



NEWS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Gordon Anderson 512.475.4743
Jill McFarren 512.475.2844

New state council visits Metroplex, gathers input on special needs housing

(AUSTIN) — Residents of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex concerned with the housing challenges confronting elderly individuals and persons with disabilities have a unique opportunity to help shape public policy at an upcoming meeting held by the state.

The Housing and Health Services Coordination Council (HHSCC) will accept comment beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 10, at the Fort Worth Central Library, Chappell Room 500, located at West 3rd Street in Fort Worth. The new state interagency council is charged by the legislature with increasing efforts to offer service-enriched housing in Texas through increased coordination of housing and health services.

“We are always seeking to better understand the barriers and opportunities that exist across the state regarding service-enriched housing,” said Michael Gerber, Executive Director of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and Council Chair. “Ultimately we want to improve the quality of life for many of our most vulnerable neighbors.

“This forum is a rare opportunity for advocates, stakeholder organizations, and the general public to share their views and concerns at the ‘blueprint’ stage of a new state initiative,” he continued. “This input will help the Council shape the future direction Texas takes in this pioneering effort, and I strongly encourage anyone with an interest in this topic to please attend and have your voice heard.”

The Housing and Health Services Coordination Council was created by Senate Bill 1878 during the 81st Texas Legislative Session to increase state efforts to offer service-enriched housing for elderly individuals and persons with disabilities. Service-enriched housing is broadly defined as living arrangements that include health and/or social services in an accessible, supportive environment.

The Council’s mission is to develop and implement policies that coordinate and increase state efforts to offer service-enriched housing, identify barriers preventing or slowing the delivery of such housing, and craft a system to cross-educate staff in state housing and health services entities.

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HHSCC is comprised of 16 members: eight members appointed by Governor Perry, and seven state agency representative members. In addition to TDHCA, other agencies represented include the Texas Department of Rural Affairs, Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, Texas Department of State Health Services, and Texas Department of Agriculture.

The TDHCA Executive Director serves as the Council Chair, and the Council is administratively supported by TDHCA staff. For more information about HHSCC and its mission, please visit www.tdhca.state.tx.us/hhsc/index.htm.

Anyone wanting to provide comment but who cannot attend this forum in person may provide written no later than Friday, February 26, 2010, to:

Housing and Health Services Coordination Council
c/o Housing Resource Center
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
P.O. Box 13941
Austin, TX 78711-3941
Fax: (512) 475-1672
Email: ashley.schweickart@tdhca.state.tx.us

Individuals who require a language interpreter for the forum should contact Sylvia Mallinger at (512) 475-4595 at least three days prior to the hearing date.

Personas que hablan español y requieren un intérprete, favor de llamar a Sylvia Mallinger al siguiente número (512) 475-4595 por lo menos tres días antes de la junta para hacer los preparativos apropiados.

About The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is the state agency responsible for affordable housing, community services, energy assistance, colonia housing programs, and disaster recovery housing programs. It currently administers \$2 billion through for-profit, nonprofit, and local government partnerships to deliver local housing and community-based opportunities and assistance to Texans in need.