



## **Interim Charge Recommendations 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Interim**

### **Cross-Issue:**

Make recommendations for how to deliver trauma-informed care within the child welfare, juvenile justice, and children's mental health systems.

Examine the systems of care model and determine how to implement a systems of care approach statewide for children involved with or at risk of becoming involved with public systems such as mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice. Determine ways of maximizing community eligibility and competitiveness for receiving systems of care funding, including federal funds.

Study how to best equip judges, attorneys, and legal professionals who practice in juvenile and family courts with an understanding of child development in order to improve outcomes for court-involved children.

### **Family Economic Security:**

Study the positive economic and social impact of matched savings accounts for children and recommend how to best implement, fund, and promote them for Texas children.

Evaluate outcomes associated with family reliance on payday lending. Make recommendations for state policies that would promote the proliferation of alternative products.

### **Health:**

Study effective statewide strategies for reducing unintended teen pregnancy, which is correlated with low birth weight and poor infant health outcomes.

Determine county and individual taxpayer burdens associated with the uninsured population.

Monitor the impact of Medicaid provider rates on access to care, quality of care, and value in all regions of the state, and make recommendations about needed changes to Medicaid provider rates.

Study the cost and identify any logistical barriers to nutritional menu labeling at point of sale.

Study the impact House Bill 3 from the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature on high school P.E. and health requirements, including 1) the extent to which any school districts continue to mandate the three semesters of P.E. or the semester of health education despite the change in state law, 2) changes in proportion of students receiving health education from school before and after legislative change in districts across the state, and 3) the average and median number of days of physical activity received through school per school year for high school students now compared to before the legislative change in districts across the state.

Study the impact of the change in daily physical activity for pre-K through grade 5 students resulting from Senate Bill 891, 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature.

Monitor the progress of community-level, evidence-based programs funded by the Department of State Health Services to reduce and prevent obesity.

**Mental Health:**

Study the state's current and long term needs for child mental health professionals. Make recommendations regarding long term strategies, including partnering with higher education systems, to recruit child mental health professionals and address current shortages in the short term.

Evaluate the feasibility of instituting statewide school assessments to prevent mental health challenges going unnoticed and resulting in preventable involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Research effective statewide strategies to promote parenting education for all populations in order to help prevent mental health challenges.

Examine rates and trends in the expulsion of young children from state regulated child care facilities. Research effective statewide interventions to support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers and to prevent problem behaviors in young children from developing into more complex problems, including early childhood consultation programs. Identify actions necessary to implement such programs statewide.

**Child Welfare:**

Evaluate current capacity within regional youth transition centers, including recent changes in capacity due to the economic recession.

Monitor implementation of House Bill 1912, 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature, including the transitional living services workgroup that includes former foster youth. Determine where services are being accessed by former foster youth upon leaving the child welfare system and what needs remain unmet. Make recommendations for addressing the needs of this population.

Monitor trends in the number, characteristics, and previous service involvement of children coming into substitute care in the Child Protective Services system. Assess the sufficiency of Family-Based Safety Services to meet the needs of children who could safely stay in their home as an alternative to substitute care.

**Juvenile Justice:**

Assess the need for municipal courts to receive training in adjudication of cases involving juveniles. Make recommendations of strategies for addressing training needs.

Study the challenges in implementation of Texas Juvenile Probation Commission standards and policies on the county level, including the use of funds appropriated by the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature for the diversion of youth from the Texas Youth Commission through an increase in community corrections. Make recommendations for increasing uniformity in implementation and for evaluating the effectiveness of county programs in effectively rehabilitating youth.

Determine the feasibility of instituting a disproportionality initiative within the juvenile justice system, modeled after the initiative instituted within the Department of Family and Protective Services.

Examine how to most effectively decrease school practices that funnel students into the juvenile justice system. Recommend changes to Texas Education Agency policies, the Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs), school discipline practices, and the Texas Education Code.