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#### Serving the citizens of:

Armstrong, Carson,  
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Ochiltree, Oldham, Potter,  
Randall, Roberts, Sherman,  
and Wheeler counties



March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This is a time to bring attention to the varied and unique experiences of individuals with developmental disabilities.

The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities and its partners collaborate to lead the annual theme ***We're Here All Year***, emphasizing that community, accessibility and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities should be recognized and championed every day - not just in March.

Part of NACDD's campaign, is seeking photo submissions to show everyday life of individuals with lived disability experiences across the country.

Individuals with lived experience are encouraged to submit one (1) photo of themselves in the community—whether it is getting a coffee, going to work, hanging out with family or friends, etc.—and telling the story behind the photo.

Submissions are being accepted till March 31, 2025 and will be displayed in an online photo gallery later this spring. [Submit photo here.](#)

## START SMALL TO SAVE FOR EMERGENCIES

With higher costs for most basic items, it might be hard to imagine how you can save money for an emergency fund.

About 27% of all U.S. adults have no emergency savings at all, according to a Bankrate 2024 report. About 29% could not cover three months of expenses with their savings.

Financial experts recommend savings that could take care of six months of expenses to cover things like health emergencies, car repairs, or job loss. While six months of savings may seem like a dream, even a small amount of savings can keep you from going into credit card debt at double-digit interest rates; the kind of debt that is very difficult to escape.

So how do you do it if you are starting from scratch? The answer is start small. Make your goal one month of savings, in itself an achievement.

Figure out how much you need for fixed expenses like housing, transportation, food, day-care, utilities, and communications. Next set up a separate bank account for your emergency fund and make automatic transfers to it just as

if you are paying a bill. If you can save enough that you could accumulate one month of expenses in a year, start doing that immediately.

At the same time, work on clearing high interest debt, while still building your emergency fund, according to Anthony Martin, CEO of Choice Mutual writing for Kiplinger. Some advisors think slightly differently. Financial guru Dave Ramsey recommends starting first with a \$1,000 emergency fund before aggressively starting to pay off debt.

When you successfully save one-month of expenses, start aiming at three months of expenses. When you achieve this, you will be protected from unexpected expensive bills or even unemployment. Pay attention to cutting your spending on things like eating out so you can save your money.



## FUN FACTS ABOUT THE MONTH OF MARCH

- March was once considered the first month of the year.
- March symbolizes transformation and new growth.
- March has two birth flowers: the daffodils and jonquils. Note: All jonquils are daffodils but not all daffodils are jonquils!
- March has two birthstones. The Aquamarine and the Bloodstone.
- March is the most popular month for vasectomies. There's a 50% increase during the first week of the month.
- March was named after Mars.
- March 20th the sun shines on the equator for the vernal equinox, giving us a near 50/50 split of day and night.



# ***It's Walk Across Texas time at TPC!***

***Mark your calendars for Friday, April 11, 2025!***

***Begin forming your teams now!***



## What is Walk Across Texas?

Walk Across Texas is a voluntary program to help employees start moving more and establish physical activity as a lifetime habit. Participating in Walk Across Texas with other employees is a great way to help stay motivated. It is not only walking but doing any physical activity of your choice (gardening, cycling, aerobics, dancing, golfing, etc.).

Walk Across Texas is an employee team event. If you wish to participate, please get with your co-workers, and discuss who will be on teams. Each team will need to designate a team captain and each team should have 8 people.

Some things to consider as a team captain for Walk Across Texas...

- Can I commit to 8 weeks?
- As team captain, you agree to be the team coordinator, invite each member to the WAT website by the deadline.
- Act as a motivator for your team.
- Keep team updated on any upcoming dates.

Watch for an email in the coming weeks that will include registration information and additional instructions. In the meantime, form your teams, pick a team name, designate a captain, and order team shirts (optional).

Please do not attempt to register until you receive further instructions as a new league code is required.



**Laurie Benedetti, Accounting/Payroll Department**, answered last month's questions correctly and was randomly selected to win a \$25 gift card.

To claim your card, contact Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen at 806.351.3308 or email: [joyce.lopez@txpan.org](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org).

## PANHANDLE DAYS

Three TPC staff traveled to Austin as part of the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Panhandle Days in February. This event occurs every two years to coincide with the Texas Legislative Session. Some of the legislative priorities included: Agriculture, Economic Development, Film, Healthcare, Tourism and Transportation.

Elvire Sanders-Blakemore, Developmental Health Director, along with Megan Rodriguez, Program Administrator, IDD, and Cathy Liekhus, Case Manager, IDD, participated in the healthcare group visiting with our local legislative delegation.

