





# Fort Bend County Special Commissioners' Court

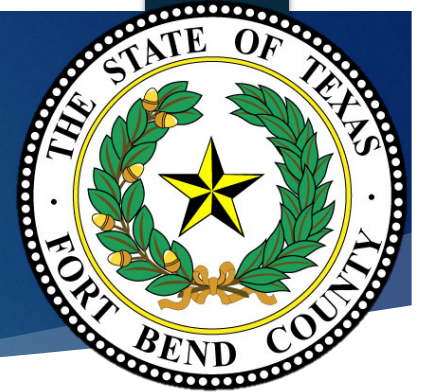
AUGUST 1, 2024 – 9:00 AM MEETING

# Item 1



## Call to Order

## Item 2



Conduct workshop to receive presentation from Health and Human Services, regarding the establishment of a community health system in Fort Bend County.



# Fort Bend County: Addressing our Community Needs

**AUGUST 1, 2024**

PRESENTED BY:

LETOSHA GALE-LOWE, M.D.  
DIRECTOR AND LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY  
FORT BEND COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

# Expanding Health Care Access



- **Initial Observations**
  - Health Care Gap Analysis
- **Research and Assessment**
  - Engaging Experienced Health Care Researchers to inform initial assessment with comprehensive data
- **Collaborative Data and Solutions**
  - Insights from research efforts and Potential solutions to address identified gaps
- **Financial Considerations- Constrained Funding**
  - Expansion in health access and services may exceed current general fund capacity
- **Potential Funding Mechanism- Hospital District**
  - Based on research findings and the Court's consideration for addressing important health needs

# Economic and Social Impact Analysis was completed by Tripp Umbach



- Over 35 years of experience in hundreds of communities nationwide.
- Nation's leader in Community Health Assessment and Economic Impact Analysis.
- Experience in Texas with El Paso, Harris, and Midland Counties.
- Experience in similar communities (i.e., Palm Beach County, Florida).
- Provided their services at no cost to Fort Bend County.

# Needs Assessment was completed by Working Partner



- Is a Strategy and Evaluation firm based in the Houston region.
- Brings nearly 20 years of deep experience working with health providers in the greater Houston region to address critical health challenges.
- Is knowledgeable about needs in Fort Bend County, having conducted needs assessments and facilitated strategy sessions with many Fort Bend organizations over the years.

