

# MST TEXAS ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evidence-Based Associates

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Project Director

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# PROJECT OVERVIEW

As Texans continue to mourn with the families and the community of Uvalde, state leaders have examined the circumstances surrounding this horrific tragedy and identified steps that can be taken to better ensure that senseless acts of violence never occur in our state again.

One critical step was to ensure that Texas children and adolescents, together with their families, have access to intensive, evidence-based, family-centered, home-based services that can not only help identify and address mental health issues before they escalate into a crisis but also introduce effective, family-centered interventions that can lead to safer communities. At present, it is estimated that approximately 7,000 Texas youth and their families would benefit from evidence-based, home-based services and supports.

In the summer of 2022, through Executive Action, funding was provided for seven Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) across Texas to begin implementing Multisystemic Therapy (MST), a widely known and highly-effective home-based service, to youth and families identified as high-risk.

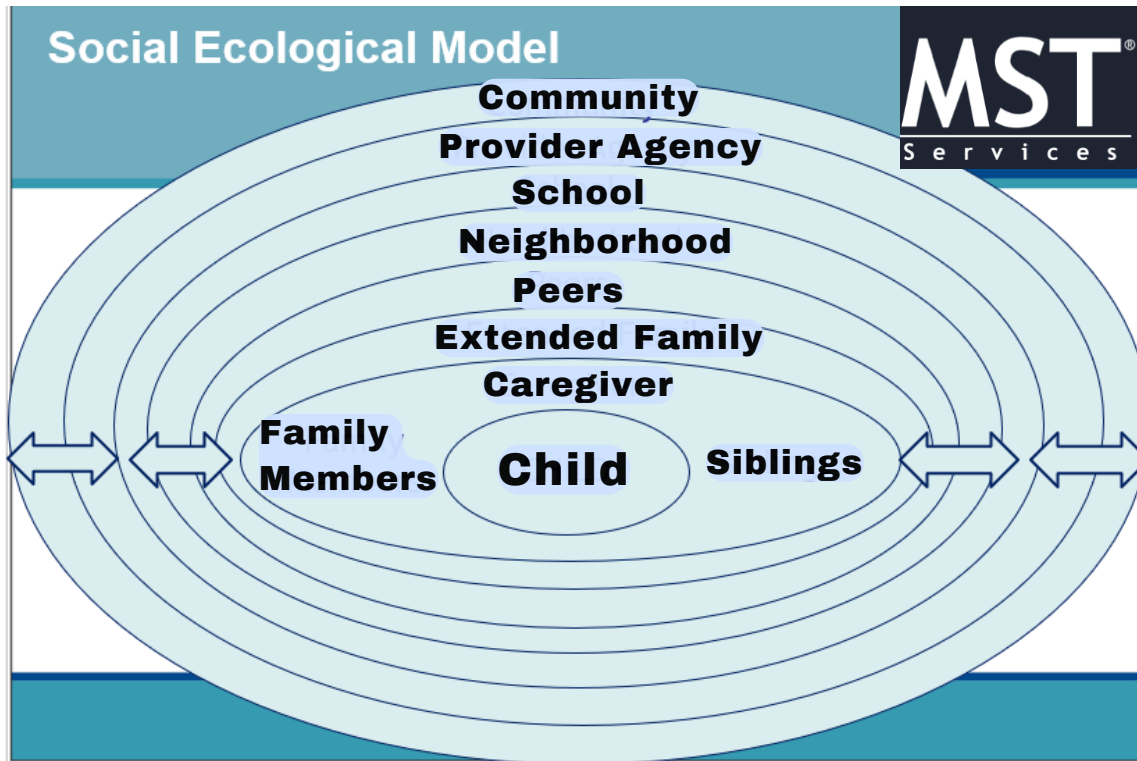
Those seven agencies included Bluebonnet Trails, Denton County MHMR, Hill Country MHMR, LifePath Systems, North Texas Behavioral Health (NTBHA), StarCare, and Tropical Texas, and these are the first of the LMHAs to receive funding to implement MST. Texas MST teams consist of 3-4 full-time MST family intervention specialists and one full-time MST supervisor – all of whom work within a 90-minute drive of client families on a flexible schedule that allows for being on-call, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Each team meets with youth and their families out in the community, including in homes, at schools, and other locations.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW<sub>cont.</sub>

The 88th Legislature approved funding for an additional 15 teams statewide: it is anticipated that these new teams will launch in the first quarter of 2024. All the LMHAs will receive training and support from the national licensing agency, MST Services of Atlanta, GA. The MST teams will work to address unmet local service needs by assembling a team of licensed, provisionally licensed, or certified qualified mental health professionals (master's and bachelor's level) that will be trained in MST and work with small caseloads of youth to ensure 24/7 availability in the event of a crisis.

As of October 1, 2023, MST programs across these seven LMHAs can serve youth and families in: Caldwell, Cameron, Cochran, Collin, Comal, Crosby, Denton, Ellis, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hays, Hidalgo, Hockley, Lynn, Lubbock, Uvalde, and Willacy counties.

# MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY



MST is an intensive family- and community-based treatment that addresses the multiple influences that contribute to serious antisocial or illegal behavior in youth aged 12 -17 years. The MST approach views individuals as being part of, and influenced by, a complex network of interconnected systems that encompass individual, family, and extrafamilial (peer, school, neighborhood) factors. In MST, this “ecology” of interconnected systems is viewed as the “client.” To achieve successful outcomes with these youth, interventions are generally necessary within and among a combination of these systems.

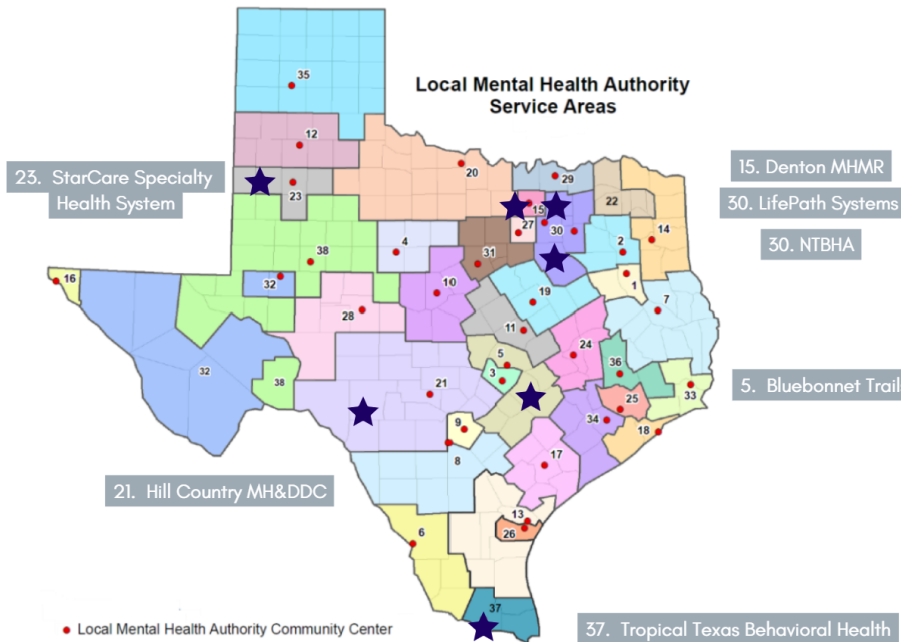
MST treatment typically lasts from 3 to 5 months (average of 4 months) and caseloads range from 4 to 6 families (average of 5 families). Caseload size may be impacted by such characteristics as the average time of the cases in treatment on a caseload (newer cases require significantly more time), number of problem youth in the home and the relative complexity of the youth's behavior (e.g., youth with multiple distinct referral behaviors).

***“This service gives young people and their families opportunities to change their lives and disrupt negative behaviors”.***

***-Tod Citron  
Hill Country MHDD CEO***



# MST TEXAS



***HHSC estimates that there will be cost savings related to adding MST for clients that would have accessed outpatient psychotherapy or experienced inpatient hospitalizations.***

**Fiscal Note, 88TH Legislative Regular Session**

Texas responded to the May 24, 2022, Robb Elementary School tragedy in Uvalde, Texas by awarding \$4.7 million dollars to seven new MST teams across the state.

Texas currently has a capacity to provide MST Services to approximately 162 at-risk youth and families each year when fully staffed. 21 of 27 Family Intervention Specialist positions were hired between November 2022 to August 2023 and approximately 86 of 162 youth and families were served from January 2023 to August 2023.

According to Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, “given that MST services typically last between three to six months and MST teams should serve at least 50 youth per year, Texas would need approximately 140 teams to meet statewide need. The 88th Texas Legislature invested a total of \$32,450,000 in MST, which is expected to [continue funding for existing Texas teams] and result in the creation of 15 new teams.”

