

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Cecelia Hartley](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Monday, October 13, 2014 11:08:10 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Monday, October 13, 2014 8:56 AM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Monday, October 13, 2014 - 08:56

Agency: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION HHSC

First Name: Julie

Last Name: Bourne

Title: Parent and Advocate for Children and Families with Mental Health

Organization you are affiliated with: Texas Family Voice Network

Email:

City: Houston

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed: As a family member of a child with mental health challenges, I oppose Issue 13 of the Sunset Commission staff report on recommendation for HHSC. This recommendation silences the importance of the significant needs of Texas children struggling with mental illness, It diminishes the voices of invested stakeholders championing best practices. The Texas System of Care Consortium provides a unique opportunity for state, community, youth and family collaboration around children's mental health which will cease to exist in a different structure. History has shown that the focus on behavioral health services for children, youth and their families will no longer be a priority focus among a broad spectrum of child and youth needs. Family and youth voices for children and youth with serious mental health challenges will not be heard if representation of special populations is consolidated.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Mental Health Coordination under, the Texas System of Care Consortium should remain as an advisory board to only address children's mental health policy. Under legislation, many stakeholders have been state required to participate, and this has improved communication on children's mental health issues across all child serving systems. This should definitely continue, but it should be recommended to the legislature to include and increase youth and family voice on the Texas System of Care Consortium. I would ask that the Sunset Commission elect to continue the wonderful work that has been done thus far for children's mental health by championing the voices of families and youth, through continuing the legislatively mandated work of the Texas System of Care Consortium to be housed under Mental Health Coordination

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree

**MY STORY**

**BY JULIE BOURNE**

*My name is Julie Bourne and I have come to Texas by way of Hurricane Katrina. I am a single mother of two, who both have mental health problems. My son was eleven years old when we moved here and my daughter was a week or two away from making one. I have no family here and had to seek services for my son, because my daughter didn't start showing signs of a problem until a few years ago. Upon seeking services, I was referred to a System of Care site called System of Hope. They are the ones I credit for giving me and my son a voice and teaching us that our voice mattered. Through this grant from SAMSHA it allowed us to attend numerous trainings and conferences. Even after the grant was over it allowed us to lend our family and youth voice around the community. Had we not discovered or been referred to this System Of Care site we would not have the family and youth voice we have today. Today my son is able to hold a job and go to community college, he is now twenty years old, and my daughter is ten years old. During the course of my services from System of Hope I have become an advocate and very heavily involved in the community, I continue to lend my voice and experiential experience to improve services for families and their children with special needs.*

*As a family member with children with mental health challenges, I oppose Issue 13 of the Sunset Commission staff report on recommendation for HHSC. This recommendation ignores the importance of how the significant needs of Texas children struggling with mental illness. By following through with Issue 13 you are diluting the voices of family and youth who have an invested interest as stakeholders who are championing for best practices. The Texas System Of Care Consortium provides a very unique opportunity for state, community, family, and youth collaboration around children's mental health. This may not be to continue in a different structure. History has shown that the focus on behavioral health services for children, youth and their families can become less of a priority focus among a broad spectrum of the family needs. Family and youth voices for children and youth with serious mental health challenges may not be present or less apparent if representation of special populations is consolidated.*

*Under Mental Health Coordination, the Texas System of Care Consortium should remain as an advisory board to specifically address children's mental health policy. Under legislation, many stakeholders have been statutorily required to participate, and this has improved communication on children's mental health issues across all child serving systems. This should not only continue, but it should be further recommended to the legislature to include and increase youth and family voice on the Texas System of Care Consortium. I would ask that the Sunset Commission elect to continue the*

*extraordinary work that has been done, thus far for children's mental health. By championing the the voices of families and youth, through continuing the legislatively mandated work of Texas System of Care Consortium to be housed under Mental Health Coordination.*