

## Mental Health

Dear Editor:

Every day in this paper we read about an incident in our city or another Texas city where a person experiencing a mental health crisis hurts someone else or hurts himself/herself. In almost every case, the event did not need to happen. If the person could have received proper diagnosis and treatment for their illness, that event might not have occurred.

In 2002, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimated that approximately 18 percent of Texans over the age of 18 suffered from a serious mental illness. According to the Kaiser Foundation, in 2010 Texas ranked 50<sup>th</sup> among states and Washington, D.C. in per capita spending on publicly funded mental health care.

Social workers provide approximately 60 percent of the mental health counseling services in the Texas, and are often the only providers in rural areas. In addition to routine counseling and intervention, the services they provide may include 24-hour crisis hotlines, mobile crisis outreach services, extended psychiatric emergency services, crisis outpatient services, community crisis residential services, and crisis intervention teams.

Social workers are the “Bootstraps of Texas!” By providing mental health treatment to every age group and segment of society, they enable people to live happy and productive lives, making our communities a better place to live for all of us. Please honor their service by compensating them fairly and recognizing their contributions. And help prevent these tragedies from occurring by supporting mental health funding in this community.

Sincerely,