



# 2024 IMPACT REPORT

*Empowering the community  
through mental health education,  
advocacy, and connection to care.*

[www.mhahouston.org](http://www.mhahouston.org)

**MHIA** <sup>SM</sup>  
Mental Health America  
of Greater Houston

# 2024 IMPACT REPORT

Dear Friends,

As we look back on 2024, we see a year marked by both challenge and clarity in the realm of mental health. Across the globe, conversations around emotional well-being grew louder, more urgent, and more honest. We saw continued strain on individuals and communities, but we also witnessed progress: increased public awareness, stronger advocacy, and a growing recognition that mental health is not a secondary concern—it is central to how we live, connect, and heal.

It is increasingly clear that mental health is one of the defining issues of our time. It affects every one of us, regardless of age, background, or circumstance. As we release our latest annual report, we do so with a sense of responsibility, reflection, and renewed resolve.

Over the past year, we have laid the groundwork for several key initiatives aimed at expanding our impact and reaching more individuals in need of support. These efforts have been guided by thoughtful planning, deep community engagement, and a commitment to strengthening our internal systems. We've prioritized sustainability and equity at every step, ensuring that our growth is not only ambitious but also responsible. As these initiatives move from vision to action, we remain grounded in transparency and collaboration—knowing that real, lasting progress depends not just on resources, but on trust and partnership.

In service,

*Renee Varia Tomczyk, MBA*

President & CEO



## Children's Mental Health



- 877** School staff trained in Emotional Backpack professional development
- 124,922** Students enrolled in Emotional Backpack districts
- 80** School campuses receiving EBP training
- 234** Art Showcase Submissions
- 53** Districts Served

### Due to my participation in Emotional Backpack training, I...

- 96%** interacted more empathetically with students in my classroom
- 93%** instituted trauma-informed practices in my classroom
- 91%** referred more students exhibiting disruptive behavior to counseling services than to disciplinary staff for punishment
- 89%** observed a decrease in discipline incidents in my classroom

## Training & Outreach



- 1,518** People trained to recognize, refer, and respond to mental health issues
- 349** Organizations Served
- 52** Texas Counties Served
- 94%** Participants likely to recommend training to others



## Peer Services



- 2,982** Veterans, service members, and families connected to services
- 245** Justice involved Veterans engaged through jail, prison, or law enforcement
- 119** Justice involved veterans receiving peer mentoring through Harris County Veterans Treatment Courts
- 16** Veterans Treatment Court Graduates



## Integrated Behavioral Health



- 210** Professionals trained to bring mental health into every aspect of health care
- 12** Behavioral Health Certificate Course Graduates

- 67%** of graduates reported experiencing a work/job/career benefit due to the newly learned knowledge and skills.
- 100%** of graduates reported applying the learning materials and concepts from the course in their current professional practice.
- 100%** of graduates reported that they recommended this program to someone in their network interested in improving their primary care practice skills.



## Government Relations



### Amplifying Houston Mental Health Needs

Directly and consistently engaged **115** policymakers at the county, state, and federal levels, ensuring diverse community priorities were part of important mental health policy discussions.



#### Federal Requests

**\$2.5 million** for a Behavioral Health Coordinating Unit for youth through the CDC's ACES program

**\$250 million** increase for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant

**\$981.9 million** for the 988 Lifeline and behavioral health crisis services



#### Legislation Supported

- S.3498/H.R.6748 – Peers in Medicare Act
- S.3060/H.R.5976 – *Youth Mental Health Research Act*

These federal asks aim to support a long-term national strategy to address the mental health crisis, invest in early prevention, and provide critical support for youth facing growing mental health challenges.

## Public Policy

We asked Texas lawmakers to study ways to better support students, families, and, communities mental health:



**1. Schools and Students:** Improve school-based mental health supports, help students transition from alternative education programs, boost graduation rates, and free school counselors to focus on student well-being.

**2. Maternal and Behavioral Health:** Expand maternal mental health care, strengthen the behavioral health workforce, and improve access to integrated physical and mental health services.

**3. Children and Families:** Support children with serious behavioral health needs, promote family preservation, and enhance recovery services for parents with substance use challenges.

## Community and Stakeholder Engagement

### Lived Experience Central to Reducing Stigma:

In 2024, Mental Health America of Greater Houston launched its first Peer Policy Fellowship to ensure the voices of those in recovery from substance use and mental health challenges directly shape public policy. Supported by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, the Fellow receives mentoring and participates in the Hogg Mental Health Policy Academy, gaining skills in legislative strategy, policy analysis, and systems change.



- **Elevated lived experience in decision-making:** The Peer Policy Fellow contributes unique perspectives to legislative analysis, testimony preparation, and coalition strategy.
- **Strengthened advocacy capacity:** Through professional development in policy analysis, communication, and systems change, the Fellow is building skills for long-term leadership in mental health advocacy.
- **Expanded statewide connections:** Participation in the Policy Academy connects MHA of Greater Houston's work to a network of peer leaders and organizations, amplifying our reach and collaborative opportunities.

By combining professional advocacy expertise with the authenticity of lived experience, MHA of Greater Houston is building stronger, more responsive policies and expanding collaboration across Texas' mental health network.

## People screened for mental health concerns

# 16,188



8,073	Student
2,679	LGBTQ
2,886	Trauma survivor
1,083	Healthcare worker
736	Caregiver of someone living with emotional or physical illness
576	New or expecting parent
392	Veteran or active duty military

What happens after someone takes a mental health screen at [mhahouston.org/screen?](https://mhahouston.org/screen?)

- Immediate results that can be printed and shared with a medical or mental health professional
- DIY tools and coping skills
- Linkage to treatment resources

### Top Concerns

- Depression
- ADHD
- Anxiety

### Top Reasons People Screened

- Low Self-Esteem/Self-Image
- Relationship Problems
- Loneliness or Isolation
- School or Work Problems

**Need help finding resources?**

Email us at [careconnect@mhahouston.org](mailto:careconnect@mhahouston.org)

or call 281-215-9988

## INVESTED PARTNERS

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**Mental Health America  
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# GET INVOLVED

Inspired by our work?  
Here are some ways you can get involved.

1

## MONTHLY GIVING

Monthly giving is a simple, sustainable way to support Mental Health America of Greater Houston in providing compassionate community members with early identification and prevention mental wellness trainings. Join today at [mhahouston.org/ways-to-give](https://mhahouston.org/ways-to-give).



2

## JOIN US FOR THE CHEVRON HOUSTON MARATHON

The Chevron Houston Marathon Run for a Reason (RFAR) charity program connects the philanthropic community to passionate race participants willing to raise funds and create awareness for meaningful causes. Join Team MHA as we run for mental health in Greater Houston! Join our team at [mhahouston.org/events/marathon](https://mhahouston.org/events/marathon).



3

## FUNDRAISE FOR MHA OF GREATER HOUSTON





Turn your passion for mental health into action by starting a fundraiser. No matter how you choose to raise funds, we are here to help you.

Visit [mhahouston.org/ways-to-give](https://mhahouston.org/ways-to-give) for more information.



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