# QUARTER 1:

September 1, 2022 – November 30, 2022

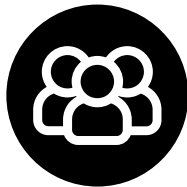
Key considerations for HHSC NCA selections included yet were not limited to identifying provider agencies with a population in need of MST Services, provider agencies committed to working in partnership with MST, and agencies that can provide extensive quality assurance implementation within a measurable reporting period. Each team underwent a program development process led by MST Services in collaboration with Evidence-Based Associates (EBA). EBA assisted teams with talent acquisition to effectively launch.



## **Goal No. 01 – Program Feasibility**

Provide a framework for determining if the development of a new MST program is a good fit for the needs of a community and of the applicant provider organization. In addition, completion of this process aids in the determination of financial and programmatic feasibility.

- Target Population Compatibility with MST
- Program Funding Sufficient for Sustainable MST Implementation
- Key Stakeholder Collaboration and Support



## **Goal No. 02 – Team Building**

Develop professional relationships with existing leaders within each agency to include Human Resources.



## **Goal No. 03 – Hiring and Recruitment**

Begin creating job descriptions, marketing tools, and strategies for new hires and onboarding. Approved license qualifications include: LPC-A, LPC, LMSW under supervision, LCSW, LMFT-A and LMFT .

# QUARTER 2:

December 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023

- There are seven MST Texas teams in pursuit of hiring licensed and provisionally licensed family intervention specialists to begin serving youth at risk of out of home placement.
- The service capacity is 162 families per year.
- Coordination with MST and EBA for hiring and recruitment support, program development, training and stakeholder engagement referral strategies have been implemented.

On January 12, 2023, StarCare Specialty Health System became the first of seven providers to host a stakeholder meeting, attend the MST 5-day training, and to begin receiving referrals.

## **Goal No. 01 – Hiring and Recruitment**



Approximately six family intervention specialists hired. EBA and MST services conducted weekly hiring and recruitment calls with each agency. EBA also created duplicate job ads to increase the probability of attracting a higher number of qualified applicants.

## **Goal No. 02 – Program Development**



MST conducted bi-weekly meetings with each provider to coordinate site visits and training schedules. Three site visits have been completed by MST Services with StarCare Specialty Health System, Denton MHMR, and LifePath Systems.

- January 12, 2023- StarCare (Lubbock, TX- Lubbock County)
- January 26, 2023- Denton MHMR (Denton, TX- Denton County)
- February 23, 2023- LifePath Systems (McKinney, TX- Collin County)

## **Goal No. 03 – Referrals**



Approximately 18 referrals were entered into MST Institute following each providers completion of the MST 5-Day training held after each site visit. MST service begins having weekly consultations with each open agency. An agency is considered to be “open” once:

- 1). A team supervisor is hired.
- 2). A minimum of two-family intervention specialists are hired.
- 3). A site visit has been conducted.

The MST Team can begin seeing families following completion of the MST 5-Day Training.



# QUARTER 3:

March 1, 2023 – May 31, 2023

- Approximately 39 of 162 youth and families have begun receiving services since Q1.
- Coordination with MST and EBA for hiring and recruitment support, program development, training and stakeholder engagement referral strategies are ongoing.
- Three additional agencies opened by hosting a stakeholder meeting, attending the MST 5-day training, and began receiving referrals.
- Six of the seven awarded MST Texas teams were open by the end of Q3.

On May 4, 2023, Bluebonnet Trails became the first of the seven providers to become fully staffed.



## **Goal No. 01 – Hiring and Recruitment**

Approximately 18 family intervention specialists hired. EBA and MST services continue conducting weekly hiring and recruitment calls with each agency with open positions. Virtual career fair planning begins to occur to attract graduates via local university outreach, social media, and marketing platforms.



## **Goal No. 02 – Program Development**

MST conducted bi-weekly meetings with each provider to coordinate site visits and training schedules. Three site visits have been completed by MST Services with StarCare Specialty Health System, Denton MHMR, and LifePath Systems.

- March 8, 2023- Bluebonnet Trails (Seguin, TX- Guadalupe, Caldwell, Gonzales Counties)
- April 6, 2023- North Texas Behavioral Health (Waxahachie, TX- Ellis County)
- May 18, 2023- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health (Edinburg, TX- Hidalgo County)



## **Goal No. 03 – Referrals**

Over 100 referrals were entered into MST Institute by May 31, 2023 along with three discharges.

