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THE SENATE OF TEXAS



LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR

DISTRICT 18

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SENATE PASSES KOLKHORST SWEEPING MENTAL HEALTH PLAN FOR TEXAS

(AUSTIN, TX) — This morning the Texas Senate passed Senate Bill 26, authored by Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham), which will create new programs to fund and expand mental health services across the state.

“Texas is poised to make an historic investment in mental health by expanding our state’s facilities and services. This will be done through local contracts and the construction of new facilities, with this bill serving as a roadmap. Every State Senator supports this bill because this issue impacts every single Texan. We can vastly reduce mental hospital waitlists so people get the help they need in local settings and finally end the cycle of Texans being in and out of hospitals, homeless shelters, the streets or jails,” stated Kolkhorst.

Under the leadership of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, Texas has made mental health investments a key focus with total investments across state agencies of more than \$1.5 billion in the last three sessions.

“As I traveled rural Texas last year, I listened closely as Texans from all regions of our state explained the need for improved mental health care access,” said Lt. Governor Dan Patrick. “As Lt. Governor, I have already invested more in mental health care than any Lt. Governor in Texas history. This historic legislation builds upon what we have done in the last 8 years in the area of mental health. This investment is a responsible use of our unprecedented budget surplus, and I am proud that the Senate has come together as one to support this important and historic endeavor.”

The legislation seeks to help de-escalate a family in crisis through the creation of an “innovation grant” matching program that would provide funding opportunities to a variety of local providers, including hospitals, local mental health providers, and non-profits so they can offer direct new services for youths and families who are suffering. It also creates a new discharge and transition program to help State Hospital patients “step-down” to a supportive, safe setting in the community once they are discharged and drives efforts to improve mental health services around the state by requiring unprecedented performance audits on community-based mental and behavioral health systems known as Local Mental and Behavioral Health Authorities.

“I recently received a letter from a mother who was desperate for help,” said Kolkhorst. “She reached out to my office for assistance for her 14 year old son who has been diagnosed with several emotional and behavioral disorders and is no longer able to live with family due to violent outbursts and physical abuse he inflicted on his family members. She literally has nowhere to go.”

Kolkhorst said that families in crisis would be helped by local grants for programs to help deliver counseling, training, social services and other programs or treatments to help some adolescents develop coping and social skills and prevent the tragedy from worsening with the criminal justice system or even jail.

“This is a bipartisan solution that offers the right place with the right help for every mental health challenge.”

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