

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & UPDATES

TEXAS RESEARCH-TO-POLICY COLLABORATION PROJECT

July 2024



Wishing you a happy, healthy, and safe summer!



July Healthy Summer Challenge

Join the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living to beat the heat with our Healthy Summer Challenge.



J U L Y	HEALTHY SUMMER CHALLENGE					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Host a scavenger hunt around the house — great for clean-up!	Take turns acting out healthy behaviors, like teeth-brushing.	Create an affirmation jar to collect kind statements to say to yourself.	Write about your favorite healthy meal from June.	Try a fruit or veggie you've never had before.	Create a personalized self-care plan to use during the school year.
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Look in the mirror, and tell yourself "You got this!"	Enjoy a "Living Room Circuit" with 5 rotating exercises.	Plan a day's worth of veggie- and fruit-filled meals, and swap with a friend.	Square breathing: inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, rest for 4.	Work with your adult at home to find a new favorite healthy snack.	Create a brand new fruit/veggie popsicle!
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Stand like a superhero in front of the mirror.	Roll dirty laundry into balls, using a basket as the hoop.	One child leads the other(s) in an exercise. Then, you can switch roles!	Create a feeling color wheel you can reference throughout the day.	Tell your adult at home your favorite way to stay hydrated!	Have a healthy picnic in the shade.
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Dance in front of the mirror, and smile!	Host a "Freeze Dance." When the music stops, freeze!	Create and perform a short song about the importance of sleep.	Create a bedtime routine for school returning next month!	Write a short thank you note to someone who you're grateful for.	Learn a new way to prepare your favorite vegetable.
	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Try to make your friend or family member laugh with a funny joke.	Create the "Fitness Alphabet" and assign an exercise to each letter.	Healthy kid's choice! Re-do your favorite activity from July.	Review your affirmation jar, and appreciate yourself!	Be healthy and safe in July!	
	28	29	30	31		
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TX RPC Project Health Policy Resources

Maternal Mental Health Conditions

Released July 1, 2024

Opioid Misuse: Prevention and Treatment

Released July 17, 2024

Maternal Mental Health Conditions

July 1, 2024

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. There is an overlapping maternal health and mental health crisis in the U.S. and Texas. Untreated maternal mental health conditions substantially impact health outcomes and cause tremendous economic loss.
2. Texas experiences persistent shortages of mental healthcare providers. Programs, such as the Texas Perinatal Psychiatry Access Network (PeriPAN), are one strategy to mitigate the challenges of shortages.

Background

Nationwide Maternal Health and Mental Health Crisis

- Pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. increased more than **3x** in the last 3 decades, with substantial racial/ethnic and urban-rural disparities.¹

Maternal mental health conditions (MMHCs) are among the most common complications of pregnancy and postpartum in Texas.

- In 2019, MMHCs were the:
 - Most common **underlying cause** of pregnancy-related death (**22%**) in Texas, with **depressive disorder** as the leading mental health condition, followed by substance use, bipolar, and psychotic disorders.²
 - Main **contributing cause** of pregnancy-related death.
 - Mental disorders contributed to **25%** of pregnancy-related deaths.²
 - Substance use disorder (SUD) & SUD-associated mental disorders contributed to **11%** of pregnancy-related deaths.²

Cause of Death: Underlying vs. Contributing

- **Underlying cause of death:** disease or injury that initiated the morbid events leading directly to death or the circumstances
- **Contributing cause of death:** disease or injury that contributed to the fatal outcome

Pregnancy-Related Deaths in the U.S.¹



12.6% of Texas women experienced **depression during pregnancy** in 2019.³

14.9% of Texas women experienced **postpartum depression** symptoms in 2019.³

UTHealth Houston

School of Public Health



Opioid Misuse: Prevention and Treatment

July 17, 2024

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Opioid use and overdoses have continued to rise in the United States, especially among youth and younger adults.¹
2. The percentage of opioid overdose deaths in 2022 was higher among Texas youth and adults between the ages of 25-34 compared to the United States.²
3. Tucker's Law, requiring prevention instruction in public schools, and the "One Pill Kills" campaign have brought awareness and introduced prevention measures to substance misuse in Texas.³⁻⁵

