

Here is an opportunity to learn more about why Texas' 1115 Waiver, part of an innovative Medicaid transformation program, is so important to people in Texas. New Healthy Texas is honored to share case stories from our colleagues and partners throughout the health care spectrum, in this instance Memorial Hermann.

## Touched By Memorial Hermann team, patient now has hope

For years, Connie Brand, 60, struggled with Major Depressive Disorder. When she presented at Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital in the spring of 2014, she had fallen into such a deep funk that pulling herself up again was not a possibility. She had no job, no insurance, no resources, and no hope.

Coupled with her depression, she was overweight and suffered with other chronic medical problems, including diabetes. She was a frequent patient at Memorial Hermann with two lengthy hospitalizations at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center and Southwest. When told she was going to lose her right leg due to an infection, she thought about ending it all, but didn't have the courage.

When all glimmers of hope nearly faded for Brand, in stepped her "angels" – in the form of Memorial Hermann's Psych Response Case Manager Kimberly Gilmore and Home Health Psych Services Registered Nurse Jessica Johnson.

"When I first came home and thought about how difficult it was going to be without a leg to just use the toilet, I thought rather than deal with that, I would rather die," Brand said. "I was mad. I was furious. But Memorial Hermann physical therapy team helped me. I vented at the nurse (Johnson), but she allowed me to vent because I needed to be angry. But God bless her, she just kept coming back. She and Kimberly were godsend. They were my angels."

Both the Psych Response Team – Case Management and Home Health Psych Services are funded through Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment, or DSRIP, stemming from the Texas Healthcare Transformation and Quality Improvement Program 1115-Waiver.

The Psych Response Team manages behavioral health patients by connecting them with services that help them adjust post-discharge to reduce repeated ER visits. Conversely, Home Health Psych Services provides support to patients with mental health issues, to better manage their psychiatric care in the home and community environment rather than the emergency room.

Working in partnership, Gilmore and Johnson literally got Brand back on her feet – both mentally and physically. Now, she is looking to get a job, attending an amputee support group and waiting to be fitted with a prosthetic leg. In addition, she has also:

- Obtained a Gold Card, now receiving Harris Health Outpatient Services – Primary Care Physician, Psychiatrist, Vision Care, PT/OT
- SNAP benefits
- Red Cross transportation
- Metro Lift Transportation
- Cardon services to obtain Social Security Disability

“I would never have gotten through this without the nurse,” said Brand, adding that she is now determined to find a job as an accountant. “Kimberly just touched something inside of me. I don’t know how to describe it. I trusted her maybe even more than I trusted my own family. Even though I pulled away from all my friends, Kimberly was not going to go away. Now, I have been lifted up because of my family and Memorial Hermann. I can’t believe that you guys are still holding my hand. I’m amazed.”