



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Assessing the Well-Being of Children in North Texas

2019-2020

NORTH TEXAS IS FACING AN INFLECTION POINT.

Reading the 2019-2020 *Beyond ABC* report, the 16th comprehensive analysis on the well-being of North Texas children that Children's Health has published, forced me to reckon with difficult questions.



Will we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the challenges facing our youth? Will we become complacent and reluctantly accept the status quo? Or will we give a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves, and transform into a community where all children can reach their full potential?

For Children's Health, the answer is clear.

We are privileged to care for our region's children, a sacred obligation that has emboldened us to disavow the notion that any problem is too big, too complicated, too widespread. Our team fights every single day to prove that positive change is possible, and the data in this report proves it, too.

But it also shows that we have a long way to go.

The robust research presented in this year's report gained form and focus from the expertise, experience and enthusiasm of our *Beyond ABC* Advisory Board – visionaries from North Texas' public, private and philanthropic sectors who generously contribute their time and insights to determine how we can better serve the children who will lead us into tomorrow. In a sea of diverse perspectives, one was stunningly clear to all: We must radically change how we support the behavioral health of our children.

Consider just a few of our findings. More than 130,000 North Texas children suffer from an emotional disturbance or addictive disorder. Of the Texas youth incarcerated in 2018, 44 percent had a moderate or severe mental health issue – more than double the rate from only three years earlier. And most alarming and tragic of all, suicide is the second leading cause of death among U.S. adolescents ages 15 to 24.

In recognition of what has become a true public health crisis, we are taking an unprecedented step in this year's report – presenting an overarching recommendation on mental health that spans all four focus areas. While we appreciate that transformational change will not happen overnight, we are confident that through a sustained effort by many, we can achieve an integrated behavioral health care system that serves every North Texas child.

The challenges we face will evolve and change, our mission will not. Children's Health has worked to make life better for children for more than 100 years, and we will continue for centuries more.

Will you join us?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher J. Durovich". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Christopher J. Durovich
President and Chief Executive Officer
Children's Health



OVERARCHING Recommendation

Address mental health needs of children and adolescents and increase access to school- and community-based mental health services.

Mental and behavioral health is critical to a child's development and overall well-being. Despite rising youth suicide rates and growing threats to mental health like social media and online bullying, Texas ranks near last in the nation for child and adolescent access to mental health services. The 86th Texas Legislature made significant investments and improvements in pediatric mental health care, including passing legislation to establish mental health policy and training guidelines for school districts and legislation to create a child mental health care consortium and increase children's access to mental health care via consultation services and telemedicine. The Advisory Board supports legislative efforts to address child and adolescent mental health care needs and recommends the state, as well as school districts, leverage new resources and innovative strategies to improve access to mental and behavioral health services.

To see the detailed research and findings that informed the Advisory Board's recommendations, read the full 2019-2020 *Beyond ABC* report at www.childrens.com/beyondabc. On this webpage, you can also request copies of the report and explore past editions.

HEALTH

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase the number of insured children and safeguard access to CHIP and Medicaid
- Promote strategies to increase child immunization rates and combat vaccine hesitancy

14.3%

of Dallas County children have
no health insurance coverage

To qualify for Medicaid, a family of 4
must earn less than

\$34,248
annually

In 2018,
Fannin County
reported the

HIGHEST RATE

13.2%

of premature
newborns in
North Texas

An estimated

130,226

North Texas children
suffer from an **emotional disturbance**
or **addictive disorder**

North Texas had

256

new diagnoses
of **childhood
cancer** in 2016

2,400

number of
North Texas children

**DIAGNOSED
WITH DIABETES**

in 2017,

an increase of

21%

from the year before

127%

the rate that

SYPHILIS INFECTIONS

have grown among North Texas
young people since 2013



Dallas County saw

**ADOLESCENT
SUICIDES
INCREASE 27%**

in 2016

ECONOMIC SECURITY

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that all working Texas parents have access to affordable, safe and quality child care
- Expand viable transportation options to connect more people with jobs

22.5%
OF DALLAS COUNTY
CHILDREN
live in poverty



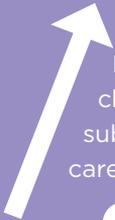
25,000
FEWER

North Texas
children are
living in **single-**
parent households



Number of
Fannin County
children receiving
subsidized child
care **has increased**

60%



27% of Texas children are
from families receiving
public assistance

higher than the national average
of **25%**

1,034

the number of
Collin County families
using **housing vouchers**

\$835 A MONTH

the **cost of pre- and after-school care**
for 2 children in the Dallas area

115,676 TEXAS STUDENTS

were **homeless** during the
2016-2017 school year

LBGTQ YOUTH

are **twice as likely** to be homeless as their peers

Drop in number
of **North Texas**
infants and
children in WIC

26%

SAFETY

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand trauma-informed care education, training and intervention throughout the child welfare system
- Strengthen resources for child abuse prevention programs to keep children safe at home

An African American child in Texas is

6X MORE LIKELY



to die from homicide
as a white child

ONE- QUARTER

of Texas
7th-12th-
graders

reported using
marijuana

in the past month

44%

of the **youth incarcerated**
in the Texas Juvenile
Justice Department
system in 2018 had a
moderate or severe
mental health issue

MORE THAN
DOUBLE THE RATE
3 years earlier

666

Texas children died of
unintentional injuries in 2017



IN 2017

Texas Department of
Family and Protective
Services cared for

50,293 CHILDREN

OF THE

22,000

Child Protective Services
investigations in North Texas in 2018

14,000

WERE IN DALLAS COUNTY

BOYS ARE

4 TIMES MORE LIKELY

to die from suicide

—
GIRLS ARE
more likely to

ATTEMPT SUICIDE

EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase education and training opportunities for teachers, particularly in cultural diversity and mental health
- Strengthen the quality of early childhood education and care

North Texas high school graduation rates have remained

ABOUT 90%
since 2013



FEWER THAN HALF

of North Texas third-graders can read at their grade level

51% OF NORTH TEXAS KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS demonstrated readiness for kindergarten in 2018

78% OF NORTH TEXAS STUDENTS met the “approaches grade level” standard on STAAR tests
HIGHER THAN THE STATE AVERAGE OF 75.4%

The percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Texas is

ALMOST DOUBLE
the national rate

In 2017

37%

of North Texas high school graduates were college ready – down from **42%** in 2016

Since 2016, the number of students receiving special education services

HAS INCREASED
ACROSS NORTH TEXAS

MORE THAN

**1.17 MILLION
CHILDREN**

live in the six North Texas counties
featured in the
Beyond ABC report

DALLAS

Youth
population
681,537

COLLIN

Youth
population
245,631

COOKE

Youth
population
9,260

DENTON

Youth
population
200,061

FANNIN

Youth
population
7,127

GRAYSON

Youth
population
29,999

