

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S  
SURVEY QUESTIONS**

- (1) From your agency's point of view, what regulations can be reduced to improve communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region?

*N/A*

- (2) What are the main trade issues between the United States and Mexico that you have identified as having an impact (both positive and negative) on your agency or your area of work?

*N/A*

- (3) Having studied the flow of commerce at ports of entry between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial vehicles across the border, what actions would you establish to aid that commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles?

*N/A*

- (4) How do you work with federal officials to resolve transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people across the border between Texas and Mexico?

*N/A*

- (5) How does your agency work with federal officials to create a unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs?

*N/A*

- (6) Has your agency identified problems involved with border truck inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure? What are those? What solutions/recommendations does your agency propose?

*N/A*

- (7) How do you work to increase funding for the North American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater facilities?

*N/A*

- (8) Has your agency explored the sale of excess electric power from Texas to Mexico? What are your findings?

*N/A*

- (9) Has your agency identified any areas of environmental protection that need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican states? If so, which are those areas and what type of protective measures need to be taken?

*N/A*

- (10) Has your agency identified common challenges to health care on which all border states can collaborate? If so, what are those challenges and how can all border states collaborate to overcome them?

HHSC has identified the following health challenges along the border: diabetes; immunizations; HIV/AIDS; tuberculosis; and infectious diseases. Border states should continue with the current strategies of collaboration through the Binational Health Councils, the Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance Project, and participation in annual Border Health Week activities.

- (11) Has your agency developed any recommendations to address border challenges in general? If so, what are them?

HHSC supports interagency planning and coordination including stakeholder input to address border health and human services needs and resources.

- (12) What programs and services does your agency offer to border communities?

All services provided by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) including Medicaid, CHIP, TANF, and food stamps.

- (13) What are some regulatory and/or legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine programs and services?

Support the Office of the Secretary of State to take an inventory of all state agency border programs and services as well as resources.

- (14) Please share any considerations from your agency regarding the effect of policies instituted by the federal government impacting the border region.

*N/A*

(15) Please give a brief summary of all your agency's activities related to the Border and/or Mexico.

The HHSC Office of Border Affairs has been involved with the planning and coordination of health and human services along the border for the past seven years. Staff located in El Paso, Del Rio/Eagle Pass, Laredo, and the Rio Grande Valley facilitate access of services in border communities with an emphasis on colonias. Through the HHSC Colonias Initiative, all HHS agencies in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, and Texas A&M Colonias program provide outreach services to colonia residents in order to improve their quality of life. The goal is to improve access of health and human services as well as employment and education programs. The following is a list of recent border activities that HHSC has participated in or taken the lead in facilitating:

- Facilitation of local interagency planning work groups that plan and implement local service delivery in area colonias and nearby communities.
- Coordination of local community and health fairs that provide information regarding local programs, as well as screening for a variety of health conditions.
- Coordination of dental services with local dental providers including the mobilization of Mobile Dental Units.
- Utilize promotoras!community health workers contracted between HHSC and Texas A&M to promote HHS and partner agency services as well as Medicaid and CHIP.
- Partner with FDA to provide Spanish language materials and brochures regarding food safety to border communities through dissemination by promotoras!community health workers.
- Participated in Operation Lonestar, a partnership with the military reserves and other health and human service partners that provided free health and dental services in the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo.
- Coordinate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Aging and Disability Services, and the HHSC Office of Eligibility Services to plan and implement an outreach pilot program to increase the number of applicants for food stamps in the Rio Grande Valley.
- Developing a new service data tracking system to collect data regarding HHS agency services in colonias.
- Piloting the use of wireless laptop computers for agency staff to take on site applications for services
- Participate in binational health councils, including partners from both sides of the border.