

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee (CYBHS)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 12, 2022
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
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Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Donna Fagan (CYBHS co-chair). Ms. Fagan provided a welcome to the members and invited all attendees to place their names and email addresses in the chat box for attendance tracking purposes. She also asked attendees to indicate in the chat box if they desired to offer public comment during that section of the agenda. Table 1 shows attendance for the meeting.

Table 1: The CYBHS Subcommittee member attendance.

MEMBER NAME	YES	NO	MEMBER NAME	YES	NO
Behavioral Health Advisory Council			Advocacy Organizations		
Donna Fagan (also family)	X		<i>NAMI Texas</i>		
Shannon Hoffman		X	Greg Hansch	X	
Jordan Smelley		X	Alternate: Matthew Lovitt	X	
Community Provider Representatives			<i>Texans Care for Children</i>		
<i>Heart of Texas Center</i>			Joseette Saxton	X	
Ron Kimbell		X	Alternate: Stephanie Ruben		X
Alternate: Telawna Kirbie		X	Suicide Prevention		
			Lisa Sullivan		X
Melissa Zemencsik	X		TCOOMMI		
Alternate: Shannon Miller		X	Emily Eisenmann	X	
Family Representatives			Alternate: Bettina Grant		X
Barbara Granger			Dept. of Family and Protective Services		
Valencia Gensollen	X		Gabrielle Rogers	X	
Alternate: Verlyn Johnson	X		Alternate: Che'Vun Lane		X
Health and Human Services Commission			Dept. of State Health Services		
<i>Behavioral Health Services</i> Liz Pearson	X		Julie DiGirolamo	X	
Alternate: Veronica Martinez	X		Alternate: TBD		
<i>Behavioral Health Services</i> Suzanne Alley	X		Texas Education Agency		
<i>Medicaid</i> John Huffine		X	Julie Wayman	X	

MEMBER NAME	YES	NO	MEMBER NAME	YES	NO
Office of Mental Health Coordination Lillian Nguyen	X		Alternate: Denise Magallanez		X
Office of Mental Health Coordination Kisha Ledlow	X		Texas Juvenile Justice Department		
Higher Education			Susan Palacios	X	
UT-TIEMH Molly Lopez	X		Alternate: Marie Welsch		X
			Youth/Young Adult		
			Callie Dupree	X	
			Calista Hughes		X

Yes: Indicates attended the meeting

No: Indicates did not attend the meeting

Also in Attendance: Ari Acosta, Alice Alvarez, Arnoldo Amador, M. Balaram, Letisia Balderas MacDonald, Kristin Beach, Ernest Buck, Christine Bryan, Sydney Carter, Molly Davis, Glenn Dembowski, Debi Dickensheets, Sandra Eastling, Sonja Eddelman, Emily Eisenman, Lacey Evans, Adriana Flores, Cody Frontz, Bettina Grant, Kim Gutierrez, Moriah Hernandez, Michael Jenkins, Verlyn Johnson, Danielle Kailing, Shaffer Lapham, Kisha Ledlow, Tracy Levins, Zatara Lumen, Lisa Mckenna, Shea Meadows, Victor Mendoza, Ashton Millet, Cory Morris, Stella Olise, Leela Rice, Brianna Rodriguez, Molly Sanders, Mark Shaffer, Donna Shaver, Ysabelle Sosong, Robin Smith, Luanne Southern, Sara Strader, Julie Strentzsch, Rohanna Sykes, Melissa Tijerina, Shanna Tipton, Sarah Turner, Christine Vo, Tiffanie Williams-Brooks

Agenda Item 2: Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee Business

Donna Fagan confirmed that a quorum of members was present. Minutes from the October 13, 2021 meeting were sent to members before the meeting for their review. Liz Pearson (HHSC) offered two clarifications to the minutes: (1) Ms. Pearson should be listed as the primary and Veronica Martinez as the alternate and (2) Ms. Martinez' title should reflect that she is the director of child and adult mental health services. Molly Lopez, from the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, moved to approve the minutes with the suggested changes; Suzanne Alley, from Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), seconded. The minutes were approved with the recommended changes.

