

Definitions and background regarding Parity: Mental health parity describes the equal treatment of mental health conditions and substance use disorders in insurance plans. When a plan has parity, it means that if you are provided unlimited doctor visits for a chronic condition like diabetes then they must offer unlimited visits for a mental health condition such as depression or schizophrenia.

- In order to obtain for the Workgroup to evaluate the level of understanding of the parity landscape, please answer the following questions:
  - o Do you understand what Parity is?
  - o Have you heard of Parity?
  - o Do you know how Parity protects you?
  - o What is your health coverage?
    - Medicaid
    - Employer sponsor plans
    - Self-funded or government plans
    - Individual market place
  - o Questions regarding any issues a consumer or provider have had accessing mental health SUD benefits versus medical benefits within their insurance plan? Have the consumer or providers receive a parity violation?
  - o What was the reason for the denial of MH SUD services? (list)
  - o Have you filed a parity complaint? Yes/ no
  - o If yes, who did you file a complaint with?
    - With MCO
    - The insurance plan
    - With DOL
    - With TDI
    - The Ombudsman
  - o Was there a resolution to the complaint? Yes/ No

Now that you have answer these questions, please help determine the priorities for the strategic plan.

# Texas Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Workgroup Survey

Insert paragraph on what is Parity and why does it matter?

In 2017, the Texas legislature passed House Bill 10. The bill created a workgroup to engage stakeholders and multiple state agencies to ensure understand of and successful compliance with parity.

The Parity Workgroup aims to reduce barriers to care that consumers and providers commonly encounter as they seek to obtain, access, and utilize mental health and substance use disorder benefits.

**Commented [V(1):** Add information of the subcommittee workgroups and how each workgroup developed goals and objectives.

The Workgroup is charged to develop a strategic plan to serve as a roadmap to improve compliance, complaint resolution, education, and outreach relating to the laws concerning benefits for mental health conditions and substance use disorders (MHCSUDs) in Texas.

The MHCSUD Parity Workgroup must make recommendations in five key areas as specified in the H.B. 10 legislation. Members were surveyed to gain feedback on the process of how to develop Workgroup recommendations. Members agreed to form three subcommittees to focus on the five key areas.

- Subcommittee 1: Compliance, Enforcement, and Oversight
- Subcommittee 2: Complaints, Concerns, and Investigations
- Subcommittee 3: Education and Awareness Each subcommittee is chaired by a MHCSUD member.

To gain additional information, support, and input external stakeholders were invited to participate within the subcommittees. Additional stakeholders may also participate as needed based on their subject matter expertise as needed. Each subcommittee created a purpose statement and goals.

The Workgroup would like to receive stakeholder input toward the development of the strategic plan through the following survey.

The goals and objectives described in the survey are from the Workgroup's initial progress report toward the development of the strategic plan. The initial progress report was finalized in August 2018. For your input to be considered, the completed survey needs to be submitted by

**Commented [V(2)]:** The survey open period should be limited to 7-10 days.

In the survey, we want you to indicate the level of importance in the objectives for each goal.

Some specific parity strategies have been identified in the initial progress report, but are not included on this survey.

Thank you for your valuable feedback in the development of the strategic plan.

**Please check all the applicable boxes that apply to you.**

recipient of mental health services

advocate for recipients of mental health services

recipient of substance use disorder treatment services

advocate for recipients of substance use disorder treatment services

family member of a recipient of mental health services

family member of a recipient of substance use disorder treatment services

mental health treatment provider

substance use disorder treatment provider

provider

employee of a hospital

children's mental health of substance use disorder treatment provider

employee of a Medicaid managed care organization

employee of a commercial health benefit plan

employee of HHSC

employee of TDI

employee of utilization review agent

employee of independent review organization

employee of a hospital, state-supported living center

provider of non-behavioral health services

Other:

In the box below, please pick which location description best describes where you are. I live in:

an Urban Area ( a community of 50,000 or more people)

a Small Urban Area (a community with at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 people)

Rural Area (any other community with less than 2,500)

# Texas Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Workgroup Survey seeks stakeholder feedback on initial goals and strategies

Purpose of subcommittee is to promote compliance and enforcement of mental health condition and substance use disorder (MHCSUD) parity rules, regulations, and statutes.

Goal: Understand current MHCSUD and parity-related regulatory and statutory landscape. Objective: Identify current processes for MHCSUD parity compliance, enforcement, and oversight.

- 1 Objective is extremely unimportant
- 5 Objective is extremely important

Goal: Understand current MHCSUD and parity-related regulatory and statutory landscape. Objective: Identify best practices for parity compliance, enforcement, and oversight.