# Needs Assessment: Health Challenges in Fort Bend County

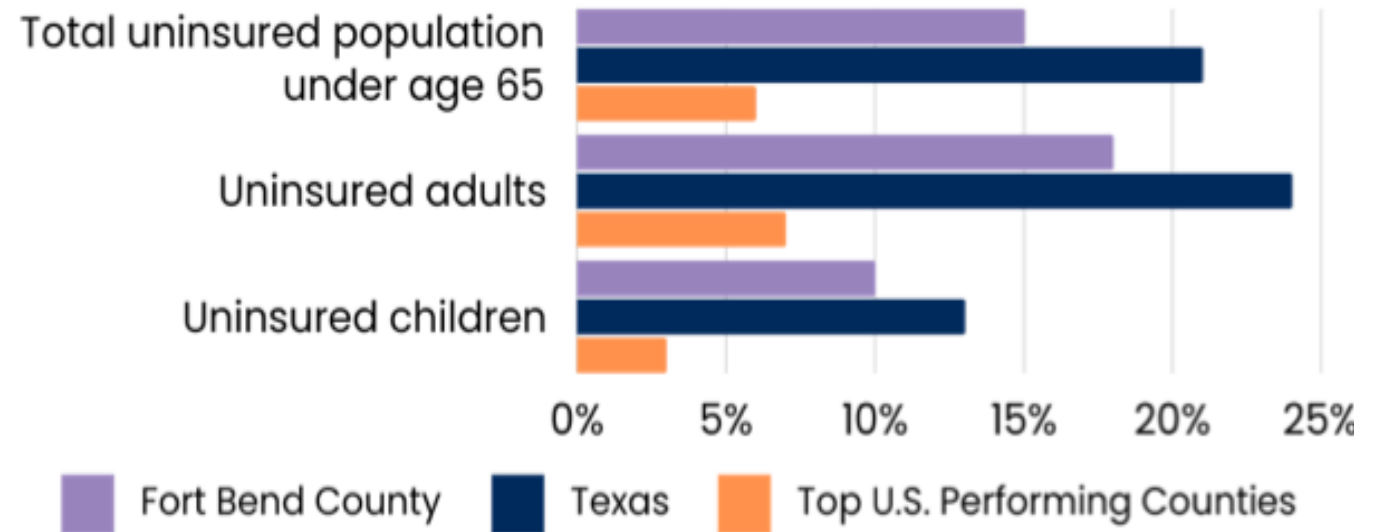


A person's ability to take care of their health is to some extent influenced by their ability to access health care.

Health care can be too expensive to pay for without health insurance, but many people struggle to find affordable health insurance.

Texas Medicaid provides medical coverage to very low-income people, but only children, pregnant women, and disabled individuals qualify.

## Uninsured Population

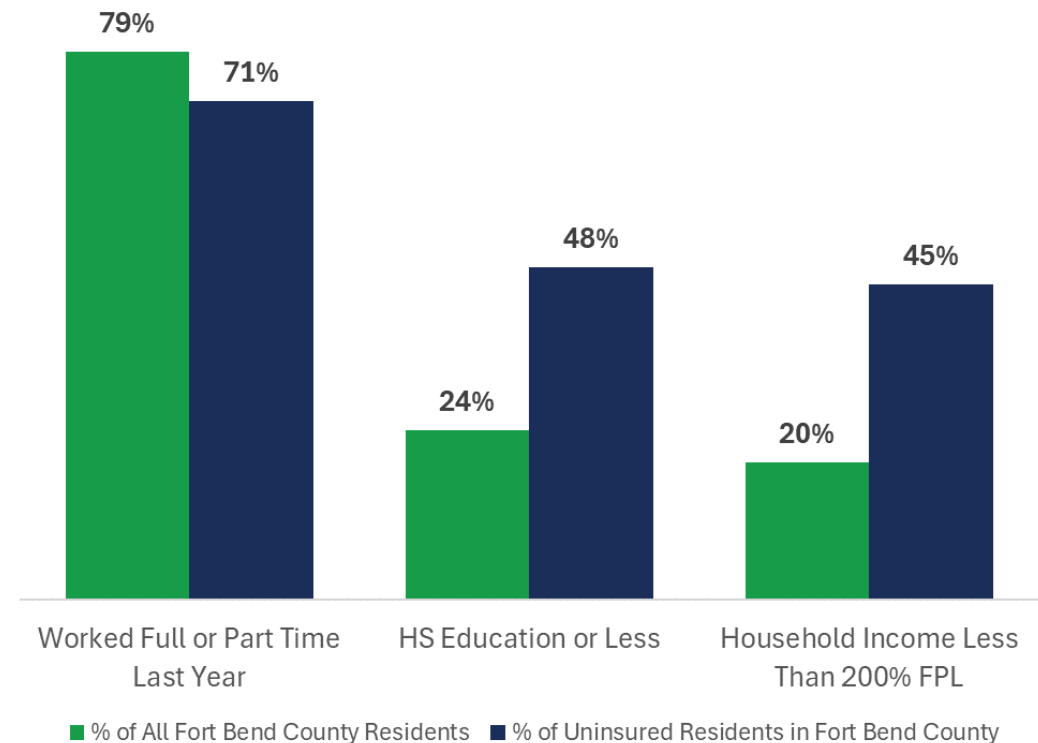


# Needs Assessment: Health Challenges in Fort Bend County - Continued



- As a result, nearly 100,000 Fort Bend County residents (making up 11% of the total county population) are uninsured.
- More than 70% of those who are uninsured work but cannot get health insurance through their employer.
- Generally, uninsured people tend to have limited education and annual incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line