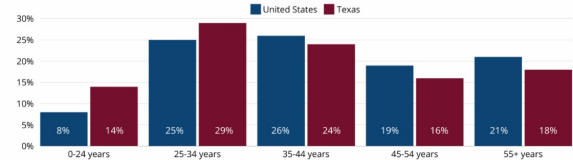
Background

Opioids are a class of drugs used to alleviate pain.

- Types of opioids include illegal (e.g., heroin), synthetic (e.g., fentanyl), and prescription drugs (e.g., oxycodone).^{6,7}
 - The number of opioid-involved overdose deaths in the United States rose from 49,860 in 2019 to 81,806 in 2022.⁸
- Overdoses have continued to increase, especially among youth and males.¹
- In 2022, American adults aged 25-44 had the highest rates of opioid-related deaths.²

Between August 2022 and August 2023, approximately 45% of drug-related deaths involved opioids.⁹

Percent of Opioid Overdose Deaths by Age Group in 2022, United States vs. Texas²



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This report discusses the status of maternal mental health in Texas and provides mitigation strategies and recommendations.

- Texas is experiencing a mental health professional shortage, with less than 1/3 of mental healthcare needs being met.
- Untreated maternal mental health conditions substantially impact maternal, child, and paternal health, and cause economic loss.
- In 2019, the total societal cost of untreated maternal mental health conditions in Texas in the first 5 years post-delivery was \$2.2 billion.

This report discusses opioid use and overdose and provides recommendations for prevention programs and support services.

- Fentanyl is an FDA-approved opioid that can be used as a prescribed narcotic. Illegal fentanyl has contributed to a rise in accidental overdose deaths among individuals who unknowingly ingest fentanyl.
- About 45% of all drug-related deaths in Texas in 2022 were from fentanyl, compared to 4.5% in 2015.
- Fentanyl overdose deaths increased 400% between 2019 and 2021 in Texas.

TX RPC Project Researcher Publications

Featured Publication

[Cardiovascular health profile is favorably associated with brain health and neurocognitive development in adolescents](#)

Maintaining cardiovascular health is essential for early adolescents' brain development and cognitive function (decision-making, problem-solving, emotional regulation), which is related to their academic and social achievements.

- This study explored the associations of health behaviors and indicators with adolescents' (11-12 years) brain development and cognitive function.
- Findings from this study indicate physical activity and overall cardiovascular health are associated with better executive cognitive function.
- Adolescents with healthier sleep status, normal body weight, and better overall cardiovascular health had a larger brain volume.
- Efforts should promote healthy behaviors (such as healthy diet, physical activity, avoidance of nicotine, and healthy sleep) in adolescents to improve cardiovascular health, brain health, and development.

Texas

[Blunt smoking during emerging adulthood: Characterizing transitions in cannabis and cigar co-use](#)

[among a diverse cohort in Texas.](#)

General

[Perceptions of the addictiveness of low-nicotine cigarettes versus typical cigarettes and exposure to tobacco industry-sponsored corrective campaign](#)

[Physical activity and sedentary time among U.S. adolescents before and during COVID-19: findings from a large cohort study](#)

[Child care center staff readiness to change in an early childhood obesity prevention program](#)

Lunch & Learn Recap: Texas SPAN Survey Data

The most recent TX RPC Project Lunch & Learn presentation by Dr. Deanna Hoelscher covered Childhood Obesity Prevalence in Texas After COVID: Findings from the 2021-2023 Texas SPAN Survey.