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Goal: Recommend opportunities for improvement of MHCSUD parity compliance, enforcement, and oversight. Objective: Compare current processes and compliance landscape in Texas to best practices.

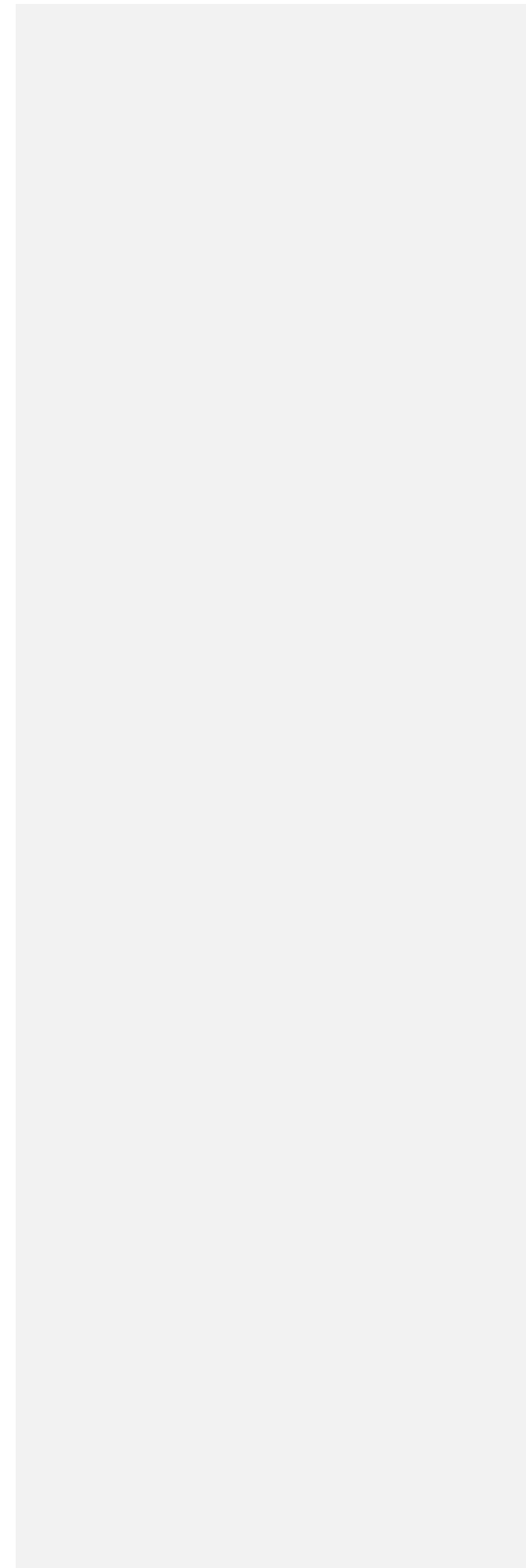
- 1 Objective is extremely unimportant
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Goal: Recommend opportunities for improvement of MHCSUD parity compliance, enforcement, and oversight. Objective: Develop recommendations and priorities to improve processes and procedures for compliance, enforcement, and ongoing oversight.

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Please enter any other objectives you think are important related to Parity Compliance, Enforcement, and Oversight:



# Texas Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Workgroup Survey seeks stakeholder feedback on initial goals and strategies

Purpose of the subcommittee is to support consumers, providers, advocates and policymakers by reviewing and improving the process of parity complaints, concerns, and investigations to increase access to care and remove barriers to service.

Goal: Ensure agency complaint processes for MHCSUD and parity-related access to care issues are both consumer-centered and capable of supporting providers. Objective: Ensure improvement of the complaint processes by developing evaluation tools and metrics.

Objective is extremely unimportant

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: Ensure agency complaint processes for MHCSUD and parity-related access to care issues are both consumer-centered and capable of supporting providers. Objective: Develop recommendations to mitigate obstacles within

current regulatory and oversight agency complaints processes.

Objective is extremely unimportant

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: Ensure agency complaints data for MHCSUD and parity-related access to care issues are consistent, transparent, and actionable. Objective: Develop a complaint reporting template in which agencies can compile data to support parity compliance efforts and inform consumers, providers, advocates and policymakers.

Objective is extremely unimportant

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: Ensure complaints for MHCSUD and parity-related access to care issues are investigated and resolved timely, effectively, and equitably. Objective: Support agency efforts to identify parity complaints; evaluate parity compliance; and determine when further investigation is warranted.