Characteristics of the Uninsured in Fort Bend County



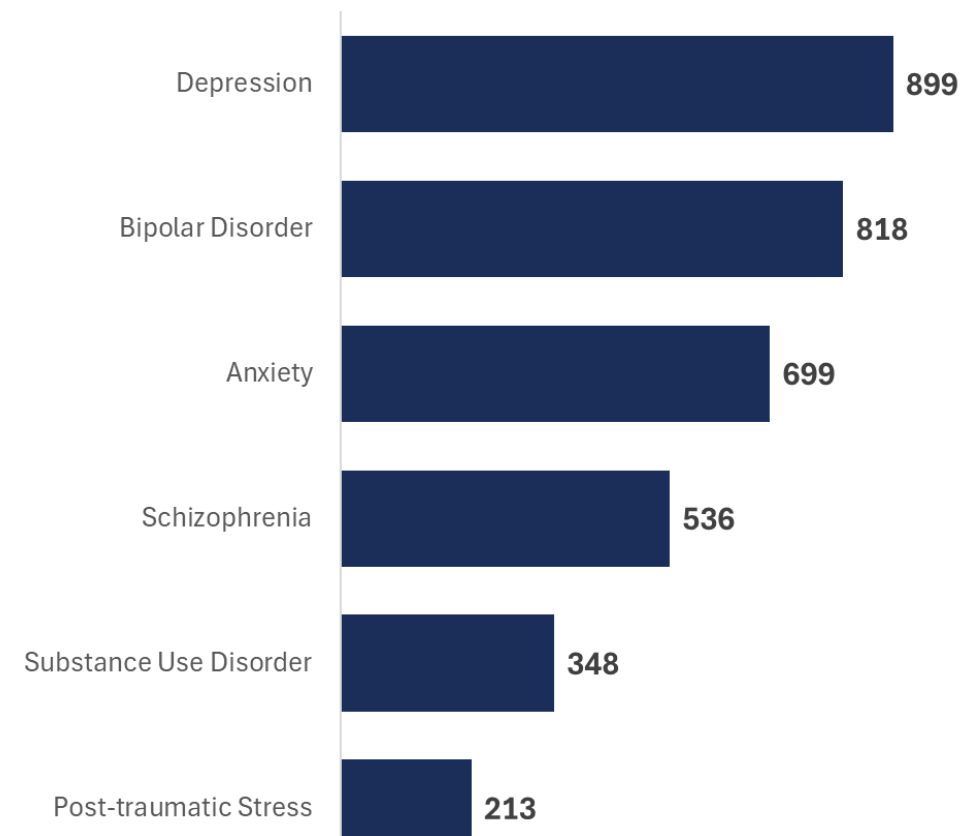
# Needs Assessment: Mental Health Challenges in Fort Bend County



Access to mental health and substance use care is also a critical gap in Fort Bend County.

- Survey data collected by Fort Bend County's HHS department found that mental health is a significant concern of Fort Bend residents.
- The Fort Bend Sheriff's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) were called to handle 1,800 crises in 2023. Of these cases, 34% were uninsured individuals.
- In 2020, suicide was the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Fort Bend County, and drug overdose deaths have increased significantly in recent years.

CIT Contacts in 2023: Mental Illness Presented



# Needs Assessment: Existing County Resources for Health and Mental Health



- Fort Bend County's Health Care Assistance Program exists to connect uninsured people to low-cost health care but has strict eligibility requirements. As a result, *less than 150 people are served* by the County program each year.
  - Eligible individuals must have an annual income of \$3,000 - \$7,000 per year (depending on how many people live in the household)
  - Eligible individuals can not have more than \$2,000 in savings or other assets
- Texana, the local mental health authority, provides mental health supports, but is largely restricted to serve only people with serious mental health and developmental disabilities.
- The Fort Bend Regional Council provides substance use education, counseling, and treatment services, but have limited funds to serve more people.

# Key recommendations from the Needs Assessment



- Connect more uninsured residents to low-cost health care by expanding the Fort Bend County Health Care Assistance Program .
- Increase mental health and substance use resources for Fort Bend County residents by establishing a Drop-Off Center operated by Texana & the Fort Bend Council.
- Implement a Health Care Access Card Program to increase access to preventative and specialty care.
- Support the establishment of a Family Medicine Residency Program with the Ibn Sina Clinic to encourage new physicians to stay in the region.

# Priority Area #1:

## Expand the Current Fort Bend County Health Care Assistance Program



### Expand the Health Care Assistance Program



**COST**



**Cost Savings**

Cost savings to taxpayers from 500 patients receiving coordinated care within Fort Bend County facilities: \$25.2M



**ROI**  
\$1 = \$3.70

# Priority Area #1:

## Expand the Current Fort Bend County Health Care Assistance Program



### Fort Bend County Health Care Access Card Program



#### REFERRALS

The County has made 1,724 referrals since 2019.



#### STAFF

#### EXPANSION

Provide staff to expand referrals for qualified patients to existing free or low-cost clinics.



#### COST

\$1M to add staff and technology resources to the current indigent care office



#### ROI

\$1 = \$28.90



#### Cost Savings

The cost savings to taxpayers from the Access Program are based on saving \$2,715 per person who avoids an ED visit. If only 30 patients avoid ED treatment daily, the annual cost savings would be \$28.9M.

# Priority Area #1:

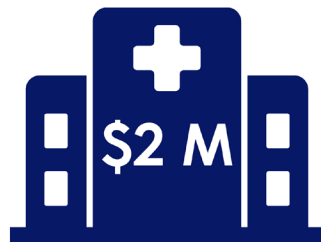
## Expand the Current Fort Bend County Health Care Assistance Program



- ▶ **Develop the Family Medicine (FM) Residency Program through Local Hospital/Non-Profit Partnerships**
  - **Residency:** 12 residents producing four family physicians annually starting in 2028;
  - **Cost:** \$2.0M Annually
  - **Economic Impact:** \$5.3M annually from the FM program and \$8.8M from four new primary care physicians.
  - **Cost Savings:** \$14.4M from four new primary care physicians;
  - **Total Economic Benefit:** \$28.5M.
  - **ROI:** \$1 investment equals \$14.25 in savings.

# Priority Area #2:

## Expand Access to Mental Health Services



### SCOPE

Mental Health's drop-off center expects two admissions per day (730 annually) and 372 annual jail diversions.



### Short-Term Cost

**Savings: \$2.9M annually**

- Each diversion saves \$175/day in incarceration costs for an average of 28 days, totaling \$1.8M annually.
- Additional savings from arrest and booking total \$1.0M. Combined diversion savings amounting to \$2.9M annually, excluding court costs.



**Long-Term Cost Savings: \$14M**



### COST



### ROI

**\$1 = \$7.00**

# Priority Area #2:

## Expand Access to Mental Health Services



### ➤ **Expand Mental Health Care**

- ▶ Develop mental health outreach services through partnerships with community organizations, faith-based groups, schools and behavioral health providers.
- ▶ **Budget:** \$710k annually
- ▶ **Cost Savings:** Access to needed and coordinated care in the community for 250 children and adults could save millions in detention costs, foster care placements, hospitalizations, loss of productivity and school absenteeism.
- ▶ **ROI:** \$1 investment equals \$4 in improved health and productivity (WHO)
- ▶ **ROI:** \$1 investment in depression services equals \$7 savings

# Cost



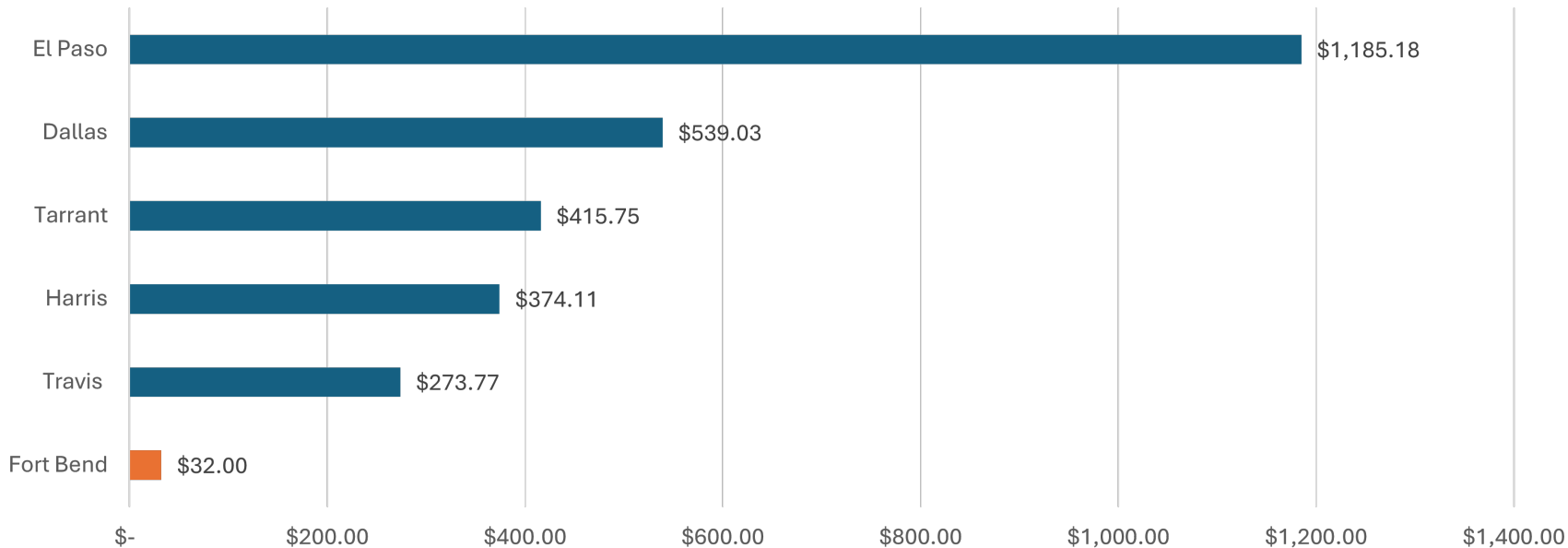
**\$12.5M total annual benefit \$101.5M**

- Annual ROI: \$1 = \$8.12
- \$89.0M in net cost savings to Fort Bend County taxpayers attributed to the development of the Healthcare District

# Direct Taxpayer Impact



Health District Tax Payment Per Property Owner

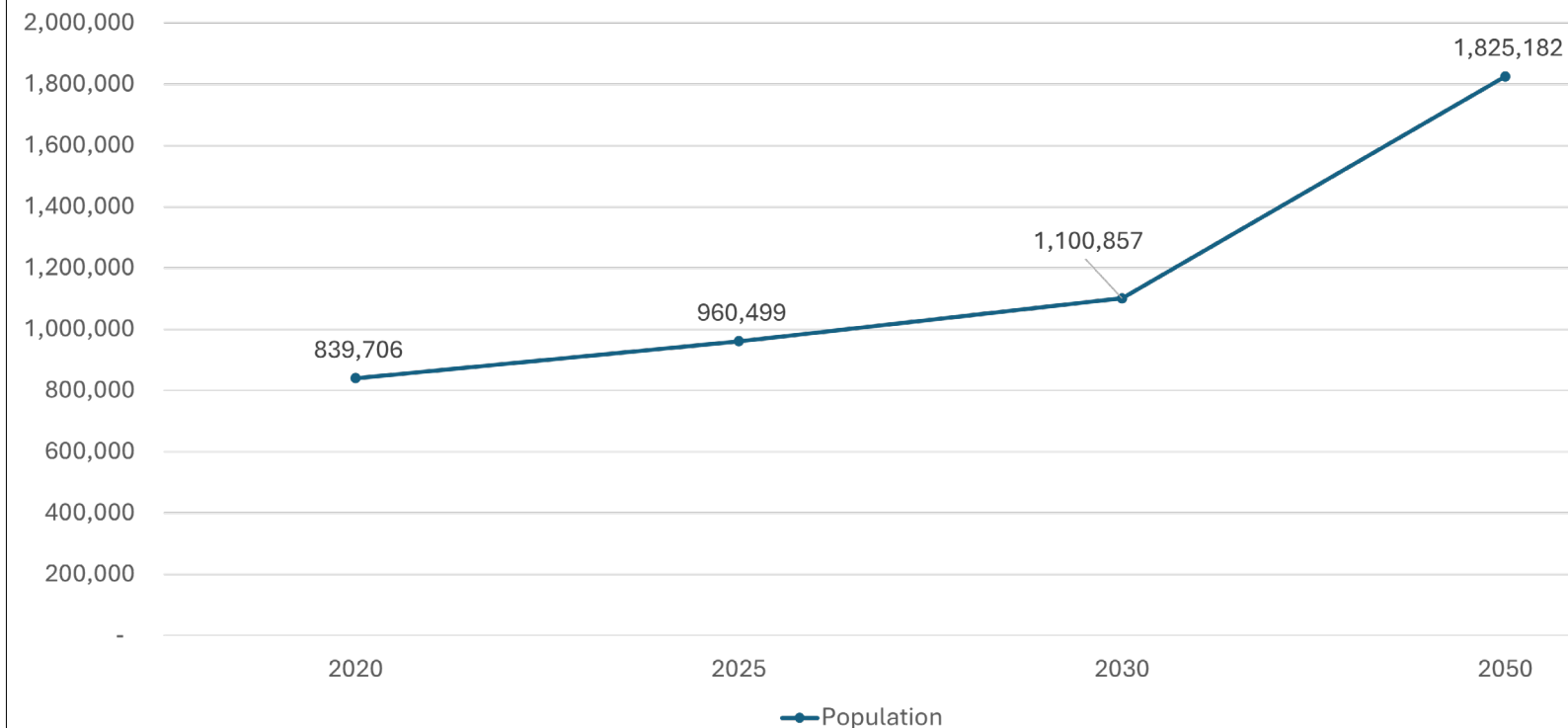


- Total cost of \$12.5m in initial year
- FY2025/TY2024 assessed value estimated at \$117.6b
- Tax Rate to fund initial year: \$0.0106 per \$100 valuation
- Annual tax impact for average taxable home value of \$300k (after \$100k homestead exemption): \$32/yr or \$2.67/mo

# What if we wait?



Population Growth Over the Years 2020-2050



- The population will continue to grow –and the cost to taxpayers will increase to serve all residents.
- The impact on residents with medical emergencies and hospitalizations will include continued long ER wait times and delayed surgeries and procedures. This impact will further increase healthcare costs.
- **Adding Health Care Assistance Program expansion to the County budget WITHOUT a Hospital District would decrease or eliminate the provision of vital County services.**

# Advantages of this Approach



- Lowest cost of any Hospital District in the state per taxpayer
- No new hospitals or other facilities will be built – services will be provided at an extended network of existing points of care.
- Emergency room visits for non-emergent conditions will be reduced, lowering healthcare costs for everyone.
- A healthier population will benefit our families, schools and businesses

# Next Steps



## **July**

- Presentations to Key Stakeholders
- Begin gathering public comment

## **August**

- Presentation to Commissioner Court (8.1.24)
- Commissioners Court adopts a resolution for a bond election in November (8.13.24)

## **September – November**

- Outreach and updates to the Commissioners Court
- Public comment
- Communication Plan roll-out

## **November**

- Election Day (11.5.24)

# Questions?



Letosha Gale-Lowe, M.D.  
Director and Local Health Authority  
Fort Bend County Health & Human Services  
Letosha.Gale-Lowe@fortbendcountytexas.gov

## ***Needs Assessment:***

Jessica Pugil  
Principal and Founder  
Working Partner LLC  
Jessica@TheWorkingPartner.com

Connie Almeida, PhD  
Director of Behavioral Health Services  
Fort Bend County  
Connie.Almeida@fortbendcountytexas.gov

## ***Economic Impact Study:***

Paul Umbach  
President and Founder  
Tripp Umbach  
PUmbach@trippumbach.com

# Item 3



# Adjournment



# Fort Bend County Special Commissioners' Court

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