

Contacts: **Merritt Talbott**
(512) 964-4718

**The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute Launches
With ‘Texas State of Mind’ Conference**

*Organization to focus on mental health policies and practices to enable Texans
to get help when and where they need it*

AUSTIN (April 16, 2014) – More Texas children with severe mental health needs receive mental health care in a juvenile detention facility, a school special education program, foster care, or when a parent relinquishes custody to the Texas child welfare system than in a public mental health clinic.

Texas veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq still wait too long for needed mental health care. When asked, most report reluctance to seek care for fear of being seen as weak and because they have lost faith in the promises their country made to stand behind them.

And, on any given day, more Texas adults with mental health needs sit in Texas county jails than in psychiatric hospitals.

These are among the many vivid examples Texans face daily that led to the formation of The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that will identify and encourage the implementation of improved mental health policies and practices to enable Texans to get help when and where they need it.

The organization launched today with a “Texas State of Mind” conference in Austin. The conference brought together people from the front lines of care – physicians, judges, sheriffs, and veteran advocates - with senior Texas officials to examine the state of mental health policies and practices in the Lone Star State. Texas Chief Justice Nathan Hecht; Speaker of the Texas House Joe Straus; State Senator Jane Nelson; and Texas Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Dr. Kyle Janek were among the top leaders participating in the conference.

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“Mental health impacts every Texan in some way, either personally, directly through family members, or economically,” said Linda Perryman Evans, president of the Meadows Foundation. “We established the Institute to help Texans to get the right help whenever and wherever they need it and to remove the stigma associated with mental illness.”

The Meadows Foundation established The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas to work with partners across the state to identify best practices, explore innovative new approaches, and find policies that work to deliver efficient and effective mental health care to Texans, Ms. Evans noted. The Meadows Foundation granted the organization \$10 million over a five-year period to assure its viability. Other founding partners include Lyda Hunt Hill, Charles Butt, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc., Rainwater Charitable Foundation and The Freebird Foundation - Curtis W. Huff and Lori M. Gallagher.

“Even though Texas has outstanding providers, we need to find promising practices and the right policies to take them to scale to reach more people,” said Tom Luce, chief executive officer of The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas. “If we can help people get quicker access to effective and efficient care, then we all win.”

Luce said they will share their findings with policymakers and communities across Texas with the goal to improve access to integrated health services that work.

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas has identified key areas for its work in 2014 including:

Helping Texas children receive effective mental health care as part of their overall health so they can reach their full potential, within their families, their schools, and communities by:

- Identifying the best ways to address mental health needs when children are young, instead of waiting until they become involved in special education, foster care or juvenile detention.
- Identifying innovative, promising and cost-effective practices that make mental health care available in schools and as part of routine visits to pediatricians and family doctors.

Helping Texas veterans and their families receive the mental health care and support that they have earned by:

- Helping local communities organize to help veterans and their families access care.

- Partnering with state and local governments to maximize access to Veterans Administration benefits and identify practical, cost-effective ways to address remaining gaps in care.
- Standing alongside veterans to stamp out any stigma that keeps veterans or their families from seeking needed mental health care.

Helping Texans in urgent mental health crises receive needed treatment in a health care setting instead of in the criminal justice system by:

- Identifying and evaluating innovative, promising and cost-effective policies and practices that safely divert adults with unmet mental health needs and substance use disorders from jail and prison settings into appropriate mental health treatment services.
- Partnering with Texas counties and providers to build on successful community programs and learn how to take them to scale within existing resources.

For additional information, visit www.texasstateofmind.org.

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About The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute for Texas is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that identifies and encourages the implementation of mental health policies and practices to enable Texans to get help when and where they need it.