[View the Presentation Slides](#)



Center for Healthy Living Webinar



Presented by **Robin Stallings**
BikeTexas Executive Director, since 2003

[The \(Bike\) Trail to Health and Economic Prosperity](#)

July 23, 2024

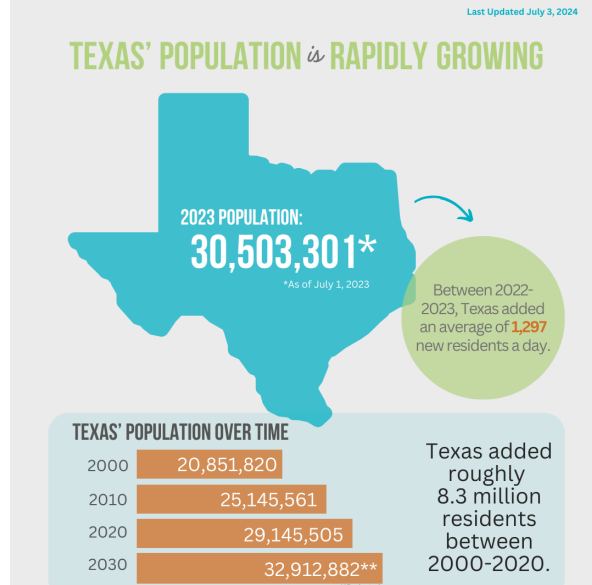
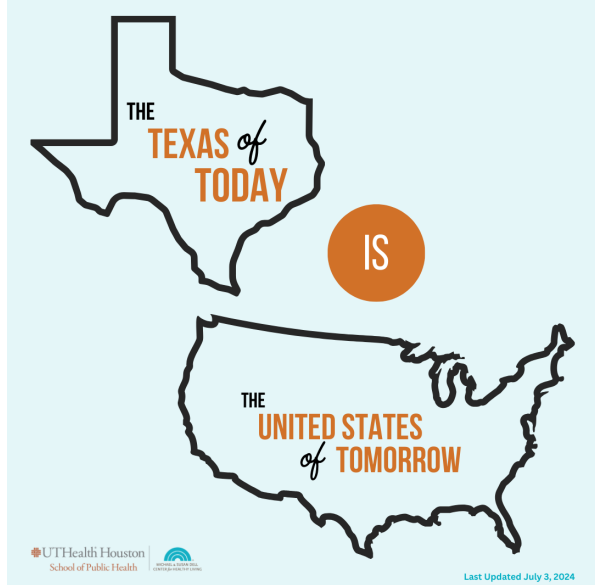
12-1 PM CT

Bicycling is part of the solution to many of the chronic problems we face today, including public health, homelessness, climate change, and economic disparities. Learn how multi-use bike/ped networks are planned, funded, and utilized from a leading national advocate. Find out how the [Texas Trails and Active Transportation](#) contributes to the conversation around transportation and public health.

[Register Today!](#)

Center for Healthy Living Texas of Today Resource

Texas' growing and diverse population, geography, and array of cultures are only a few of the benefits that make the Lone Star State an ideal place to perform public health research. See our latest resource to learn more about how the [Texas of Today](#) is the United States of Tomorrow.



Resource Corner

The TX RPC Project develops accessible and accurate public health policy-related resources from field experts. If you would like to request information on a public health topic, please complete the following form:

[Access the Request Form](#)

See below for links to specific resource categories on our website:

- [Health Policy Resources](#)
- [Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinars](#)
- [TX RPC Project Newsletters Archive](#)
- [Texas Legislative Bill Tracker](#)
- [Texas Child Health Status Reports and Toolkits](#)
- [Newsletter Resource Sharing Form for Publication](#)

About TX RPC Project

The [Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration \(TX RPC\) Project](#) is a nonpartisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and legislators.

The TX RPC Project team and overall network are available to support Texas legislators with informational requests or resources related to health during the interim and in preparation for the 2025 Legislative Session.

If you and your legislative office are interested in collaborating with our team to receive data-driven information at state, district, and local levels, please reach out to TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

Contact Our Team

For more information, email TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

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Texas Research-to-Policy
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