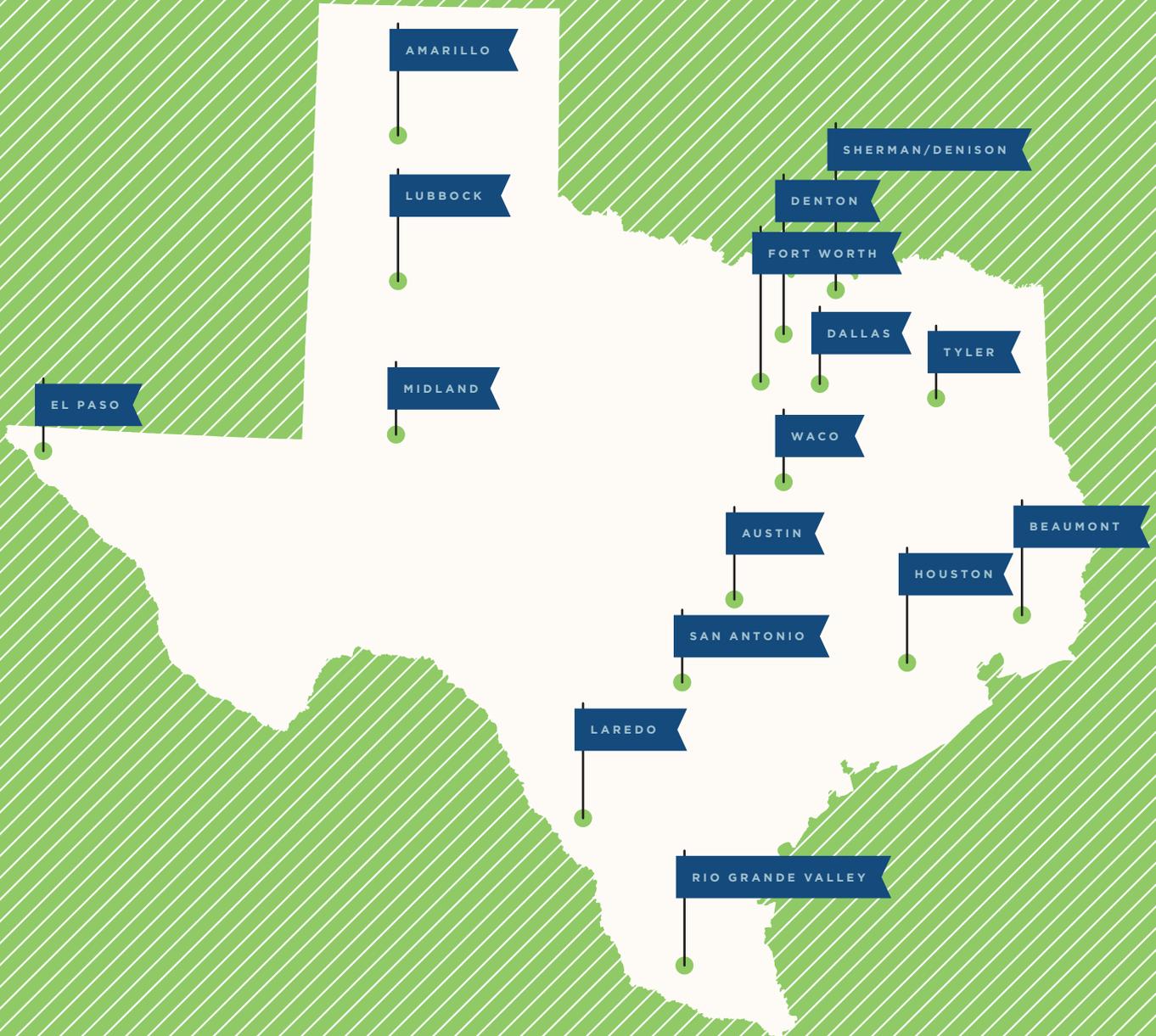
Some partners have invited us into their communities, shared their knowledge, recruited additional advisors and advocates, and helped us raise awareness statewide. Others performed the demanding tasks of combing through data, interviewing public officials, and sifting through state laws and local procedures. We are indebted to them for their help and eager to continue expanding these collaborations.

