

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health
and Substance Abuse Services

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Governor Fallin Calls for Increased Access to Substance Abuse Treatment, Other Health Care Services, as a Priority for the State

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin today called for increased access to substance abuse treatment and other health care services as a priority issue to be addressed during this year's legislative session. Her remarks were included as part of the Governor's inaugural State of the State address before a joint session of the state's legislative bodies. The address kicks-off Oklahoma's FY 2012 legislative session.

While the Governor acknowledged that the state faces a difficult budget challenge, calling for state agencies to be creative in the search for cost efficiencies and better ways to serve Oklahomans, she emphasized the need to fund core services that impact the future growth of our state and address taxpayer needs. She specifically spoke to the need of supporting programs that address substance abuse, reduce incarceration and allow families to stay together.

"We can be tough on crime and also smart on crime," said Governor Fallin.

In addition to her remarks as part of the State of State address, the Governor's office released its 2012 Executive Budget. Of the five key funding issues outlined in the document, three are specific to the state's behavioral health care system. These include funding to treat substance abuse and reduce female incarceration rates, expand the mental health emergency responders program and meet the matching requirements of Oklahoma's Systems of Care program.

Terri White, commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), commended the Governor for her strong stance in support of Oklahomans negatively affected by substance abuse and other behavioral health issues.

“The Governor absolutely realizes the far-reaching effects of untreated mental and addictive disorders,” said White. “I am encouraged by her support for these programs, particularly in regard to components of the department’s Smart on Crime initiative, and look forward to continued dialogue with her and other elected leaders throughout the legislative session.”

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