



## **HT Wellness Initiative: PHASE 1**

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Solutions-Based Listening Tour**

#### **Addressing East Austin's Mental Health Crisis**

Reports from various sources (2012 Community Health Assessment for Austin/Travis County, Studies from the University of Texas at Austin, Reports from the Hogg Foundation and data from Austin Travis Integral Care) have all confirmed that Austin/Travis County is in a state of crisis with respect to mental and behavioral health services. This crisis exists primarily around four critical needs: 1) Austin's need to improve behavioral health care quality, access and affordability for minority, indigent and uninsured populations; 2) Austin's need to address the critical shortage of mental and behavioral health practitioners 3) Austin's need to address the barriers which lead to behavioral health care aversion, especially amongst minority populations; and 4) Austin's need to address cultural, lingual and ethic diversity amongst the mental and behavioral health provider workforce.

The 2012 Community Health Assessment for Austin/Travis County report revealed that many of the pathways to poor health in the Black/African-American and Latino/Hispanic Communities are linked to mental and behavioral health issues. Austin can and must address this growing crisis by prioritizing access to mental and behavioral health services. If unaddressed, these factors will have a rippling effect throughout the overall health care system of Austin and Central Texas.

In response to this crisis, Huston-Tillotson University is advancing a two-phase approach to building a state-of-the-art Community Health and Wellness Center that will comprise specialized health care services, programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the East Austin mental health crisis. Phase I involves laying the foundation. This Phase will entail the facilitation of a 21st-Century solutions-based listening tour, strategic planning, assessments and focus groups aimed at gathering relevant information from a diverse group of stakeholders from across Austin. Ultimately, this Phase will result in the placement of a temporary facility that will house these services along with People's Clinic (A Federally Qualified Health Clinic), Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC) and Huston-Tillotson University's site-based research and outreach initiatives.

As outlined above, the first step in Phase I will be the hosting of the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Solutions Based Listening Tour. The University proposes the sponsoring of this exploratory trip at a cost of \$20,000 in November 2013 to engage an expert team of minority mental and behavioral health practitioners and researchers to accomplish the following:

- 1) establish connection points with constituents of the Austin Health Care Community;
- 2) set the stage for the development of the Blue Ribbon Framework for Mental and Behavioral Service Delivery;
- 3) facilitate the inaugural meeting of the Blue Ribbon Guiding Coalition;
- 4) visit and assess the blended target population and areas of highest need;
- 5) interface with the academic community to establish an agenda for future research and service; and
- 6) explore partnerships with potential funding sources.

The health care challenges facing Austin are daunting but, with careful coordination, collaboration and continued dialogue, they are not insurmountable. The University realizes that the crisis referenced herein must be addressed through systematic strategies which not only address the apparent root causes, but also offer pragmatic solutions with measurable outcomes. The University invites all stakeholders to the table as it endeavors to create and advance a unique health care delivery model that will not only transform lives in East Austin and beyond, but also personify the realities of its unique urban mission.

<b>Proposed Budget</b> <b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Solutions-Based Listening Tour</b> <b>Addressing East Austin's Mental Health Crisis</b>	
<b>Programmatic Expenses</b>	
Stipends for Team Members	\$7,500.00
Logistics, Printing, Marketing	\$1,500.00
<b>Travel Expenses</b>	
Airfare for 5 member team	\$5,000.00
Lodging for 5 member team	\$2,000.00
Meals for 5 member team	\$1,500.00
<b>Reception Expenses</b>	
Expenses for Community Reception and Stakeholders Breakfast	\$2,500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>