

Designation of UT Health San Antonio as Lead HRI for Disaster Response



Executive Summary

UT Health San Antonio requests formal designation as the Lead Health Related Institution (HRI) responsible for overseeing and coordinating disaster response training and deployment activities across the TCMHCC — under direction of TCMHCC administration in coordination with TDEM and HHSC.

01

Standardized Training

Deliver comprehensive disaster mental health curriculum to child and adolescent clinicians across all TCMHCC member institutions.

02

Rapid Deployment

Establish a statewide deployment coordination framework, with each HRI maintaining regional disaster response capacity.

03

Evidence & Evaluation

Support data collection, peer-reviewed dissemination, and translation of evidence into updated training protocols.

Background and Statement of Need

Challenges

- ▶ Texas is among the most disaster-prone states in the nation — hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and mass casualty events.
- ▶ Children are disproportionately vulnerable to post-disaster trauma: PTSD, depression, and acute stress are leading outcomes.
- ▶ Disasters overwhelm existing child mental health infrastructure — the same systems TCMHCC was built to expand.
- ▶ The Hill Country Floods left TCMHCC staff working to organize and coordinate responses in the middle of an active legislative session

Opportunities

- ▶ Texas has already invested in a children's mental health workforce — disaster training multiplies that investment.
- ▶ TCMHCC staff who responded to Uvalde and the Hill Country Floods expressed strong desire for increased training.
- ▶ TCMHCC Hubs have pre-existing trust with schools, pediatricians, LMHAs, and families — enabling faster, more effective response.
- ▶ A Lead HRI designation would formalize and strengthen TCMHCC's already proven disaster response commitment.

Why UT Health San Antonio?

Faculty Expertise: Direct operational experience in community disaster mental health, pediatric trauma, NOVA & CISM protocols, and evidence-based PTSD treatment.

UT Health San Antonio has connections and collaborations with key partners including STRAC, TDEM, and first responders across Central Texas

Community Infrastructure: Long-standing partnerships with LMHAs, school districts, HHSC, DBHC, and STRAC across medically underserved South-Central Texas.

Proven in Crisis: Led TCMHCC coordinated teams during Uvalde (May 2022) and Hill Country Floods (July 2025).

A. Statewide Training Coordination

- NOVA Basic Community Crisis Response Team Training
- Pediatric disaster triage & mental health needs assessment
- Crisis stabilization adapted for school/community settings
- CME/CEU-integrated training modules
- Quarterly responder meetings & readiness trainings

B. Deployment Coordination

- Deployment registry of trained clinicians across all HRIs
- Standardized deployment protocols aligned with TDEM
- Coordination with STRAC, regional advisory councils, & state EM
- Post-event documentation & after-action reporting

C. Cross-HRI Governance

- TCMHCC Disaster Response Advisory Committee (all HRIs)
- Inter-HRI communication, resource sharing & mutual aid
- Technical assistance to HRIs building local capacity
- Single state/federal point of contact for child MH matters

D. Data & Evaluation

- Ongoing data collection & after-action reports
- Peer-reviewed dissemination of findings
- Evidence translated into updated training protocols
- Annual evaluation and improvement report

Proposed Scope of the Lead HRI Role

Implementation Timeline

Phase 1

- Formal designation
- Hire Disaster Response Coordinator
- Convene Cross-HRI Advisory Committee
- Landscape assessment of HRI disaster response capacities

Phase 2

- Develop standardized training curriculum
- Finalize deployment protocols
- Establish deployment registry

Phase 3

- Pilot training at UT Health SA + 2 HRIs
- Integrate with LMHA & state EM partners
- Refine curricula from feedback

Phase 4

- Statewide TCMHCC Disaster Response Team rollout
- Publish Year 1 evaluation report
- Brief TCMHCC Executive Committee & UT System leadership

Key Deliverables

Annually

- ✓ Annual Nova Training delivery
- ✓ Updated TCMHCC Disaster Responder Roster
- ✓ Ongoing training revisions based on evaluation feedback
- ✓ Advisory Committee meetings and documentation
- ✓ Quarterly Responder meetings and documentation
- ✓ Annual evaluation and improvement report

Post Response

- ✓ After Action Reports (daily, weekly, total)
- ✓ Pre- and Post-deployment briefings with TCMHCC responders
- ✓ Feedback surveys from deployed responders
- ✓ Quality Improvement Plan

Conclusion

- TCMHCC is uniquely positioned to enhance disaster response across Texas by providing training to our already expanding workforce.
- By designating UT Health San Antonio as Lead HRI, TCMHCC can transform the state's capacity to protect the psychological health and long-term wellbeing of its youngest and most vulnerable residents.
- We stand ready to train responders and provide coordination support for TCMHCC when needed.