

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee (CYBHS)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 11, 2023
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 10:00 by Josette Saxton. Ms. Saxton 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		
Vanessa Saenz		X	<i>NAMI Texas</i>		
Melissa Ann Luna		X	Greg Hansch		X
Jennifer Reed		X	Alternate: Hannah Gill		X
Victoria Rodriguez	X		<i>Texans Care for Children</i>		
Nasruddin Rupani		X	Stephanie Rubin		X
Community Provider Representatives			Dept. of State Health Services		
<i>Heart of Texas Center</i>			Julie DiGirolamo	X	
Kristen Hejl	X		Alternate: Susan Bareis		X
Alternate: Jessica Jimenez		X	Suicide Prevention		
			Josette Saxton	X	
<i>Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare</i>			Alternate: Lisa Sullivan	X	
Melissa Zemencsik		X	TCOOMMI		
Alternate: Shannon Miller		X	Emily Eisenmann		
Family Representatives			Alternate: Lenny Colunga	X	
Donna Fagan			Dept. of Family and Protective Services		
Valencia Gensollen		X	Jennifer Nichols (CPS)		X
Verlyn Johnson	X		Alternate: Angela Roberts (CPI)		X
Youth/Young Adult			Brooke King (PEI)		X
Vacant					
Health and Human Services Commission			Higher Education		

MEMBER NAME	YES	NO	MEMBER NAME	YES	NO
<i>Behavioral Health Services</i> Yakir Harosh		X	<i>UT Austin – Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health</i> Molly Lopez		X
Alternate: Liz Pearson	X		Alternate: Natalie Fikac		X
<i>Medicaid</i> Kacie Cardwell		X	Texas Education Agency		
<i>Office of Mental Health Coordination</i> Lillian Nguyen	X		Julie Wayman	X	
<i>Texas System of Care Project Director</i> Sherry Rumsey	X		Alternate: Tammy Gendke		X
<i>Substance Use</i> Letisia Balderas MacDonald	X		Texas Juvenile Justice Department		
			Susan Palacios		X
			Alternate: Amanda Britton	X	

Yes: Indicates attended the meeting

No: Indicates did not attend the meeting

Also in Attendance: Julie Abreu, Arnolando Amador, Lizzette Amparan, Stefan Cole, Jennie Costilow, Glenn Dembowski, Mary Beth Fisk, Lyssette Galvan, Jennifer Haussler Garing, Nidia Heston, Shannon Hoffman, Tammy Holland, Greta James Maxfield, Ophelia Jaushlin, Kendall Jones, Mona Fafeel, Leah Kelly, Ashley Lilavois, Amay Litzinger, Aaron Loeb, Zatarra Lumen, Terry Mabrito, Kyler Ramsey, Lisa Releaven, Angela Roberts, Laura Rushing, Pinky Sangwan, Jessica Santiago, Jay Smith, Amelia Somers, Stacy Spencer, Alice Steiner, Sam Stinnett, Kaylah Topasna, Adriana Valadez, Hannah Vasquez, Vanessa Vaughan, Nicole Warren

Agenda Item 2: Children’s Mental Health Strategic Plan

Dr. Courtney Harvey presented on the Children’s Mental Health Strategic Plan, authorized by the 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023. HB 1 requires the statewide behavioral health coordinating council (SBHCC) to: (a) develop a strategic plan specific to the needs of children and youth; (b) incorporate the full continuum of care needed to support children and families, including strategies to identify and address gaps in care, a discussion of workforce shortages, information on funding and reimbursement and children-specific data and expenditure information. The SBHCC has developed a subcommittee to draft the strategic plan.

Some initial decisions that the subcommittee has made include: (a) the plan will incorporate the System of Care framework and values; (b) the timeframe for the plan will be five years and updated on even numbered years (initially 2025-2029); (c) the plan will focus on children from birth through age 17; (d) the plan will address the full continuum of care, including mental health promotion and

prevention; and (e) the plan will incorporate mental health providers from different sectors (e.g., government, non-profit, for-profit). For more information about the strategic plan, email: mentalhealth_SBHCC@hhs.texas.gov. The CYBHS will create a workgroup with people who are interested in assisting Verlyn Johnson, as the CYBHS representative, in providing feedback to the Children's Mental Health Strategic Plan, and volunteers were recruited.