We also are profoundly grateful to the donors and foundations that have supported us from the beginning. Their generosity has allowed us to build a strong organization for all our future efforts: to do research, hire expert staff, meet with advocates and community leaders around the state, define goals, and develop the strategies to achieve them.

Their gifts and grants have made it possible to accelerate reforms in regions already working to improve mental health systems. They also allowed us to share our expertise with state agencies and nonprofit groups at no cost when the need was critical and the groups had no funds to cover consulting fees. We thank the following foundations and donors for their pioneering commitment to our mission:

Canon Solutions  
Charles Butt and Charles Butt Foundation  
Clements Foundation  
Curtis W. Huff & Lori M. Gallagher  
— The Freebird Foundation  
Deedie Rose  
Episcopal Health Foundation  
Houston Endowment Inc.  
James T. & Maureen O. Hackett  
— Greater Houston Community Foundation  
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— National Philanthropic Trust  
Meadows Foundation, Inc.  
Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.  
St. David's Foundation  
Susan & Jim Parker  
The Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation  
The Dallas Foundation  
The R.W. Fair Foundation  
The Rainwater Charitable Foundation  
The Rees Jones Foundation  
W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation  
at the Communities Foundation of Texas

# Communities We Touch





# Year in Review

**During the first half of 2015**, much of the Policy Institute's work focused on educating lawmakers about mental health issues and providing technical research on mental health that would support statewide policy reform. The Texas Legislature only meets for six months every other year, so the hours were long and the work intense. Our experienced policy team provided information that helped lawmakers craft bills to improve accountability in health care contracting, better integrate mental health and primary care, standardize data collection, and increase access to effective treatment.

Our statewide policy work extended well beyond the Capitol Complex. The Institute provided pro bono technical assistance, such as data collection and systems analysis, to several state agencies at their request. These public agencies rarely have funding to hire outside consultants to study issues. Without our services, such research projects might have been postponed for years, or solutions might have been cobbled together without the knowledge needed to make them successful.

## **Among the results:**

- **The Department of State Health Services developed a plan to create community-based supports for patients who have spent years in state psychiatric hospitals.**
- **The Department of Family and Protective Services is creating a standardized assessment system for children in foster care, as well as programs in North Texas for foster kids with the most severe behavioral health needs.**
- **The Health and Human Services Commission examined issues related to renewing the state's 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver — a topic of critical concern to private and public hospitals, clinics, and health care providers.**

Additionally, we began helping communities around the state analyze and strengthen their local mental health systems. By the end of 2015, the Institute was working with local partners in Texas' six largest cities: Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth, and El Paso. We also expanded our efforts into Denton County, Tyler (Smith County), Midland, Amarillo, Waco, Beaumont-Port Arthur, and the Rio Grande Valley.

The Institute also took action on one of its guiding principles, to expand the behavioral health care workforce, by naming our first mental health policy fellows. These talented individuals have the knowledge and experience to help us advance our work in diverse regions across Texas. We also launched our summer internship program for undergraduate and graduate students to help educate the next generation of mental health policy leaders.

Last, we strengthened our internal infrastructure. We recruited recognized experts in the fields of veterans' affairs, children's mental health, and criminal justice. We opened a satellite office in Houston thanks to the generous support of the Episcopal Health Foundation. The board of directors conducted a national search for our next chief executive officer and chose Andrew Keller, PhD, formerly our executive vice president for policy and programs. He became CEO on January 1, 2016. With his new leadership, the Institute has the staff and resources to continue leading mental health care reform efforts in Texas.

A portrait of Lacerica Olson, a woman with long brown hair, smiling and wearing a white lace-trimmed blouse and gold earrings. She is standing outdoors with a blurred green background.

**Lacerica Olson**

United Way of Denton County, Inc.  
*Community Impact Director:*  
Denton County Behavioral Health  
Leadership Team

**DENTON COUNTY**

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## Change Begins With Collaborative Leadership

“Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute is an outstanding partner for our diverse community leadership collaborative.”

“Their access to national and state behavioral health experts, expertise in local systems change, and ongoing technical assistance and guidance enabled us to progress from information-sharing through the citizen’s council into an action-oriented Leadership Team that has accomplished great strides in a relatively short time. Just within the last six months, we have identified priority men-

tal health service areas and divided into six work groups dedicated to Child & Family Systems, Consumer Services, Housing, Jail Diversion, Mental Health Treatment Court, and Veterans.”

Following a community mental health needs assessment, public and private community leaders and service organizations including the United Way of Denton County formed the citizen’s council in 2014 to address Denton County’s fragmented mental health services. The group was formally chartered as the Denton County Behavioral Health Leadership Team in June 2015 with 31 appointed members.

“The mission of the Leadership Team is to facilitate system-wide change in Denton County’s behavioral health services and truly address the needs of the residents of our community. Our vision is comprehensive behavioral health services for every person in Denton County.”



# 84th Legislature Recap

During the 2014 interim year for the Texas Legislature, the Sunset Advisory Commission (SAC) reviewed the effectiveness of the state's Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). We are honored that our CEO Tom Luce was an appointed public member of that commission.

The SAC review produced multiple recommendations related directly or indirectly to mental health services in Texas. With special thanks for the dedicated leadership of SAC chair Senator Jane Nelson and vice chair Representative Four Price, many recommendations were incorporated into draft legislation for lawmakers to consider when they convened in early 2015 for the 84th Legislature.

During the legislative session, Policy Institute staff members monitored relevant bills as they progressed through committees and to the full House or Senate. Our team also provided expert data and analysis and additional testimony to six legislative committees and responded to dozens of requests for information. Our work established the Institute's reputation for being an independent, objective, and trustworthy resource for lawmakers working to do what is best for Texas.

## **Several key Sunset recommendations passed, including provisions to:**

- Consolidate certain administrative functions, such as contracting, within the HHSC to increase efficiency and accountability.
- Create a behavioral health advisory council for the HHSC.
- Require local behavioral health authorities to better integrate physical and mental health care and substance abuse services.
- Require the state to design a new, locally driven formula for allocating beds in state mental health hospitals.

Most of the provisions were included in Senate Bills 200, 202, and 20 and House Bill 1, the general appropriations bill.

## **In addition, lawmakers passed measures to:**

- Create a grant program to support community mental health programs that serve military veterans with mental illness.
- Address critical shortages in certain medical specialties, such as psychiatry, by expanding the number of residency slots available and providing a source of ongoing funding for them.
- Provide loan repayment assistance for behavioral health professionals working in underserved areas of the state.



**Rebecca Brune**

*Senior Vice President of  
Strategic Planning and Growth  
Methodist Healthcare  
Ministries of South Texas, Inc.*

## SOUTH TEXAS

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# Policy Reforms Helping Local Nonprofit Invest With Greater Impact

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Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. is dedicated to providing medical, dental, and behavioral health services to low-income and uninsured residents in 74 counties across South Texas. Executives of the Methodist agency were founding funders and community supporters of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute when it launched in 2014.

**In Bexar County, the Policy Institute** has helped agencies understand where different parts of the mental health system are fragmented and how to redeploy resources to improve outcomes. That is helping Methodist Healthcare Ministries invest its mental health-related grants to assure greater impact.

“The Institute was incredibly strategic in the Texas Legislature,” says Rebecca Brune. “Now, the Institute is a respected partner in state policy discussions and a valuable asset for local communities trying to improve mental health services. They have such a pulse on what’s happening across the state that they’re able to lead the discussion with comparative analysis. You can help communities move along in both discussion and execution by showing what other communities have done.”

“The quality of their research and data analysis has positioned them to become key informants to policy makers and indispensable in reframing policy discussions among state officials,” Brune added. “That’s what’s made them so successful in such a short amount of time.”

## A “Do Tank” Approach to Help Minor Offenders With Mental Illness

**Criminal justice** is an enormous enterprise in Texas. The state incarcerates about 150,000 inmates in its prisons, state jails, and drug abuse treatment centers. County jails lock up tens of thousands more men and women. About a quarter of all inmates have an untreated mental health issue; the majority also have substance abuse problems.

Dr. Tony Fabelo may know more about the interplay of mental illness, addiction, and imprisonment than almost anyone else in Texas. He has studied the issue as a state policy official, and advocated for reforms, for more than three decades. He has found a powerful ally in the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.

