

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The Meadows Institute's Paso del Norte Center Announces a \$500,000 Landmark Gift from the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation to Improve Mental Health Care in El Paso**

*The Hunt Family Foundation's commitment will increase the quality and access to mental health care throughout the Borderplex region, where critical service gaps persist*

**EL PASO, October 30, 2025** — The Paso del Norte Center, a regional center of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute that is based in El Paso, has been awarded a \$500,000 landmark gift from the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation to improve the mental health of residents in the region.

The gift from the Hunt Family Foundation will help the Paso del Norte Center expand access to quality mental health care to those individuals who need it most through a range of expanded programs and policies.

El Paso has a shortage of mental health professionals and programs. In 2020, El Paso County had 97 mental health providers per 100,000 residents, which is 9.7 per 10,000 people. At the same time, estimates show that in El Paso County 140,000 adults are living with a mental health condition, and 10,000 children and youth suffer from depression.

The Hunt Family Foundation's commitment to improving behavioral health access and outcomes for the people of El Paso will build a stronger system of care, increase the quality of treatment, develop the workforce, and ensure that every individual and family can receive the care they deserve.

"Our Paso del Norte Center has been helping El Paso lead the way in building a mental health system that truly meets people where they are for more than three years," said Andy Keller, PhD, president and CEO of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. "The generosity of the Hunt Family will help more families get the care they need, when they need it, and it provides a powerful example of how strategic philanthropy can turn policy into real change for real people, improving lives and strengthening communities across Texas."

That generosity will help accelerate the implementation of programs that will transform mental health care in the region, including:

- Integrating mental health care into primary care clinics so that families can receive help early - often from the same trusted doctors who provide their regular care

- Expanding access for children and adolescents with same-day telehealth visits for those with urgent mental health needs
- Enhancing crisis response to ensure that people experiencing a mental health emergency receive care and support instead of involvement with the justice system
- Bolstering the mental health workforce to meet the growing needs of the region

The support of the Hunt Family Foundation will help ensure that El Paso residents fully benefit from the \$12 billion in behavioral health funding that the Texas Legislature has invested since 2014. That historic funding is critical to expand essential services and strengthen key systems that will increase access, improve outcomes, and build capacity across the region.

Since 2014, for every \$1 of unrestricted funding the Meadows Institute has received, it has been able to secure \$221 for policy-driven funding, which will maximize the impact of the Hunt Family Foundation's gift and build the momentum necessary to help make El Paso a model for mental health care.

"The Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation is committed to advancing the health and well-being of our region, and we recognize that mental health is a critical component of that mission," said Stacey Hunt Spier on behalf of the Hunt Family Foundation. "This investment reflects our belief that every individual in El Paso deserves timely access to high-quality mental health care. We are honored to support the Meadows Institute's efforts to strengthen local systems of care and help build a sustainable, evidence-based model that will serve our community."

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

Launched in 2014, the Meadows Institute helps Texas 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 [mmhpi.org](http://mmhpi.org).

#### **About the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation**

The Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation is one of the Borderplex's private family foundations focused on creating a globally competitive region. Since 1987, it has made grants and commitments of over \$169.1 million to institutions working to transform education, improve healthcare, advance regional economic and cultural development, and create a greater quality of life for all Borderplex residents. Over 90% of the Foundation's total giving has supported organizations and initiatives in the Borderplex region.