

MEADOWS  
MENTAL HEALTH  
POLICY INSTITUTE

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## Senator Jane Nelson Honored with First Tom Luce Award for Mental Health

AUSTIN – Senator Jane Nelson, whose contributions to better mental health policy, particularly for children, have helped Texas vastly improve its mental health care systems, was named the first recipient of The Tom Luce Award for Mental Health Policy Transformation, awarded by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute at its Sixth Annual Engage & Excel Conference.

“As other states are looking to Texas as a model, the models they're looking at more often than not are programs that had their genesis in the mind and heart of Senator Nelson,” said Andy Keller, President and CEO of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. “If she had not invested her passion, her energy, and herself in the cause of mental health, we would not be where we are today.”



*Andy Keller and Senator Jane Nelson*

Senator Nelson was instrumental in the development of The Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium, established in the 86th Legislature, that today is helping more than 2 million Texas school children each year access urgent mental health care when they need it.

Tom Luce, the award’s namesake, recalled meeting her when she first arrived in the Legislature and knowing there was something special about her.

“She was such a spark of energy, and you knew she was a star in the making,” he said. “She’s a force of nature when it comes to building a consensus around a piece of legislation.”

Luce noted that her ability to lead and build consensus has been pivotal to the state's efforts to improve mental health care.

“We have really led the nation in trying to earnestly and effectively and efficiently transform our mental health system,” he said. “We have a lot of work to do but under Jane's leadership, we've made enormous progress.”

Senator Nelson thanked the Meadows Institute for the award.

“I want to thank Meadows for everything you do to raise awareness about the enormous need that exists in the mental health arena,” Senator Nelson said. “No one has done more to help us achieve our goals than Tom Luce, and I consider it a great honor to receive an award with his name attached.”

Engage & Excel brought together 427 participants from 24 states to discuss timely and crucial topics related to mental health. More information on E&E can be found at <https://mmhpi.org/event/engage-excel-2021/>.

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#### **About Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute**

Launched in 2014, the Meadows Institute helps legislators, state officials, members of the judiciary, and local, state, and national leaders identify equitable systemic solutions to mental health needs and has become Texas’s most trusted source for data-driven mental health policy. The Meadows Institute is making a significant impact in multiple areas, helping Texas and national leaders shift the focus of new investments toward early intervention, addressing the mental health crisis in our jails and emergency rooms, and helping all people with mental health needs recover and be well. Learn more at <https://mmhpi.org>.