

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Unprecedented Training for Elected Officials Coming to Texas**

*Local Leaders will soon have the opportunity to learn more about the challenges faced by individuals with Developmental Disabilities*

**March 22, 2024 (Dallas, TX)** – Dallas county officials will soon begin a first of its kind training in Texas this month. Metrocare, in partnership with the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD), is embarking on a two-year long project, aimed at educating our local leaders on the barriers and biases towards individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

**Texas has the second-largest population of individuals living with disabilities.** In fact, there are over 3.5 million Texans who have at least one disability, and over 1.3 million of those have a cognitive disability. Still, these individuals often attain less education, face higher levels of unemployment, and are unable to access the quality care they need. Right now, there are over 200,000 individuals (or over 160,000 unduplicated) currently sitting on Texas' Interest Lists to receive support services. The next state with the highest number of people with IDD on waiting lists is South Carolina, with 29,867 (*see Map 1 below*).

"Texas has to do better, and that starts with education and awareness," says Carrie Parks, Chief of IDD Provider and Specialized Services at Metrocare. "The political system needs a new lens through which to view individuals in Texas with IDD. Our hope is that by providing clear and accurate insight into the challenges the IDD community is facing, our elected officials are better able to advocate for them."

The newly created "Disability Cultural Humility Trainings" will be held in-person and will incorporate a mix of videos, pre and post assessment testing, and opportunities for discussion. The video trainings are short but content rich and examine the history of diagnosing and treatment, the various state funding streams for service, the importance of inclusive design, and more. The one-hour trainings will take place monthly throughout the year, to be scheduled in coordination with elected officials and their staff's availability. State Representative Venton Jones and his staff will be the first elected official to complete this training.

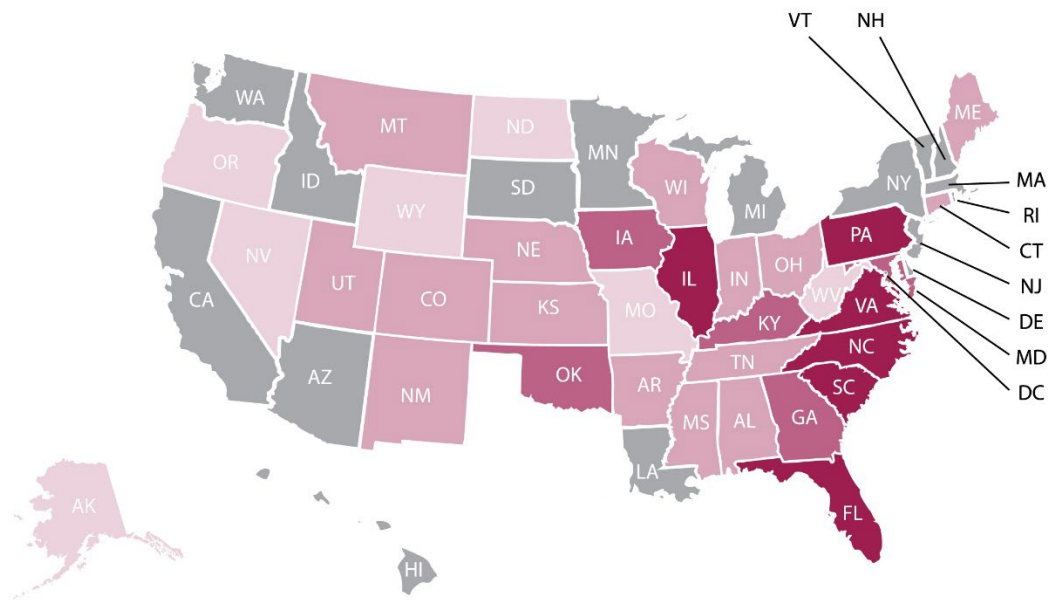
**About Metrocare:** Metrocare is the largest provider of mental health, developmental disability and permanent supported housing services in Dallas County serving over 50,000 children, teens and adults annually. For over 55 years, Metrocare has provided a broad array of services from mental health care,

primary care, services for veterans and their loved ones, accessible pharmacies, homeless outreach, and supportive social services [or “more”]. Metrocare provides specialty mental health services to over 10,000 children and teens and has numerous programs for babies, children and adults with disabilities, including Early Childhood Intervention, Flourishing Families, Nurturing Parenting, Supported Employment and two specialty autism clinics in Dallas and DeSoto. In conjunction with clinical care, Metrocare’s Altshuler Center for Education and Research (ACER) is transforming the community mental health landscape of North Texas through workforce development focused on innovative partnerships and exceptional trauma-informed training.

Metrocare upholds the person-centered philosophy to **focus care on the needs of individual**. We take care to ensure that people’s preferences, needs and values guide clinical decisions and to provide care that is respectful of and responsive to those we serve. We see ourselves as partners in healing with our clients and their support network.

**About Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities:** Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) is one of 56 state councils on developmental disabilities in the U.S. and its territories created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The Council’s mission is to create change so that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives. Learn more at [tcdd.texas.gov](http://tcdd.texas.gov).

**Map 1: Heat Map Showing Number of People with IDD on States' HCBS Waiting Lists**



**KEY**  
Number of people with IDD on states' HCBS waiting lists

- No waiting list
- < 1,000 people waiting
- 1,000-4,999 people waiting
- 5,000-9,000 people waiting
- 10,000 - 30,000 people waiting

Texas is not included on this map because their interest list of over 200,000 people is so large it washes out the rest of the heat map.

Case for Inclusion 2023," ANCOR & United Cerebral Palsy, accessed January 2024, <https://caseforinclusion.org>