# QUARTER 4:

June 1, 2023 – August 31, 2023

- All seven LMHA's opened for services. Four of seven MST Texas teams became fully staffed.
- Approximately 52 of 162 youth and families have begun receiving services since Q1.
- All stakeholder meetings and 7 of 7 MST 5-day orientation trainings have been completed.
- Coordination with MST and EBA for hiring and recruitment support, program development, training and stakeholder engagement referral strategies are ongoing.

## **Goal No. 01 – Hiring and Recruitment**



Approximately 21 family intervention specialists hired. EBA and MST services continue conducting weekly hiring and recruitment calls with each agency with open positions. Virtual career fair planning begins to occur to attract graduates via local university outreach, social media, and marketing platforms.

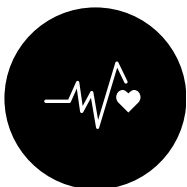
## **Goal No. 02 – Program Development**



MST conducted bi-weekly meetings with each provider to coordinate site visits and training schedules. Seven site visits have been completed by MST Services.

- On July 26, 2023, Hill Country MHDD Centers launched MST Services in Uvalde, Comal, and Hays County. With support of Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Hill Country MHDD promoted the opening of MST services via news and internet media broadcasting.

## **Goal No. 03 – Referrals**



Over 188 referrals were entered into MST Institute by August 31, 2023 along with three discharges. Nearly a dozen additional referrals were under review at that time.

# MEASURING PROGRESS

As of August 31, 2023:

- Total Number of referrals: 199
- Total Number of Children Served: 100
- Total Number of Therapists/ MST professionals: 21
- Average number of cases per therapist: 2.86
- Total number of referrals on interest lists: 92
- Total number of children discharged by end of FY 23: 49

Agency	Location	Opening Month	Targeted Counties	Total Number of Referrals	Total Cases Served	Total Number of MST Professionals	Total Referrals on Interest List	Total Discharges
StarCare	Lubbock, TX	February 2023	Lubbock Cochran Crosby Hockley Lynn	15	14	2	9	8
Denton MHMR	Denton, TX	February 2023	Denton	35	24	4	16	12
LifePath Systems	McKinney, TX	March 2023	Collin	46	19	4	9	13
Bluebonnet Trails	Seguin, TX	April 2023	Guadalupe Caldwell Gonzales	20	18	3	11	13
North Texas Behavioral Health	Waxahachie, TX	May 2023	Ellis	25	12	2	11	3
Tropical Texas	Edinburg, TX	June 2023	Hidalgo Cameron Willacy	43	8	4	34	0
Hill Country MHDD	San Marcos, TX	July 2023	Uvalde Hays Comal	15	5	3	2	0

# NEXT STEPS

- Increase the overall serving capacity in Texas.
- Increase hiring opportunities to attract qualified MST professionals.
- Monitor systems of operation to maintain fidelity of the model.



## No. 01 – Facilitate Successful Expansion of MST Programs Statewide

- Funding was approved by the state legislature for 15 additional MST teams statewide.
- HHSC issued a “Needs and Capacity Assessment (NCA)” in July 2023; applications from interested LMHAs were due August 18, 2023
- HHSC anticipates notifying the awardees in the fall of 2023 and the new MST programs launching sometime in early 2024.
- MST Services will lead program development processes, provide training and QA for the new teams.
- EBA will focus on hiring support, data management, and referrals/utilization for all new MST programs.



## No. 02 – Hiring and Recruitment

September 15, 2023 - the provision of some MST activities became allowable using QMHPs. HHSC recommends that the LMHA consults with the MST Expert regarding the allowability of QMHPs to perform the activities outlined in the MST Model and as the Statement of Work refers to the MST Model for delivery of services.

Evidence-Based Associates continue to hold bi-weekly hiring and recruitment calls to support each LMHA with open positions. The focus of the call is to maintain communication on applicant tracking and to continue collaborative strategies to help agencies fill the open positions. Those strategies include yet are not limited to hosting virtual career fairs, weekly applicant sourcing, monitoring job ads, marketing and social media tracking, and creating an applicant pool of QMHPs by posting QMHP specific job ads on various hiring platforms.

# NEXT STEPS

cont.



