

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Andy Keller, PhD – Invited Testimony on Senate Bill 674 – March 1, 2017

- **A public health crisis:** An overwhelming majority of Texas counties are designated as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas, defined as more than 30,000 Texans per clinician.
 - As of November 2013, **207 of 254 (81.5%) Texas counties** had whole or partial county Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) for mental health.
 - In addition, **241 counties** had whole or partial county designation or at least one site-designated HPSA; over 80% of these counties are rural counties.
- **For psychiatrists:** Texas has **1,460 psychiatrists** (*532 over the age of 55*) and can train **only 370** in Texas residencies each year (including just over 50 child psychiatrists).
 - Texas needs **at least 1,000 more adult and 200 more child psychiatrists today.**
 - There are **185 Texas counties** that do not have a single psychiatrist; 10.5% of all Texans (2.8 million) live in counties with no psychiatrists. Nearly all Texans (99.4%) live in counties with fewer psychiatrists than recommended.
- **For other mental health professionals:**
 - One in four Texans (23.3%) live in the 199 counties with workforce shortages.
 - One hundred and two (102) Texas counties have no psychologists, 48 counties have no licensed professional counselors, and 46 counties have no licensed social worker.
- **Culturally and linguistically competent mental health professionals** are also lacking: 65.5% of psychiatrists are white, only 5.3% are African American, and 9.7% are Hispanic.
- **What are the main drivers?**
 - **Restrictive licensing** – Texas is one of only eight states with no physician reciprocity; similar restrictions exist for other professionals.
 - **Too few residency slots** – Texas needs at least twice as many residency slots that target the right types of needed care (*e.g.*, public sector, community-based care).
 - **Training infrastructure** – We asked residency training directors in 2014 how many new psychiatric residency slots they could develop with unlimited funds, and they said 13. The main limiting factors cited included the need for additional faculty, facilities, and placements.