“They’re a ‘do tank’ as opposed to a ‘think tank,” says Dr. Fabelo, now director of research for the Justice Center of the Council

of State Governments. “You have people who have done great work analyzing stuff and providing reports, but the ‘do tank’ is having a plan, a policy plan to give to the Legislature.”

He credits the Institute for helping local governments identify exactly why minor offenders with mental illnesses repeatedly land in jail. Sometimes it is poor screening at jail intake, sometimes it is a lack of available or conveniently located psychiatric beds, and sometimes it is inadequately trained police officers.

“We are trying to look at the whole system because there’s not a simple solution,” Dr. Fabelo says. “We present a map to local officials and come up with a plan. The Meadows Policy Institute ‘do tank’ approach provides the momentum and incentives to put people together.”

“For years, we have increasingly used jails to deal with the mental health problems of poor people who do not get adequate services outside of the criminal justice system. These people should be getting treatment outside of jail.”



**Dr. Tony Fabelo**

*Director, Research Division  
Justice Center  
Council of State Governments*

# Our Focus Areas

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute has identified three populations deserving of special focus: children, veterans, and people involved in the criminal justice system.



## CHILDREN

Early intervention can spare children with emotional disorders a lifetime of suffering. But the first time many Texas youngsters receive mental health services is when they land in foster care, special education, or juvenile detention. The Institute is working with Children's Health in Dallas to integrate behavioral health into primary care settings, so issues can be identified and treated before they derail a child's school and family life. We also are working with the Spring Branch and Fort Worth school districts to analyze mental health needs and gaps in services.



## SMART JUSTICE

The Institute's Smart Justice Initiative aims to improve how criminal justice systems handle people with mental illness. About one-third of all Texas inmates have mental health issues. Better behavioral health care could promote public safety, save millions of tax dollars, and replace incarceration with more humane alternatives for many low-level offenders. We worked with the Council of State Governments Justice Center to analyze Bexar County's criminal justice system and encourage pre-trial diversion of adults with mental illness. Bexar County is now renovating an obsolete booking facility to create appropriate space for mental health assessments, and creating a public defender position specializing in mental illness. The Institute is working with Dallas and Harris counties on similar projects.



## VETERANS

Veterans deserve appropriate, timely care for their behavioral health needs. The challenge is especially difficult in Texas, with its large, diverse population of vets scattered across 268,586 square miles of territory. In 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature authorized \$20 million in grant funds, to be matched with equal funding from the private sector, to support community mental health programs for veterans and their families. State leaders selected the Policy Institute to oversee the \$1 million pilot phase of the statewide grant program.

# Local Systems Work

An effective mental health system requires thoughtful state policy, adequate funding, and a strong local network that includes providers, hospitals, city and county officials, police and sheriff departments, and nonprofit agencies. Historically, these groups rarely work together to identify needs and align goals for mental health services.

The Policy Institute is a resource to any Texas community that wants to analyze and improve its local behavioral health system.

The Institute has developed a protocol for providing technical expertise in behavioral health care and systems change, as well as guidance to assist communities. The first phase involves identifying leaders whose involvement is essential in reforms and setting up a governing structure. In the following phases, our staff helps community leaders assess their current system's strengths and weaknesses, develop a strategic plan to improve services, implement those plans, and evaluate outcomes. This protocol has guided our work as we expanded to communities spanning from Beaumont-Port Arthur to Amarillo.

**In addition to the partner highlights featured in this report, following are a few of our engagements:**

- The Institute evaluated existing mental and primary health care systems in a multi-county region around Austin to identify barriers to integrating care.
- We mapped the mental health landscape in Harris County, providing a detailed analysis of needs and available services.
- The Institute has partnered with Mental Health Connections of Tarrant County on developing a county-based behavioral health workforce improvement initiative.



## Building A Community Movement From Family Tragedy

**“We can’t say enough to express our gratitude** that the Meadows Foundation made the commitment to establish the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute,” says Fonda Latham. “I’ve been in the mental health field for 38 years, and that act alone is one of the most hope-filled things I’ve seen,” says Latham.

In 2014, Doug McSwane, Fonda Latham, and other community leaders organized the first “Peace of Mind” conference to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. About 800 people attended the Tyler conference, many drawn to the event by McSwane’s personal story.

The McSwane’s son Patrick was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 2005. They found little help in East Texas where treatment options were minimal and the stigma surrounding mental illness was pervasive.