Agenda Item 3: Project Updates

Kisha Ledlow (HHSC, TxSOC Project Director) updated CYBHS members on TxSOC activities, noting TxSOC received a no-cost extension in order to further help local communities with their System of Care sustainability efforts. Site visits to the four SOC sites are scheduled for this month and in the spring.

Additionally, Ms. Ledlow reported that HHSC applied for and was awarded a new SOC grant through the US Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). HHSC completed a needs assessment in January 2021 to identify the Local Mental Health Authorities to lead three new communities in their systems of care work.

To advance the work of this grant, the HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination (OMHC) will be hiring a youth engagement specialist and a family engagement specialist to advance efforts to build family and youth voices in all aspects of the new grant.

Christine Vo (TIEMH) was introduced to give an update on the 2022 Creative Arts Contest. Last year there were about 700 entries, with hopes of 1000 for this year. The website for the Arts Contest can be found at <https://gallery.txsystemofcare.org/>.

Brianna Rodriguez (TIEMH) updated CYBHS members on the 2022 Children's Mental Health Acceptance Day. The 2022 theme is "Be a Mental Health Hero." Planning committees and subcommittees are actively working towards a May 2, 2022 launch. Planning team members are developing a toolkit to assist communities in designing and launching their own Children's Mental Health Acceptance activities. Additionally, subcommittees are identifying potential speakers and designing engagement activities. More information is available at <https://cmhaustin.weebly.com/>.

Valencia Gensollen (Texas Family Voice Network, (TxFVN)) updated CYBHS members on recent activities of the Texas Family Voice Network. Dates for the quarterly meetings of the TxFVN have been established, with the first meeting scheduled for January 27, 2022. The link to this virtual meeting will be available on their website at <https://txfvn.org/meetings/>. Members are continuing to make progress on establishing TxFVN as a 501C3 non-profit organization and are excited to move forward working with families around Texas.

Dorothy Garza of HHSC's Children's Mental Health (CMH) announced that Apryl Rosas resigned and CMH is working on filling the position. If individuals have questions about the Residential Treatment Center (RTC) project, they are urged to email the HHSC RTC mailbox at RTCProject@hhs.texas.gov. Ms. Garza noted that the program evaluations of the RTC project have been completed and are under review with leadership. She concluded by telling CYBHS members that CMH is also looking to identify ways to capitalize on TANF funding for families.

Agenda Item 4: Behavioral Health Advisory Council Recommendation Discussion

Tracy Levins (TIEMH) shared the results of the Thought Exchange launched late last week, responding to the question, "What are some critical gaps or challenges facing the behavioral health system for children and youth in Texas? At the time of the presentation, 13 people participated, providing 43 thoughts and 263 ratings. Josette asked members for their feedback on those thoughts and what other thoughts members might have.

Julie Wayman (Texas Education Agency, TEA) noted in the chat that she would like CYBHS to deploy this Exchange with Education Service Centers to get perspective from that lens to add to the discussion.

Liz Pearson (HHSC, Children's Mental Health) mentioned that HHSC had completed a survey related to the state hospitals in order to gather recommendations that can be used to address needs and gaps in communities for families and youth and it would be useful to bring that information to CYBHS for consideration as well.

Luanne Southern (Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium, TCMHCC) voiced interest in seeing a baseline for capacity needs to further help identify recommendations. She would also like to look at accessibility for children of color and explore equity-related issues. Additionally, Ms. Southern noted in the chat that the discussion is in line with the recent report, *Recommendations for Improving Safe Placement and Services for Children, Youth, and Families*. She added that CYBHS members and other stakeholders should look at how many and where family liaison/family partner positions exist across agencies to help define the current landscape and capacity for the state.

In the chat, Valencia Gensollen (Texas Family Voice Network, TxFVN) added that she had heard from families across the state that children with dual diagnoses in a mental health crisis were being turned away from services and that she knew of parents driving four hours outside of their communities to get their children treatment. Most families do not have the resources to get this type of help for their children.

