

Emergence Health Network
El Paso's Local Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Authority

The mission of Emergence Health Network is to ensure superior recovery-based services for mental health, developmental disability, and related conditions for the people of El Paso County. Our vision is to take the lead on behavioral and developmental services in the El Paso region ensuring access to quality services, advocating for a better quality of life, and providing strength, hope, and recovery for persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse disorders.

What is a community Center?

Purpose and policy “A community center...is intended to be a vital component in a continuum of services for persons in [the state of Texas] with mental illness or an intellectual disability.”

“It is the policy of [the state of Texas] that community centers strive to develop services for persons with mental illness or an intellectual disability and may provide requested services to persons with developmental disabilities or with chemical dependencies, that are effective alternatives to treatment in a large residential facility.” Tex. Health & Safety Code § 534.0015

A Community Center is a governmental entity created by “[a] county, municipality, hospital district, or school district, or an organizational combination of two or more of those local agencies....” Tex. Health & Safety Code § 534.001(a)

“Each function performed by a community center...is a governmental function if the function is required or affirmatively approved by” Texas or federal law. Tex. Health & Safety Code § 534.001(f)

What is a Local Mental Health/IDD Authority?

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (“HHSC”) must designate a LMHA to serve one or more local service areas (“LSA”). HHSC may then delegate to the local authority the state’s authority and responsibility for:

- planning,
- policy development,
- coordination (including coordination with criminal justice entities),
- resource allocation,
- resource development, and
- oversight

for/of *mental health/IDD services* in the most appropriate and available setting to meet individual needs in that LSA. Tex. Health & Safety Code § 533.035(a). Currently, EHN serves as the LMHA and LIDDA for the El Paso LSA, carrying out all assigned responsibilities for the service area designated by HHSC’s Executive Commissioner, pursuant to Texas Health and Safety Code § 533.035.

EHN Governance – Board of Trustees

EHN is governed by a seven (7) person Board of Trustees. The County of El Paso and UMC El Paso each appoint three Trustees to the seven-member Board. The seventh Trustee is jointly appointed by the

County Judge and the Chair of the UMC El Paso Board of Managers. The County Sheriff also sits as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. EHN is required to comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act (“TOMA”), Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code and with the Texas Public Information Act (“TPIA” or “PIA”), Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code.

EHN Disaster Behavioral Health Response Plan

EHN is the owner/author of the Disaster Behavioral Health section of the City’s Emergency Management Response Plan. In March 2018, EHN approved a Disaster Behavioral Health Response Plan with the purpose of ensuring “an efficient, coordinated and effective response to the disaster behavioral health needs of the [El Paso] population in time of a disaster.”

The goal of the Disaster Behavioral Health Response Plan is to relieve stress, reinforce healthy coping strategies, mitigate future mental health and substance abuse problems, and promote resilience. Under the Disaster Behavior Health Plan, EHN is prepared to respond with the following staff, training, and certifications:

- Licensed behavioral health professionals such as psychologists, social workers, Licensed Professional Counselors (“LPCs”), and substance abuse counselors;
- Trained paraprofessionals such as first responders, and Qualified Mental Health Professionals;
- Trained and certified in Psychological First Aid, Crisis Intervention, Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM”), or other Early Psychological Interventions (“EPI”);
- Specialized training such as working with children or adolescents, cultural diversity, geriatric populations, special needs populations victims of crimes, grief and loss, death notifications, suicide assessment and intervention, and substance abuse;
- Experience working with survivors of disaster and/or critical incidents; and
- Meets minimum requirement set for the Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse.