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## **Hogg Foundation Awards \$900,000 in Grants to Advance Peer Support in Integrated Health Care**

AUSTIN, Texas – The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at The University of Texas at Austin has awarded \$900,000 in grants to three Texas community health centers (CHCs) to advance peer support in the delivery of integrated health care.

Integrated health care is the systematic coordination of primary care, mental health services and substance use treatment. There is now an abundance of research supporting the notion that integrated care approaches can be effective for individuals with both chronic care conditions and mental health conditions. In recent years, the Hogg Foundation has made advancing integrated health care a key strategic area in its grantmaking.

The establishment of peer services in existing integrated health care settings is a natural next step. Peer support is the principle and practice of incorporating individuals with lived experience of mental illness as key members of the care team. This grant program aims to further establish recovery and peer support as core principles in the delivery of care.

The Advancing Peer Support in Integrated Health Care grants have been awarded to three CHCs: Gulf Coast Health Center (Port Arthur), Hope Family Health Center (McAllen) and Project Vida (El Paso). The grantees have each been awarded \$300,000 over four years to support the hiring of certified peer specialists. Following a substantial planning period, the grantees will hire two certified peer specialists to work in team-based care delivering integrated health care. The rigorous adoption of recovery-oriented principles can be especially beneficial at community health centers, which are often the first point of contact for both physical and mental health concerns.

“This grant program represents the joining of two of our most significant programs areas: integrated health care and peer support,” said Dr. Octavio N. Martinez, Jr., executive director of the Hogg Foundation and associate vice president for diversity and community engagement at The University of Texas at Austin. “We are committed to helping ensure that peer support is not an adjunct or an after-thought, but an integral part of health care delivery.”

The Hogg Foundation advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research and public education. The foundation was created in 1940 by the children of former Texas Governor James S. Hogg and is part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.

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