



# Investments in Infrastructure

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*Robert Romig, Deputy Executive Director*

	<b>By the Numbers</b>
<b>Licensed Professional Counselors in TX</b>	31,759
<b>Licensed Professional Counselor Associates in TX</b>	6,957
<b>University Programs</b>	26 CACREP
<b>Number of Texas Counties</b>	254
<b>Counties with Mental Health Care Shortage Areas</b>	246

# Texas is not interested in moving deck chairs

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## ✗ Compacts

*The Texas Legislature considered numerous compact bills during the 89<sup>th</sup> session, and rejected all but one (Cosmetology) – including HB1537 / SB498 for the Counseling Compact.*

## ✗ Niche Licenses

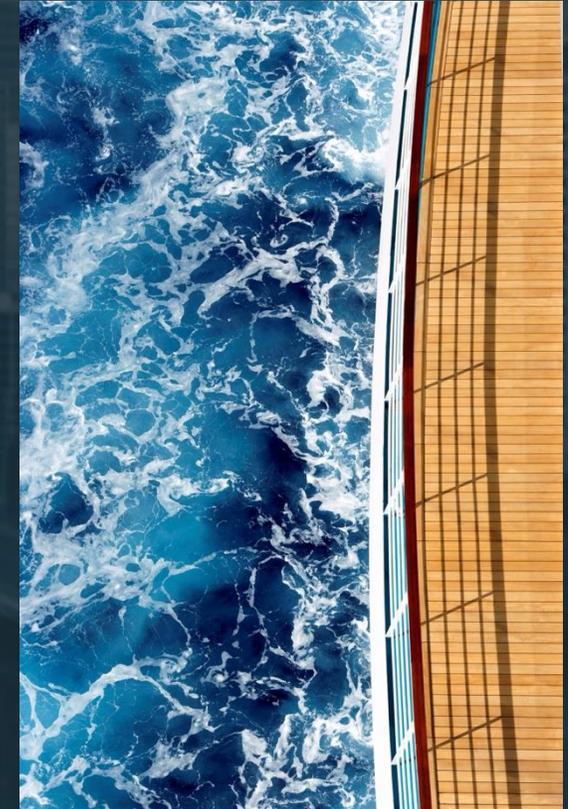
*The Texas Legislature rejected Senate Bill 1081 that would have created the Texas Art Therapy Board and created a new art therapy license.*

## ✗ Alternative Degrees

*While BHEC recognizes social work, psychology, and marriage and family therapy as related to counseling, applicants with those degrees must still meet all academic course requirements for an LPC license.*

## ✗ Eliminating Exams

*Despite recent concerns related to national licensing exams, there is no movement in Texas to eliminate licensure exams. In fact, the Texas Legislature appropriated funds for BHEC to begin exploring creation of a state-owned psychology exam.*



# Investments in New Hospitals

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Since 2017, the Texas Legislature has invested more than \$2.5 billion to replace and renovate hospitals across the state.

This includes seven state hospitals to provide inpatient psychiatric services to both rural communities and the state prison population.

For example, in 2024, more than 2,300 people were waiting in county jails for psychiatric treatment through the state hospital system.



# Loan Repayment Assistance

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## Senate Bill 646, by West:

- Expands existing loan repayment assistance program to LMSW, LPC associates, LMFT associates, and school counselors.
- Raises the award cap to \$100,000 for an psychologist, LCSW, or LPC or LMFT with a doctoral degree, or \$60,000 for an LMSW, LPC associate, or LMFT associate.
- Adds incentives for bilingual applicants, practice in a rural county, and long-term practice in a mental health provider shortage area.

# Mental Health Profession Pipeline Program

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## Senate Bill 1401, by West:

- Tasks the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board with facilitating pipeline programs at both baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate degree programs
- Allows junior college students to transfer credits and enroll in a program leading to licensure as a psychologist, school psychologist, LMSW, LPC, LMFT, or an APRN with mental health certification
- Includes automatic admission into postbaccalaureate programs



# Health Professions Workforce Coordinating Council

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## House Bill 3801, by Orr

- Directed to “study and develop a strategic approach for ensuring a thriving health care system and health professions workforce.”
- Replaces the Statewide Health Coordinating Council
- Focused on graduation rates, federal labor statistics, and workforce shortage areas.



# Reduced Regulatory Burdens

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## Military Licensing

*House Bill 5629, by Wilson, requires licensing of military service members, their spouses, and veterans, who hold a license of similar scope from another state. Authorizes permanent practice under recognition of out-of-state license.*



## Criminal Histories

*Senate Bill 1080, by West, increases felony convictions for which a license may be revoked. But also creates a provisional license for inmate applicants.*



## Remediation/Waiver

*BHEC Rule 882.14, creates an avenue for individual applicants to petition the professional boards for waiver of a non-statutory license requirement, or the opportunity to cure a deficiency through remediation.*



## Modernization Efforts

*Texas has made a concerted effort to modernize state agency systems, including the transition to online applications and functions. BHEC's process for licensing and enforcement is virtually paperless.*

