

May 2022

FEATURED NEWS



New Toolkit Helps Prepare Young Adults with IDD for an Emergency

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health, supported by the WITH Foundation, developed an Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for Young Adults with IDD and their Primary Care Team.

The toolkit includes two tip sheets to assist young adults with IDD, their support persons, and their primary care teams to plan for disasters and emergencies, and is available in English and Spanish.

[**Learn More**](#)



Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds for Qualified Clients, Effective Feb. 21 – Sept. 30

To assist families in need who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, [Texas Health & Human Services](#) has awarded The Harris Center with \$2,932,582 in Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds to distribute to our eligible client population.

What are the eligibility requirements?

In order to receive assistance funds, eligible families must:

- Live in Harris County, Texas
- Be an active client at The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD
- Have a dependent under the age of 18 years old living in the home
- Have a member in the household with a mental health, intellectual and developmental disability or substance use diagnosis
- Have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

Assistance funds are to address the urgent needs of eligible families. This includes:

1. **Rental Housing Support Services:** May include rent and utility assistance, security deposit assistance and other time-limited expenses to help maintain current housing or move quickly into housing
2. **Housing Modifications:** Allowing for physical adaptations to a member's home that are necessary to ensure the member's health, welfare and safety or that enable the member to function with greater independence in the home. Limitations do apply
3. **Emergency Housing and Hotel Vouchers:** Short-term emergency housing or hotel vouchers when a member of the household tests positive for COVID-19 to reduce the chances of spreading the virus and to eliminate the financial burden associated with a safe and healthy living environment
4. **Ancillary Expenses:** Short-term basic needs such as purchasing diapers, clothing, emergency food, burial assistance and other necessary personal care items to promote short-term family stability

Funds may not be used for the following purposes:

- Childcare expenses
- Transportation
- Short-term education or training

How much funding can each participant receive?

The Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund will be available from Feb. 21, 2022 through Sept. 30, 2022.

- Funding cannot be provided for more than four (4) consecutive months
- Families of 3 or less, can receive a maximum of \$7,000 towards eligible services
- Families of 4 or more, can receive a maximum of \$10,000 towards eligible services

Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis and participants may not receive more than four consecutive months of assistance. No funding will be available after Sept. 30, 2022.

Speak to your care team today to see if you are eligible.



New Program to bring Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Children with Autism and Anxiety

Co-occurring anxiety disorders affect 40 to 50% of children with autism spectrum disorder, contributing to substantial distress and impairment. Personalized cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been found to be effective for this underserved group, but it is not readily available currently, and the core treatment mechanisms are not well understood.

The Harris Center, Baylor College of Medicine, and the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill is proud to announce an awarded grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to implement a cognitive behavioral therapy intervention and clinician training protocol called CAPTA (Community-based Anxiety Program Tailored for Autism).

The program will work to treat youth with anxiety and autism and will be available in community mental health settings. Researchers will then evaluate clients' preliminary response to the treatment. Drs. Eric Storch and Andrew Guzick are leading the project at Baylor College of Medicine while Dr. Rinita Roberts, Dr. Sylvia Muzquiz, and Tiffanie Williams-Brooks are project champions at The Harris Center.

[Learn More](#)



Gertrude "Trudy" Leidich, MBA, RN
VP, Clinical Transformation & Quality
Starting May 23, 2022

Trudy Leidich, MBA, RN Joining The Harris Center as VP of Clinical Transformation and Quality

Join us in welcoming Trudy Leidich as the new Vice President of Clinical Transformation and Quality. Previously, Trudy enjoyed a long career at Texas Children's Hospital rising from Assistant Director to Vice President of Quality and Safety. Across this career, Trudy led three hospitals in transforming and strengthening the quality and safety infrastructure through process improvement, data analysis, and team building. Additionally, she provided oversight of clinical quality, patient safety, infection prevention & control, medical staff governance, and quality staff education.

In her new role at The Harris Center, Trudy will oversee the quality improvement/quality assurance, clinical transformation, and health analytics departments. Trudy will join The Harris Center on May 23rd. We are looking forward to gaining and learning from her extensive experience.

"Trudy's depth of knowledge and experience will be a vital part of The Harris Center continuing to provide high quality services that transform lives of those with behavioral health needs in Harris County. We are excited to welcome her to the leadership team and look forward to her contributions across the agency." – Wayne Young, Chief Executive Officer, The Harris Center

"Trudy is bringing a wealth of experience for transforming care from Texas Children's and has phenomenal depth and knowledge on quality and safety. We are so excited for her joining the Harris Center and appreciate her leadership as we expand our commitment as an organization to quality improvement and learning." – Dr. Luming Li, Chief Medical Officer, The Harris Center

"I am honored and excited to join the leadership team at The Harris Center. I cannot wait to begin the important work with Dr. Li and the rest of the team as we continue to drive improvement science and quality education across the center." – Trudy Leidich



Kia Walker, MSN, RN

Chief Nursing Officer

Starting May 23, 2022

Kia Walker, MSN, RN joins The Harris Center

The Harris Center is pleased to announce another important addition to the agency. Join us in welcoming Kia Walker as the new **Chief Nursing Officer**. Kia comes to The Harris Center with a wide variety of skills including experience in acute care, outpatient, and inpatient settings. Additionally, Kia has worked with Veterans, led educational programs at the university level and coordinated successful accreditation inspections with multiple accreditors.

In her new role at The Harris Center, Kia will oversee all nursing activities which are so critical to agency's high-quality care. Kia joins The Harris Center on May 23rd. We are looking forward to welcoming her to the leadership team.

"Nursing is so vital to the operation of The Harris Center living its mission. Kia's addition to the team will provide an opportunity to build on a strong foundation with contributions that will be felt agency wide." – Wayne Young, Chief Executive Officer, The Harris Center

"I strive to lead by this mantra: The definition of a good leader is to lead by example and not by title." – Kia Walker

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS



IDD Employment Services

From respite care to Home and Community-based Services to day habilitation and drop-in programs, The Harris Center assists thousands each year by coordinating caring, compassionate support for individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities. In addition, clinicians and case managers have developed extensive community partnerships that benefit individuals with Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and other conditions. The Harris Center also coordinates care for those with a dual diagnosis of a mental illness and an intellectual or developmental disability.

[Watch the Video](#)

IN THE MEDIA

Woodlands Online



[NAM Recognizes Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

May 20, 2022

Throughout the month NAM has offered free community events including a Community Learning Circle presented by The Harris Center and a film screening of "Wisdom of Trauma," exploring the root of human pain, and the source of healing.

MORE INFORMATION

Do you want to learn more about The Harris Center?

Visit our website to learn more about our programs and services or view our [FY2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#) to see how we're working to transform lives in Harris County and beyond.

[Visit The Harris Center's Website](#)

Questions? Contact Communications@TheHarrisCenter.org.