Pressing healthcare topics included funding for mental health capacity needs, mobile crisis out reach teams, crisis facilities, children's behavioral health strategic plan priorities, increased rates for direct support professionals (wages), IDD service coordination, and reducing the Medicaid Waiver Interest Lists, are just a few of the call to action priorities that the legislature is being asked to consider.



## Welcome these New Employees...

|                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Jordan Battle           | Alternate Living Admin        |
| Jodi Ladd               | MCOT                          |
| Janette Morales         | Alternate Living Admin        |
| Emily Spice             | IDD Service Coordination      |
| Livie Hughes            | IDD Service Coordination      |
| Michelle Penton         | MH Service Coordination Adult |
| Benjamin Ramos          | HB133 Amarillo BH Adult       |
| Daniela Macias          | ECI                           |
| Ricky Grabich           | Maintenance                   |
| Lisa Silvestre          | Continuity of Care BH         |
| Tuyisenge "Levis" Levis | Alternate Living              |



# SAVE THE DATE

## Panhandle State Hospital Groundbreaking Ceremony

**Tuesday,  
June 10, 2025**  
10 a.m.

New 75-bed inpatient  
psychiatric hospital.



TEXAS  
Health and Human  
Services

Health and Specialty  
Care System

**Formal invitation to follow**

Articles or suggestions for this publication may be submitted by the 1st of each month to:

Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen • 901 Wallace Blvd., • Amarillo, Texas 79106  
Phone: (806) 351-3308 Fax: (806) 351-3345 Email: [joyce.lopez@txpan.org](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org)

# COMPLIANCE CORNER

Welcome back to Compliance Corner. Each month we will address a question that was received internally for the purpose of education. (All personal identifying information has been removed to protect the identity of the employee and/or client).

## IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING...

Employees are the “eyes and ears” of the organization to detect any violation of our Compliance Program. You are required to immediately report anything that you encounter at TPC that you believe may be unethical, illegal, or fraudulent to:

- Your supervisor or
- Brittany Cotgreave, Coordinator of Compliance and Planning  
Phone: 806.349.5647  
Email: [brittany.cotgreave@txpan.org](mailto:brittany.cotgreave@txpan.org)  
or
- Vania Beavers, Director of Quality Management, Compliance Privacy Officer  
Phone: 806.351.3400  
Email: [vania.beavers@txpan.org](mailto:vania.beavers@txpan.org)

### IDD and Behavioral Health Services

#### **Can we correspond with clients via email or text? No**

Only face to face contact or over the phone contact is encouraged. Corresponding with clients via email or text can become a slippery slope due to the lack of encryption on the receiving end of that correspondence, along with trying to determine if you are providing a service with such correspondence, or the ability to document such correspondence. We understand that there may be exceptions from time to time, however, any contact with clients via email or text is strongly discouraged. If absolutely necessary please keep email/text short and brief i.e. “Hello John, This is Brittany from TPC please give me a call when you get a chance.”

\*Please keep in mind that all client information is confidential, and we are all responsible for being good stewards of our client’s protected health information.



*May good luck be with you wherever you go and blessings  
outnumber the shamrocks that grow!*

*Happy St. Patrick's Day!*



## A NIGHT TO SHINE

Elvire Sanders-Blakemore, Developmental Health Director



Several people from TPC were dressed in their best and had a great time participating in the "A Night to Shine" celebration. A Night to Shine is a prom-like event for people with special needs that's hosted by churches and different organizations around the world. The event is free and takes place on the Friday before Valentine's Day. Attendees are paired with a buddy; take prom portraits; can walk the red carpet; have dinner; dance and play games; participate in other activities; and are crowned king and queen of the prom. Also included are gifts, and hair and makeup stations.



A Night to Shine was started by Tim Tebow, the ex-football player, to help break down barriers and to cultivate a welcoming environment for people with special needs. It also gives people with special needs, their parents, and caregivers, a night to relax and enjoy themselves.

Our local Night to Shine took place in two places this year, the Amarillo Civic Center, and in Pampa with its first celebration.



## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



<https://minesandassociates.com>

### Office Hours

Monday – Friday: 6:30 am – 5:00 pm MT

**Need help now? Please call:**  
**(800) 873-7138**

Counseling, service intake, and crisis  
support are available 24/7

### Answer's to last months questions:

**1) 240 2) Jail Based Competency Restoration 3) Burnout**

Answer the questions correctly and your name will be entered in a random drawing to be eligible to win a \$25 gift card.



1. Walk Across Texas is scheduled to begin on \_\_\_\_\_.
2. LAR stands for \_\_\_\_\_.
3. About \_\_\_\_\_ of all U.S. adults have no emergency \_\_\_\_\_ at all.

Submit your answers to [joyce.lopez@txpan.org](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org). Deadline for responses is the 5th of the following month. You must type "Monthly Drawing" in the email subject line to be eligible. For those that do not have a computer, entries may be submitted via interoffice mail. The same requirements apply for hard copy submissions and remember to include your name.