Objective is extremely unimportant

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: Ensure complaints for MHCSUD and parity-related access to care issues are investigated and resolved timely, effectively, and equitably. Objective: Provide timely support to consumers seeking access to care, regardless of health plan coverage.

Objective is extremely unimportant

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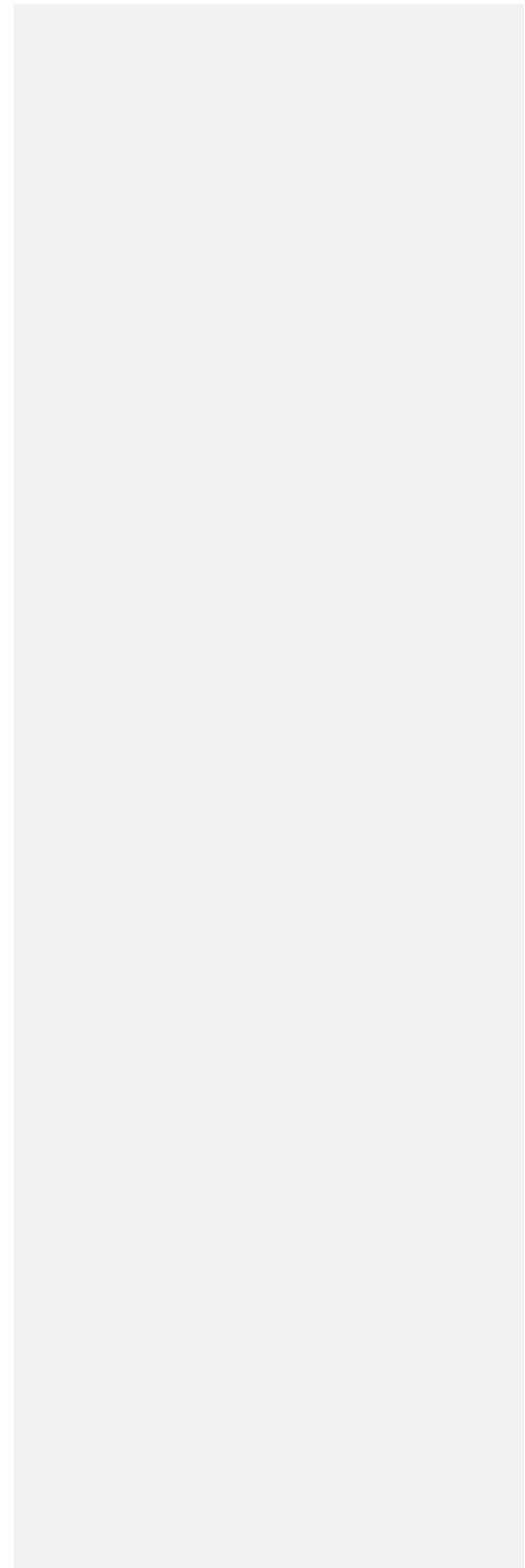
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Objective is extremely important

Please enter any other objectives you think are important related to Parity Complaints, Concerns, and Investigations:



# Texas Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Workgroup Survey seeks stakeholder feedback on initial goals and strategies

The subcommittee's purpose is educate all appropriate stakeholders (including, but not limited to: managed care organizations, commercial insurers, consumers, family members/support systems, advocates, providers, hospitals, public, etc.) on parity laws in order to increase access to care and ensure awareness of avenues to reconciliation of complaints.

Goal: To seek to ensure stakeholders understand federal and state parity laws and their impact. Objective: Establish a baseline of parity law understanding.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: To seek to ensure stakeholders understand federal and state parity laws and their impact. Objective: Establish a baseline of parity law understanding.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: To seek to ensure stakeholders understand federal and state parity laws and their impact. Objective: Create/provide basic teaching and/or training related to parity laws.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: Seek to ensure all stakeholders' needs and perspectives are considered in the development of strategies that improve parity awareness and education.

Objective: Address needs of each stakeholder group through education at the level according to the intended audience.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: To ensure that stakeholders' understand the various federal and state agencies' roles in ensuring compliance with parity laws. Objective: Expand knowledge of existing parity regulations.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: To inform stakeholders about identifying potential parity violations, how to report them, and the resolution process. Objective: Provide culturally sensitive, understandable materials at an appropriate reading level.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: To inform stakeholders about identifying potential parity violations, how to report them, and the resolution process. Objective: Identify existing channels within the community to leverage for parity education.

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Objective is extremely important

Goal: To ensure evaluation and continuous improvement of education and awareness efforts. Objective: Develop monitoring program of agencies responsible for education and awareness.

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Objective is extremely important

Please enter any other objectives you think are important related to Parity Education and Awareness: