

# TROPICAL

## TEXAS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

P.O. Drawer 1108 • 1901 South 24th Avenue  
Edinburg, Texas 78540  
(956) 289-7000

*"2 new officers"*

January 28, 2014

Martin Cantu  
Constable Precinct 2  
Hidalgo County  
300 W. Hall Acres  
Pharr, Texas 78577

Dear Constable Cantu,

Tropical Texas Behavioral Health is the designated Local Mental Health Authority for Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties. Tropical Texas is contracted by the Texas Department of State Health Services to provide mental health services in these counties. Tropical Texas is in the process of developing and coordinating a team of specially trained Commissioned Mental Health Officers who will be responsible for carrying out law enforcement duties related to mental health.

The main goal of this project is to divert mentally ill persons who commit some minor offenses from arrest and entry into the criminal justice system to evaluation and treatment for their mental disorders. We feel that this would facilitate services to the mental health client and it would also save money in incarceration costs, law enforcement man-hours, and the cost of prosecuting these cases.

As you are probably aware, Officers who become involved with subjects in mental crisis must usually spend several hours obtaining evaluation, medical clearances and hospitalization for these patients. One of the benefits of the formation of a team of MH Officers to local law enforcement would be a significant reduction of the man-hours required to handle and process persons suffering mental crisis as these duties would be handled by this specialized team.

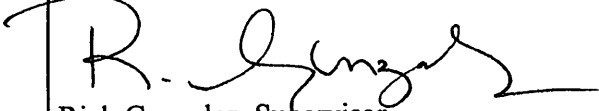
This project is being funded under the Texas Healthcare Transformation and Quality Improvement Program. In this project local law enforcement agencies would agree to assign an officer(s) to the Mental Health Officer Team coordinated by Tropical. Tropical will then reimburse the LEA for the total salary and fringe benefit costs of the officer.

I have been employed to develop and supervise the MH Officer Team. I have a background in law enforcement, having recently retired as a DPS Major of Criminal Investigations after 31 years of service.

Constable Cantu, I would like to meet with you and the other Hidalgo County Constables to discuss this project in detail and answer any questions you might have. Your Chief Deputies are also welcome to attend. I will keep the meeting brief and there will be no obligation. If you are agreeable, I can try to arrange a group meeting for all the Constables here at Tropical. If you can let me know by telephone or email when you would be available I can work to arrange a meeting.

I can be reached at email [agonzalez@ttbh.org](mailto:agonzalez@ttbh.org) . My office number is 956-289-7297 and my cell number is 956-231-3134.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Gonzalez", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Gonzalez, Supervisor  
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health  
Mental Health Officer Team