Austin

MEMORANDUM

To:	Mayor and City Council
Through:	Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager
From:	Carrie Rogers, Director, Austin Government Relations
Date:	October 22, 2026
Subject:	**Austin Government Relations Update – No Wrong Door Legislative Initiatives**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on legislation relating to the No Wrong Door program.

Background

In Summer 2024, the City of Austin, alongside other large cities across Texas, and homelessness service providers, met in Austin at the request of Senator Tan Parker, to discuss possible legislative solutions for individuals living at the intersection of mental health, homelessness, and public safety. A second meeting was held in December 2024 in Austin, which was followed by the filing of SB 2487, SB 2488, and SB 2489 during the 89th Texas Legislature. SB 2487 would have established crisis care centers at the county level. SB 2488 would have established data sharing coordination across statewide homeless service providers. The City opposed SB 2489, which would have penalized local governments relating to homeless services. Also, during the 2025 legislative session, Austin delegation leader Representative Donna Howard filed HB 1656, which would have extended warrantless emergency detention authority to emergency medical personnel. The City supported this bill. Senator Parker and Representative Howard are anticipated to pursue similar legislation in 2027.

While none of these bills achieved a successful conclusion by session's end, several bills intended to alter or end homelessness services also did not pass. The efforts on these and other bills underscored a growing focus on homelessness services in the legislature, specifically the significant gap in appropriate care settings for those experiencing mental and behavioral health crises who may also be homeless and interacting with the criminal justice system – and more acutely, those here in Austin-Travis County.

89th Texas Legislature Interim

Monthly legislative updates are provided by Austin Government Relations (AGR) to the Mayor and City Council. In November 2025, City staff outlined via memorandum a schedule for development of the City's 2027 legislative program and a call of potential priorities. In March 2026, City staff began meeting with City Councilmembers to receive priorities for the 2027 legislative program, which

included preliminary discussion of No Wrong Door and the goal to establish initial connectivity across the various services. AGR's role has been to identify potential legislative remedies to support more integrated solutions, if needed. Legislative communications to City councilmembers, including planning efforts on mental health, homelessness and public safety were distributed on March 27, April 11, May 24, May 26, May 29, June 23, and June 30, 2026. On May 26, 2026, staff briefed the City Council on the draft legislative program. The City Council adopted the City's 2027 legislative program on July 23, 2026. Subsequent communications with legislative updates on No Wrong Door followed on August 3, October 1, and October 2, 2026, with a briefing to City Council on October 6, 2026 and the Public Health Committee on October 7, 2026.

In March 2026, the Senate and House both released interim charges, including charges to study the intersection of mental health, homelessness and public safety. Hearings were held in June and July 2026. Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis and Homeless Strategies and Operations Director David Gray both testified. Witness testimony from communities large and small across the state echoed similar challenges. Additionally, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is undergoing Sunset review, providing an additional platform to address these issues.

Throughout the legislative interim, City staff has met with numerous stakeholders, first and most often, Integral Care, to better understand the mental health continuum. In these conversations, two issues among many have been repeatedly identified by local community stakeholders: (1) the lack of coordination between partners and programs and (2) the lack of sufficient resources, including intermediate, step-down and crisis care beds. As part of Central Health's FY27 budget adoption in September 2026, the discussion around development of a mental health crisis care center has strengthened the commitment across partners to serve this population together.

Countless meetings and discussions have taken place, primarily though not exclusively, among multiple city departments, Travis County, Integral Care and Central Health, to advise and identify potential legislative remedies that could support the partners and the work of No Wrong Door, if needed. Those discussions continue today and will continue throughout the legislative session.

Effective Legislative Strategy

While it is operationally essential for the No Wrong Door program to be collaborative, it is equally fundamental to any successful legislative efforts. The City has led facilitation of shared local legislative priorities with partners, where aligned, to advocate for legislative considerations, administrative changes, and dedicated funding to provide the consistent and meaningful coordinated care needed to better stabilize and maintain any progress for people repeatedly in crisis. This capacity is not currently available in our community. State and federal partnerships are needed to effectively support our highest and most complex system utilizers. AGR staff and partners have met with members of the Austin state delegation to understand the priorities of the members and the palatability of these issues in the upcoming legislative session.

The following are legislative proposals City staff plan to share with our partners in the Legislature for submission to the Texas Legislative Council for preparation of draft legislation. AGR will continue to work with our community partners and our legislative partners as the process moves forward.

- BILL: Hospital Mental Health Exclusionary Criteria / Admissions Data (Integral Care)
- BILL + RIDER + REFILE of SB 719: Psychiatric Beds Availability (City)
- BILL: Coordinated Discharge / Warm Handoff (City)

- REFILE of SB 2488: Homelessness Data Sharing (All)
- RIDER + REFILE of HB 154: Fund Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) / Increase Psychiatric Per-Diem (Integral Care)
- RIDER: Funding for Central Texas Mental Health Crisis Center and Intermediate/ Stepdown Beds. (All)
- RIDER: Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) Exclusion Waiver (Integral Care)

It is important to emphasize that while the City or any entity may request legislation be considered, a bill is filed by a member of the Texas Legislature, and it is the bill of that legislator. It is not "the City's bill" to unilaterally determine its path and content moving forward. City staff make every effort to support a bill author in all ways, including meeting with and addressing stakeholder input with varying perspectives.

There are other legislative priorities that will be deemed of greater importance to members and legislative leadership, including priorities that will directly conflict with the City's legislative goals. Any effort by the City will be competing with those priorities. Finally, the City staff will also be working to address real or perceived issues that may arise from other City work underway.

Next Steps

Legislative updates will be provided in advance of and throughout the legislative session. Should you have any questions, please contact me at carrie.rogers@austintexas.gov.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
Jason Hadavi, City Auditor
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court
CMO Executive Team
Department Directors
Austin Government Relations