“We didn’t talk about it,” Doug McSwane recalls. “We just dealt with it, or tried to deal with it, as best we could.”

The illness eventually overwhelmed their son and he committed suicide in 2012. McSwane first spoke publicly about his family’s struggle at Patrick’s funeral. After that, numerous calls from people asking how to help their child, sibling, or friend, with mental illness lead to the “Peace of Mind” conference.

An acquaintance introduced McSwane to the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. The Institute helped the Tyler mental health advocates organize meetings of community stakeholders — county officials, city officials, hospitals, social service agencies, and religious congregations — and develop a Behavioral Health Leadership Team. The team already has tackled two urgent issues: prevention and acute crisis management.



Organizing Members:  
2014 “Peace of Mind”  
Conference, Tyler, Texas

**Doug McSwane, Jr.**

Attorney  
Potter Minton

**Fonda Latham, ACSW, LCSW**

Executive Director  
Samaritan Counseling Center



**Enrique Mata**

Senior Program Officer  
Paso del Norte Health Foundation

## WEST TEXAS

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# Unique Regional Challenges To System Improvement

**The Texas border region**, with more than 2.4 million residents, has a paradoxical combination of connection and isolation. The unique geography, where two countries converge, isolates the region from state capitols and other metropolitan areas by hundreds of miles of desert.

“This isolation challenges organizations to be resourceful and united,” explains Enrique Mata. “Regional partners willingly collaborate to improve health in this hybrid society where families may live in one state, work in another, and regularly cross the international border for health services or other needs.”

The Paso del Norte Health Foundation in El Paso promotes health and prevents disease in a region that spans three counties in New Mexico, two in Texas, and the city of Juarez in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are priorities of the Foundation, which is collaborating with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to improve behavioral health systems throughout the region. The Policy Institute provides vital behavioral health information and tools related to state legislation, changes in federal Medicaid funding, and best practice programs, among other topics.

“The Policy Institute’s team members helped us catalyze local efforts and coordinate with key leadership in other Texas communities,” Mata says. “They are knowledgeable in the subject matter and always respectful of the local culture.”

# Moving Forward

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## Talking About Cures

When it comes to mental illness, we tend not to talk about cures. When the issue is raised, people quickly point out that there are no cures for mental illness. But this is just as true for cancer and other illness, and that doesn't seem to bother us.

Moving forward, we want Texans to talk more about remission, recovery, and progress toward cures for mental illness, just like we do for other physical diseases. Working Texans with depression need to know that treatment can bring about full remission, and employers need to know that effective care can improve productivity and the bottom line. Texas families need to know that behavior problems at school can be resolved by caregivers and clinicians working together to help our children stay in school and on healthy developmental paths. And Texans afflicted with psychosis deserve aggressive, intensive care with an expectation of returning to a life filled with meaningful work, family, and a caring community – just like we provide to other life-threatening diseases, no matter our fears about the prognosis.

Moving forward, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute is committed to providing the leadership in policy and research necessary to help Texas's leading medical institutions and community providers discover and deliver effective mental health care solutions to every person and family across our great state. We will partner with policy makers, local communities, and state leaders to tackle and bring about systemic changes to improve access to behavioral health care that brings about remission, recovery, and some day even cures.

## Marketing and Communications

One of the Institute's long-term goals is to change perceptions of mental illness. Since our inception, we have worked toward that goal by developing and executing a marketing campaign to position mental health, and the Institute, at the forefront of public policy discussions.

Our first- and second-quarter push introduced the Mobilizing Minds campaign through various platforms. The campaign shared video stories, sponsored content, survey infographics, and our policy and program work through the Texas State of Mind website, digital advertising, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, engagement with organizations, outreach, and printed materials. During the third and fourth quarters we maintained our digital and social presence, and added a newsletter to keep audiences informed on the Institute's progress. We were also pleased to be a resource to local and state officials on many occasions.

We also prepared the launch for the next phase of our communications plan, which includes a community based movement and engagement program called, "Okay to Say." An objective of this program is to increase public awareness about mental health issues that affect Texans, and the successes they encounter when seeking help for these treatable conditions. We will focus on the general public and provide a platform for community members to add their voice and share their story.



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# Board of Directors

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**Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute**

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