**SAVE THE DATE! MAY 9, 2025**

A poster for the 5th Annual Mental Health Awareness Event. The background is a gradient of blue. On the right, there is a large silhouette of a human head in profile, facing left. Inside the head, there is a dark blue night sky with white stars and a green plant with leaves growing out of the top. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'Texas Panhandle CENTERS' with a small map of Texas and the text 'Behavioral & Developmental Health'. Below the logo, it says '5TH ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH Awareness Event'. The word 'Awareness' is in a cursive font, and 'Event' is in a larger cursive font. Below the event name, it says 'May 9, 2025' followed by a green ribbon icon and '11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.'. Below that, it says 'Live Music: (TBD)'. Further down, it lists 'FOOD TRUCKS, RESOURCE BOOTHS, T-SHIRT SALES, GIVEAWAYS, AND MORE!'. In the bottom right corner, there is a white rounded rectangle containing the address '6600 Killgore Drive Amarillo, TX'. There are also some musical notes and a treble clef on the left side of the poster.

**Texas Panhandle**  
**CENTERS**  
Behavioral & Developmental Health

*You're Invited!*

5TH ANNUAL  
**MENTAL HEALTH**  
*Awareness Event*

May 9, 2025  11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Live Music: (TBD)**

FOOD TRUCKS, RESOURCE  
BOOTHS, T-SHIRT SALES,  
GIVEAWAYS, AND MORE!

6600 Killgore Drive  
Amarillo, TX

*March 20th*  
*First Day of Spring*



## POINTS TO PONDER - What is a LAR?

Vania Beavers, Director of Quality Management

LAR stands for Legally Authorized Representative, also known as a guardian. If a person receiving services through TPC (*from any program*) has a guardian, that means that the person receiving services *cannot* legally consent to care or sign any legal paperwork without the guardian also signing. This pertains to any services an individual may need, including (but not limited to), medical services, financial services, and legal services. Current guardianship paperwork should be kept on file in Papervision.



All of the people that we serve have basic human rights, but if the person has a guardian, the guardian *must* be the one to sign any and all legal paperwork.

To report abuse for a person receiving services in our IDD residential homes or behavioral health services, please call the Department of Family Protective Services at 1-800-647-7418 immediately or within one hour of witnessing the event. If reporting for a person receiving services in the behavioral health department, also email a written report including the DFPS report number to [performance.contracts@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:performance.contracts@dshs.state.tx.us). Please cc [vania.beavers@txpan.org](mailto:vania.beavers@txpan.org) on the email.

To report abuse of an individual that participates in the ISS (day hab) programs, please call HHSC complaint line at 1-800-458-9858 immediately or within one hour.



"We're looking for someone who checks all the boxes, not someone who sits in them."



"The person behind you is taking the same medication. Maybe he'd be better at describing the side effects."

## A Traditional March Event

NCAA Men's Basketball tournament is becoming one of the best-known rites of spring. The 86th annual NCAA Basketball Championship begins March 16, at the University of Dayton's UD Arena in Ohio.

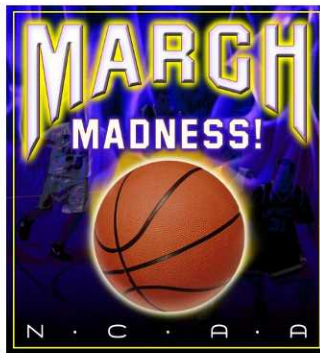
The tournament takes place over three weeks at sites across the United States. The national semifinals, the Final Four, have become one of the nation's most prominent sporting events.

It is a single-elimination tournament featuring 68 college basketball teams. The tournament bracket is made up of conference tournament champions from each conference, which receive automatic bids. The remaining slots are at-large berths. Teams are chosen by an NCAA selection committee. The selection process and tournament seedings are based on several factors, including team ranking, win-loss

records, and other data.

Since first held in 1939, the tournament has built a legacy that includes dynasty teams and dramatic underdog stories.

Beginning with rounds one and two, all games are featured on national television.



In recent years, friendly wagering on the event has become something of a national pastime, including countless workplace pools that attract expert fans and novices alike.

The term "March Madness" was coined by Henry V. Porter of the Illinois High School Association in 1939. Most historians agree that the name was popularized by Brent Musburger, a CBS sportscaster who worked in Chicago for many years.

**Income Tax Deadline • APRIL 15**

## WHITE HAT AWARD

The IDD Service Coordination Department would like to present this month's White Hat Award to **Susan McQuaig, IDD Nursing Department**. Her position is very demanding with scheduling and rescheduling appointments, filling out paperwork and making sure every team member has the information they need for each appointment.



Raul Aguilar on behalf of IDD Service Coordination Department