

*Note: The following talking points are meant to provide general guidance regarding suggested messaging for the DSHS teleconference. We encourage members to tailor their testimony to their own work and experience where possible.*

**Talking points for participants in DSHS teleconference regarding exceptional item requests:**

1. Introduce yourself, and briefly describe the services provided by your organization (i.e., prevention, treatment, residential).
2. The membership of ASAP strongly supported DSHS' exceptional item from last legislative session that would have increased funding for substance abuse treatment and prevention services. We sincerely appreciate DSHS making substance abuse funding a priority during that session.
3. We understand that the state faces a difficult budget situation, and that funds will be extremely limited across the board.
4. We would respectfully urge DSHS and budget writers to keep the following in mind as it makes budget decisions and sets priorities heading into the next session. (Note: pick one or two of the following topics to include, and use personal experience during explanation.)
  - a. Current funding for substance abuse treatment and prevention services does not meet the demand for those services. (If possible, cite personal experiences regarding unmet need and/or lack of providers in your region.)
  - b. Studies have shown that expenditures for substance abuse prevention and treatment services are offset by savings in other areas.
  - c. The legislature began to acknowledge this fact in 2007 when instead of spending scarce resources to build additional prisons, it instead made treatment services available for certain individuals in the criminal justice system.
  - d. In 2009, the legislature included an adult substance abuse treatment benefit for Medicaid enrollees based upon a finding by the Legislative Budget Board that the anticipated expenditures would be more than offset by reduced medical care expenditures. This conclusion was based actual results already observed here in Texas.
  - e. Numerous studies have also concluded that targeted, evidence-based prevention programs provide significant return on investment for the state by improving education performance, reducing utilization of our criminal justice system, and reducing health care expenditures due to reduced drug and alcohol abuse.
5. We appreciate DSHS' support for substance abuse programs in this state. We understand the budget situation facing policymakers, and simply request the this agency keep these points in mind during the budget process.