Josette Saxton asked CYBHS members for volunteers to develop recommendations for CYBHS to provide to the Behavioral Health Advisory Council (BHAC). Volunteers included Alice Alvarez, Julie Di Girolamo, Callie Dupree, Donna Fagan, Mary Beth Fisk, Molly Lopez, Matthew Lovitt, Lillian Nguyen, Susan Palacios, Leela Rice, Luanne Southern, and Julie Wayman.

Donna Fagan discussed that the BHAC will be developing and publishing a report on the BHAC website that includes recommendations for the systems. There are a number of timelines that inform the process, but the recommendations to BHAC will need to be completed this summer.

Josette Saxton noted the next step will be for a meeting to be arranged for the volunteers. At that meeting, team members will summarize the focus and recommendations to BHAC. Those recommendations might include topics such as the need for access to intensive community-based services to prevent separation from home, school, families, health equity issues, school space, and teeing up a conversation about trends and strategies related to youth suicide and how the state currently addresses youth suicide across systems. Josette will schedule a meeting and invite workgroup participants.

Agenda Item 5: Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC) Updates

Donna Fagan, BHAC member and CYBHS co-chair, provided an update from the BHAC. The BHAC has developed a template for all recommendations to use for submission and a status chart to track recommendations, indicating which subcommittee of BHAC offered the recommendation, the dates of consideration, voting, approval by BHAC, and the date the recommendation was seen in the Executive Committee. The recommending subcommittees will be notified about the status of the recommendations.

The BHAC website is in the process of being updated with 2022 meeting dates. Donna shared that the 2022 dates include February 11, 2022; May 6, 2022; August 5, 2022, and November 4, 2022.

Agenda Item 6: Panel – Youth Suicide Prevention Presentations

House Bill 3980 Summary Report by Jennifer Haussler Garing, Office of Mental Health Coordination

Jennifer Garing (HHSC, OMHC) began her presentation with an overview of the summary report of House Bill 390, passed during the 86th Legislature, Regular Session. HB 390 directed HHSC to prepare a summary report on the prevalence of suicide death, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation in Texas. The summary report can be found at

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2020/suicide-prevention-texas-may-2020.pdf>.

Important observations in the report included:

- Texas has seen an overall increase in suicide mortality with the death rate rising 36 percent.
- There has been a significant increase in suicide mortality for Black youth and young adults, ages 10-24 years old.
- More than half of overall suicide deaths are from gunshots. The second highest percentage of deaths by suicide is from suffocation/hanging.
- Calls to the Texas Poison Control Network from 13-19-year-old females have almost tripled since 2005.
- The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System asked two specific questions about suicidal ideation and behaviors in the past 12 months. Data indicated that there were no differences by sex, race/ethnicity in the number of individuals who had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months. The largest difference seemed to be related more to the previous diagnosis of depressive episodes.
- However, 18-24-year-old young people with a disability were 2.5 times more likely to have considered suicide in the past 12 months.
- The second factor found to increase the risk of having seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months for both the 18-24-year-old age group and the over 25-year-old age group was sexual orientation. Individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual were found to have higher rates of suicidal ideation in the past 12 months compared to those who identified as straight or heterosexual. Young adults and adults both were about five times as likely to have suicidal ideation if they also identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. (HHSC Report on Suicide and Suicide Prevention in Texas).
- The Youth Risk Behavior Survey collects and analyzes suicide ideation and attempt data from randomly selected students in randomly selected Texas high schools. The percentage of Texas students who attempted suicide in the past 12 months was higher than the US percentage. Texas students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual were three times as likely to have attempted suicide in the last 12 months. 22.3 percent of gay, lesbian, or bisexual high school respondents indicated they attempted suicide in the past 12 months compared to 7.5 percent of heterosexual students.

Donna Fagan (TxFVN) asked if data were available on how many high school students in Texas have taken Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA). Lillian Nguyen (HHSC) responded that there are currently 74 individuals at the Local Mental Health Authorities trained to provide tMHFA. Lillian added that in the entire fiscal year 2021, 329 Texas high students were trained in tMHFA and thus far in fiscal year 2022, 369 high school students have been trained.

House Bill 3980 Summary Report by Jennifer Cruetsinger, Youth Suicide Grant Project Director for RYSE grant.

