

**Presented:**

9<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CHANGES AND TRENDS AFFECTING  
SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS

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## **What Happened to MHMR?**

**Presented by:**

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## **Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers, Inc. Announces Name Change**

Austin, TX – After many years of advocacy efforts and unanimous approval by Congress, President Obama signed Rosa's Law (S.2781) into effect on October 5, 2010. Inspired by Rosa Marcellino, a child with Down syndrome, and her family's refusal to accept the use of a stigmatizing label that did not reflect her value and accomplishments, Rosa's law directs the elimination of the term "mental retardation" and replaces it with the term "intellectual disabilities" in federal health, education and labor statutes.

In support of Rosa's Law and out of respect for people with intellectual disabilities, the Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers, Inc. has changed its name to the Texas Council of Community Centers.

The name change follows a decision by the Texas Council Board of Directors to replace use of the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disabilities" from all official Texas Council documents and publications.

Although not passed into law, State Senator Zaffirini filed a "Respectful Language" Bill (SB 1395) during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session. By pre-filing SB 26, Senator Zaffirini again signals intent to make respectful language for people with intellectual disabilities a priority for Texas when the legislature convenes in January 2011.

"Our name change is a simple, yet powerful statement of respect and regard for people with intellectual disabilities who want what every good citizen wants: family, friends, a meaningful job and the opportunity to give back to a caring community," said Danette Castle, Texas Council CEO.

***As an association the Texas Council of Community Centers supports the thirty-nine (39) Community Centers in their public mission, across all 254 counties, to serve as an effective system of care for Texans with mental illness, intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders.***

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## What is a Community Center?

Texas Community Centers are units of local government. Each Center is governed by a Board of Trustees – public officials appointed by and accountable to the Center's sponsoring entity (or entities). Sponsoring entities include county commissioners and may also include cities, hospital districts, and/or school districts.

In accordance with state statutes, Centers strive to develop services for persons who have a serious and persistent mental illness or have intellectual and developmental disabilities, and may provide substance addiction services.

With this state charge, and in accordance with state law and its trustees' decisions, Centers may:

- **Provide** services
- **Expand** resources for their service areas
- **Manage** resources for state and local government
- **Include** the community in service assessment, planning, and evaluation
- **Provide** leadership to the coordination of local mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance addiction resources
- **Strive** for "best value" in the expenditure of its public funds

In addition, Community Centers are subject to the same "open government" requirements as state government.

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For more information about the Community Centers of Texas, please contact Lee Johnson at [ljohnson@txcouncil.com](mailto:ljohnson@txcouncil.com)

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[Training Trustees on Working with the Disability Advocacy Community\(ies\); plus  
The Role of the Texas Council of Community Centers](#)

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