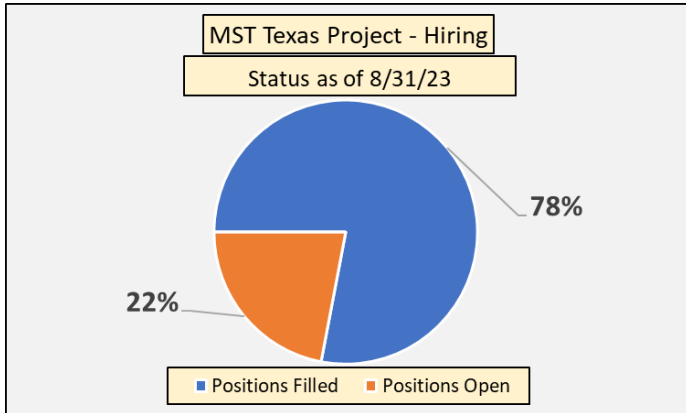
## **No. 03 – Action**

MST Services, Evidence-Based Associates, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission continue collaborative efforts to support the first cohort of teams by conducting monthly provider calls. MST Services and Evidence-Based Associates also conduct a monthly call with the providers to streamline internal operations on receipt of appropriate referrals, increasing referral strategies, and building relationships with community referral partners.

The second, larger, cohort of teams will be on a different developmental timeline, going through many of the same steps outlined above for the initial seven teams

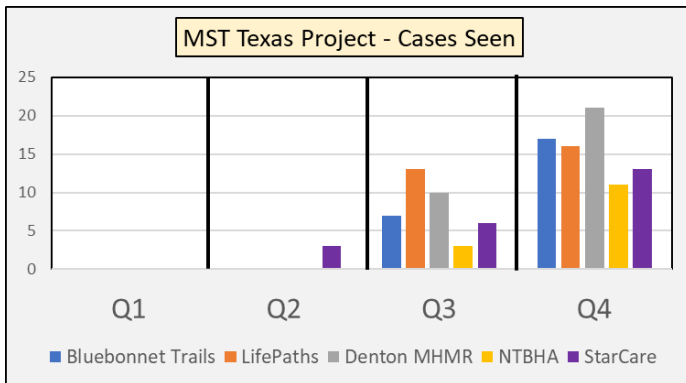
# CONCLUSION

As of August 31, 2023, the MST Texas Project is gaining significant momentum. LMHA's across the state, MST Services, Evidence-Based Associates, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, and HHSC continue to work together to increase MST presence across the state.



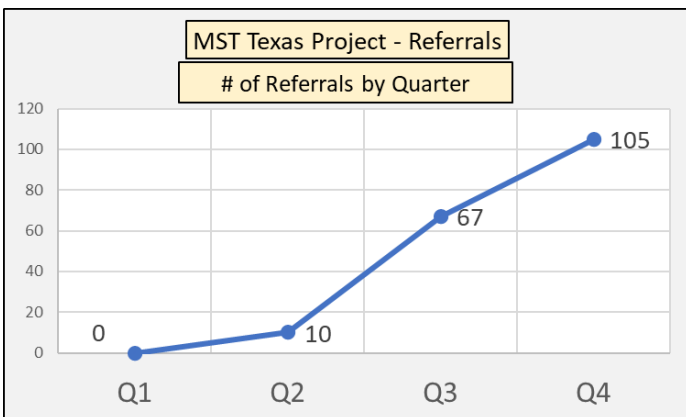
21 of 27 positions were filled as of August 31, 2023. Hiring and recruitment will continue until all positions are filled.

- 78% fully staffed.
- 6 Family Intervention Specialist positions are unfilled.



100% of Program Development- Completed

Upon completion of program feasibility, an in-person stakeholder meeting, and a 5-Day MST Training; MST services can be administered. Approximately 52 families have begun receiving services ending August 31, 2023.



Referrals continue to increase. Approximately 188 referrals had been received as of August 31, 2023. As referrals continue to increase, an interest list also continues to grow increasing the demand of needed MST services.

Since the first grand opening in January 2023, 30 total families have received MST services and have successfully discharged.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MST Texas Project would not have the growth it has today without tireless efforts of collaborative work on the projects mentioned within. Below, is a list of names of those committed to service Texas MST youth and families:

- Family Intervention Specialists
- MST Supervisors and Back up Supervisors
- Human Resources Teams
- Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute
- MST Services
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission

*The teams seem very sincere and willing to help us by doing “whatever it takes.”*

Denton MHMR



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