RYSE (Resilient Youth, Safer Environments) is a 5-year grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support Galveston County. This county was selected because its suicide rate had exceeded the national rate for a multi-year period. In August 2017, the region experienced the impact of Hurricane Harvey. A few months later in May 2018, the community underwent additional trauma as a result of a shooting at a school in Santa Fe, Texas which resulted in ten people being killed and 13 people being wounded. This grant was designed to support the community in the face of tremendous loss and trauma.

RYSE is currently in the third year of the five-year grant. There are four different contracts that drive the activities of this grant – Gulf Coast Center, Santa Fe ISD, Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative, and the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health.

Gulf Coast Center is the local mental health authority that supports this region. Through the grant, Gulf Coast funds three staff members (a suicide prevention specialist and community lead in that area, a care navigator, and a youth-specific mobile crisis outreach team member).

Through this grant, staff have been able to work directly with the school districts in that region. RYSE has offered a number of suicide prevention-related trainings (e.g., CALM youth Mental Health First Aid, Safety Planning, and other interventions) and workforce development opportunities. The Galveston County Suicide Prevention Coalition has been established and includes over 15 different community entities/stakeholders to support suicide prevention efforts.

In June 2021, RYSE partners offered a workshop on Texas Advancing Suicide Safer schools. Five different school districts from the Galveston County area worked with the Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition in this two-day workshop to help school districts develop a road map to have suicide-safer schools.

Josette Saxton (Texans Care for Children) noted that the work from RYSE offers the opportunity to think about suicide prevention as part of the CYBHS recommendations and can help offer guidance on how CYBHS as a collective group of state, local, and advocate stakeholders use the lessons learned or strategies to continue moving forward in other parts of the state to address youth suicide.

Agenda Item 7: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Services

Ari Acosta, Texas System of Care Behavioral Equity Specialist introduced Meagan Butler, LPC, Austin ISD Secondary Counselor.

Meagan noted that the challenges LGBTQ children experience that impact their mental health include issues at school, bullying, harassment, not being valued at school or in their family, and scarce access to mental health services. Meagan added that the mental health challenges are not due to the young people being part of the LGBTQ community, but are instead a result of the stigma, the overwhelming lack of resources, and the lack of support. It's the mistreatment and lack of support that increases risk, not the fact that they are LGBTQ.

Meagan also explained that intersectional identities pose an increased challenge. For example, 59% of young people who identified as Black and either transgender or non-binary seriously considered suicide in the past year compared to 31% of native and indigenous LGBT youth and 12% of white LGBT youth.

In response to being asked about advice for parents of children who identify as LGBTQ, Meagan responded that parents should do everything they can to ensure that there is no doubt in that child's mind that they truly love that child and their entire self. Parents should be encouraged to let their children express themselves and to bring their entire selves to the parent-child relationship. Parents should invite their child's LGBTQ friends into the home. If a family's church home or community is not welcoming and supportive, families are encouraged to find one that is. Parents should connect their child with LGBTQ role models. Above all, children and youth should know that their parent cares about them, has their back, and knows that if they feel unsafe, they can go to their parent.

Meagan noted that creating safe environments for LGBTQ youth is critical. Agencies and organizations need to explicitly name protective groups in policies; have clear ways of reporting bullying; have specific people to contact for those young people who feel unsafe; offer specific gender/sexuality clubs so that all students have safe spaces, and offer visible allies so students know who the adults are that they can go to.

Resources shared in the presentation and contemporaneous chat includes:

- For additional information, contact: meaganbutler@gmail.com;
 - <https://storiesandnumbers.org/>
 - <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>
 - <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2020/suicide-prevention-texas-may-2020.pdf>
 - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/?section=Introduction>
 - <https://afsp.org/preventing-suicide-in-lgbtq-communities>

Agenda Item 8: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 9 Next Steps

In closing the meeting, Kisha Ledlow (HHSC) summarized the following next steps.

- Workgroup will be formed of the volunteers of this meeting to meet before the next CYBHS meeting.
- Suicide data slides will be emailed.

Agenda Item 10: Announcements

There were no announcements.

Agenda Item 11: Next meeting

Next Meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2022.

If have anyone has agenda items for the next CYBHS meeting, please email them to Josette Saxton