Agenda Item 3: Family Experience Presentation

Nidia Heston introduced Vanessa Vaughan, a family member with lived experience navigating the mental and behavioral health landscape. Ms. Vaughan has three children. Ms. Vaughn shared information about her oldest child, who has struggled with mental health concerns since the first grade. Ms. Vaughan discussed her advocacy with the school to identify the support her child needed and the different experiences she had with her other child, who had complex medical issues. Her daughter experienced regular changes in her psychiatrist, which was challenging due to previous trauma experiences and the need to start new relationships. Ms. Vaughan struggled to access the intensive services she needed. The family experienced challenges with wait lists, lack of a continuum of services, providers who did not take their insurance, and lack of in-person services during COVID. Ms. Vaughan discussed how important it was to have her family partner and other families with lived experience to help her figure out how to navigate the system, the right words to use, and how to advocate for their family's needs. Despite being very resourceful and savvy with technology, she really struggled to navigate the system and find resources, especially when they were in crisis. She identifies making it easier for families to identify resources and know what is available as a critical system need.

Agenda Item 4: Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee Business

Liz Pearson provided an update on new positions within the Children's Mental Health team. They are currently hiring a Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) Lead, a Relinquishment Avoidance Lead, a Youth Crisis Outreach Lead, and RTC Project Coordinator. They are also currently interviewing for the Children's Mental Health Manager position.

Jay Smith, Children's Health Strategy Manager at HHSC, shared information about the Family Health Services Division, which was created through an internal reorganization in November. The Division has four goals: (a) healthy mothers having healthy babies; (b) healthy children growing into thriving adults; (c) healthy families creating stronger communities; and (d) strong teens supporting strong programs.

A quorum of members was present. Minutes from the June 28th meeting were sent to members prior to the meeting for their review. Verlyn Johnson moved to approve the minutes; Lilly Nguyen seconded. The minutes were approved with no changes.

Agenda Item 5: Membership Update

The nomination committee put forward two new potential members for consideration. Sherry Rumsey shared background information on a prospective youth representative. Rohan is currently a Junior at Westwood High School and serves on a youth leadership committee there. Rohan is also a co-founder of a non-profit that focuses on promoting mental health awareness and is a member of the Changing Lives Ensemble. Josette Saxton moved to vote to approve Rohan to serve as a youth representative to CYBHS, and Sherry Rumsey seconded. Members voted and the motion passed.

Josette Saxton made a motion to approve adding the HHSC Family Health Services Office, with representative Jay Smith, as a new member of CYBHS; Lysette Galvan seconded the motion. Members voted and the motion was approved.

Agenda Item 6: Suicide Prevention Panel

State Update on Youth Suicide Prevention

Tammy Weppelman provided a brief overview of the HHSC Suicide Prevention team. Jennifer Haussler-Garing presented some recent data, including data on ER visits by suicide and suicide attempt calls to the Poison Control network. The state team also presented data on the biennial Youth Risk Behavior (YRBS) survey from DSHS. The team provided an overview of the Suicide Care Initiative (SCI), funded by the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, which has the goals of the developing and maintaining four Regional Suicide Care Support Centers (RSCSCs) to serve as training and technical assistance hubs for other LMHA/LBHAs; and implementing the Zero Suicide Framework to fidelity in their own LMHAs. The Resilient Youth Safer Environments (RYSE) is a five-year youth suicide prevention grant (2019-2024). The grant supports 10-24-year-olds in Galveston County and its goals are to increase the number of youth that are screened for suicide risk, with those that have positive screening receiving a full risk assessment and referral to care.

Youth Crisis Calls to Integral Care Help and Crisis Line

Nicole Warren presented on their crisis call system. Integral Care's Crisis Services offers 24/7 local crisis Helpline in 15 languages; the 988 number is in 65 counties; allow Walk-Ins (PES); MCOT Services, and Crisis Respite/stabilization services for those 18 and older. The Helpline has grown since 1967 when it consisted of volunteers to present day with 988 chat/text expansion and AAS accreditation

(receiving an average of 14,500 calls per month). They further described what it was like calling the Helpline and how calls are handled to improve social determinants of health.

Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition

Terry Mabrito presented on the Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition, which is the only coalition that is youth focused and has a functioning teen advisory board. The coalition work was impacted by the pandemic, especially as a primarily unfunded organization. They continued to work to identify funding and provide community presentations. Their priority is to strengthen their role as a convening entity, conducting their first needs assessment, and following it up with their second strategic planning session. The San Antonio Council on Drug Abuse is now serving as a backbone agency, which has allowed them to expand focus to neighboring communities. She reflected that the youth are feeling the burden of the many social, environmental, and political concerns, and they are really experiencing pervasive sadness.

The Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative

Lisa Sullivan presented on the Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative, which was established in 2019 to provide stewardship of Texas Suicide Prevention Council (statewide nonprofit). Three broad areas of focus: 1) technical assistance to communities and statewide partners; 2) promote evidence-based practices; and 3) administer the suicide prevention council. The first suicide prevention plan was developed in 2001 by 10 community groups. The Texas Suicide Prevention Council serves as a pipeline to local communities, fosters partnership and collaboration. It has now grown to over 140 entities (local coalitions, statewide partners, higher education institutions, and military veteran organizations). The Council has five key areas of focus: collaborating and capacity building, outreach, coalition development, training and symposia, and developing and implementing the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention.

Discussion

One stakeholder shared the frustration he and others like him feel with the lack of resources in rural areas. He feels like they reach out to many of the organizations in their community, but they are not getting a response. He also noted that those with different cultural backgrounds do not have access to resources. Parents are faced with organizations that are supposed to be helping, but the organizations are not held accountable for ensuring those services are available. A member also reflected how it could be important to know who rural families are reaching out to so that we could better target communication about available services.

Agenda Item 7: SAMHSA Grant Updates

Sherry Rumsey thanked all who were able to attend the Texas System of Care and Community Resource Coordination Group conference this summer. If anyone would like to watch sessions from the conference, they are available at <https://txsystemofcare.org/highlights/2023-txsoc-crcg-conference/>.

Sherry also shared that the Creative Art Contest will launch in December and that folks can watch for that launch at <https://gallery.txsystemofcare.org>.

The team is also beginning to plan for Children's Mental Health Acceptance Day in May. We hope that those who are interested will participate in the state event or local events in their community.

Agenda Item 8: BHAC RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATES

The CYBHS subcommittee submitted a draft report of our work over the past year to the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC), which will be included in the BHAC's mandated annual report to the Legislature.

Agenda Item 9: Public Comment

Stefan Cole is a Board Member for Texas Parent to Parent; however, he is speaking as a private citizen today. He is speaking to the Children's Mental Health Strategic Plan. He expressed concern about the lack of resources in rural areas. For example, they have no ADA Coordinator; the county website is not accessible to people with disabilities. He said there are issues with access to appropriate health care and accommodations that are fitting to individual needs. He hopes that addressing these issues becomes a part of the children's mental health strategic plan.

Leah Kelly commented as a private citizen and a community member. She spoke in relation to the Behavioral Health Strategic Plan, specifically suicide prevention. She is a parent of an autistic child who has significant mental health needs. Her comment addressed the lack of mental health resources available in her child's school district. She stated that although the school district has licensed mental health professionals on campus and access to TCHAT, these resources are grossly insignificant to meet the demands of the community. With the increasing needs since the pandemic and the series of deaths by suicide of children in her county, she is concerned about the large gaps in services and wants to know what can be done to ensure there is equitable access to resources for all children. She knows that there are funding sources to assist families with basic needs and that this improves academic outcomes. She is frustrated with the fact that students and families in her school don't have access to these resources and wants to see that things are done to promote better access and equity.

Agenda Item 10: Announcements

In closing the meeting, chair Josette Saxton summarized the following next steps.

- There are volunteers for the ad hoc committee (Strategic Plan Work Group).
 - Mary Beth Fisk, The Ecumenical Center
 - Shannon Hoffman, Hogg Foundation
 - Aaron Loeb
- Verlyn Johnson announced that the Texas Family Voice Network is revamping and should be back active soon.

Agenda Item 11: Next meeting

Next Meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2024.

If have anyone has agenda items for the next CYBHS meeting, please send agenda suggestions to info@txsystemofcare.org.

Location for presentation slides and handouts -
<https://utexas.box.com/s/rnpunhg7cdyz8z1jqr3xax6upiicvokc>