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Specialized Therapy Team Launches to Support At-Risk Youth in Jefferson, Hardin, Chambers, Jasper and Orange Counties

BEAUMONT, TX – A specialized response team was introduced today to support at-risk youth in need of intensive assistance in Jefferson, Hardin, Chambers, Jasper and Orange counties. The new Multisystemic Therapy (MST) was funded as part of the state’s initial \$105.5 million response to the Uvalde tragedy, which launched seven MST teams across the state. In 2023, at the 88th legislative session, an additional \$21 million was appropriated to establish 15 more teams, including Spindletop Center in Southeast Texas. MST is a proven family and community-based treatment for at-risk youth aged 12 to 17 with intensive needs. It has proven most effective for treating youth who have committed or are at risk of committing violent offenses, have serious mental health or substance abuse concerns, are at risk of out-of-home placement, and have experienced abuse and neglect. It is the only evidence-based treatment that has been shown to reduce violent crime among adolescents, bringing rates down by as much as 75%.

The program is a collaborative effort between the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and Spindletop Center. “We continue to seek ways to expand services to those in our community and are committed to the betterment of our youth through much need programs such as this,” said Holly Borel, Spindletop Center’s CEO. “MST is an outstanding community-based service that utilizes a holistic approach for at-risk youth. This service gives young people and their families opportunities to change their lives and disrupt negative behaviors.”

The MST program includes a team of specially trained therapists who provide intensive treatment, usually in the home, while focusing heavily on the involvement of parents and other caregivers. Team members remain on-call and available 24 hours a day and help the young person develop necessary skills to cope with family, school, and neighborhood stressors, with structured supervision and quality assurances to ensure progress is being made and maintained. A team consists of one supervisor and three or four therapists, with each therapist serving clients in various counties of their catchment areas. The average treatment duration ranges from three to five months, during which therapists and provider agencies address the underlying causes of delinquent and antisocial behavior.

“When Uvalde happened, we knew Texas had to do more to reach at-risk youth. State leadership took immediate steps to invest in much-needed mental health and school safety initiatives,



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recognizing the importance of early intervention and evidence-based programs,” said Andy Keller, President and CEO of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, which helped implement plans for expanding MST in Texas. “MST has been proven to have a long-term impact, with positive outcomes. By keeping young people in their homes and including family members and other caregivers as a key part of treatment, this model helps turn lives around before they get caught up in cycles of crisis, violence, and arrest.”

In addition to its singular capacity to reduce future violence, the scientific literature clearly shows the effectiveness of MST, with 9 out of 10 young people served still living at home, in school or working, and avoiding follow-up arrests. Further, by keeping youth out of juvenile detention or hospitals, MST returns \$23.59 for every dollar invested in treatment.

About Spindletop Center

Spindletop Center is a non-profit healthcare organization specializing in behavioral healthcare, programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and substance use services for each stage of life. Our Center serves more than 16,000 people annually throughout Jefferson, Hardin, Orange, Jasper and Chambers counties and has campuses in Beaumont, Port Arthur, Orange and Silsbee. We promote healthy living in our community through innovative and best-practice options that meet the unique needs of every family.

The mission of the Spindletop Center is to help people help themselves by providing resources and support.