

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Saturday, October 18, 2014 11:05:55 AM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2014 4:58 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Friday, October 17, 2014 - 16:57

Agency: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION HHSC

First Name: Eileene

Last Name: Chappelle

Title:

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 with a youth with mental illness, for the past 22 years, I am opposing Issue 13, Recommendation: "Remove the Task Force for Children With Special Needs, the Children's Policy Council, the Council on Children and Families, and the Texas System of Care Consortium [a children's mental health advisory board] from statute and direct the executive commissioner to recreate one advisory committee in rule to better coordinate advisory efforts on children's issues." The System of Care has been researched nationally and in the State of Texas. It has been proven since 1986 that family and youth involvement is IMPORTANT in improving outcomes for the youth and their families, and to keep children in their communities and not in out of home placement. By keeping children in their communities and their families saves the taxpayers a lot of money. As you point out in the Sunset report the importance of integrated care this model is important in doing the very thing the commission is recommending. To dissolve each of these task forces that are focus on helping children and families with various issues pertaining to children's health and wellbeing eliminates the opportunity for Texas System of Care Consortium and the efforts in Texas to improve mental health services. I beg you to reconsider your recommendation. As a parent having years of mental health services in Texas, the support of peer to peer has been so important to me in helping my child and for the first time in many years the families who are stigmatized with children with mental health challenges are finally being heard where often other groups of families with children with other health special needs often do not address our population of children. My child has also benefited greatly from the peer support he is currently receiving as he transitions into adulthood. That peer support is very valuable in these young people becoming successful adults who can contribute to society. In addition, the first time in the history of Texas all of these groups are beginning to work together to look at children holistically and collaborate together thanks to the Texas System of Care Consortium

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

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 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

Hello,

Let me introduce myself. I am Eileene Chappelle, a registered nurse, and my most important role is as my children's adoptive mother. I am here today to speak to Issue 13.2 of the Sunset Commissions report. I have a 27 year old son with Special Needs and a 24 year old daughter. My son has a major mental illness that occurred due to from the trauma of removing his eye at age 15, caused by Coats disease. My son does not have a "casserole illness", where the community, family, and friends bring a casserole to help if he had been diagnosed with cancer for example. Some in the special needs community call us the "in betweeners", saying it is easier to do tube feedings than to have to deal with mental illness. Families that have children and youth with mental illness are often isolated. Our children are not invited to other children's birthday parties, and parents are often viewed as the cause of our children's illnesses. When our children are hospitalized, no one welcomes them back in the community. No one asks, "Is there anything we can do to help?"; instead, they simply avoid us or ignore the subject of our mentally ill child. This is why it is important to have family and youth voices that the Texas Systems of Care Consortium provides.

By removing the Texas System of Care Consortium from statute you are declaring that our family needs to remain isolated and we do not have a "casserole illness". My disabled son was not as fortunate to receive the services of System of Care, and his outcomes have not been good. We have been receiving care in Texas for the past 22 years that has been fragmented with difficulty getting community based services. This fragmentation of health care has been costly and frustrating, and has not lead to the best outcomes. My disabled son has cost tax payers money because of his disabilities, which keep increasing as he is aging. In addition, due to his inability to work because of his illnesses, his consumption of Medicaid dollars increase in attempts to provide the appropriate care and medication he needs to treat his illnesses, also increasing the cost to Texas taxpayers.

Research proves that having a family and youth voice improves care at all levels. Youth and family driven services and support systems that are complemented by mental health professionals is fundamental to bringing a needed transformation to a very broken mental health care system in Texas. In the mid 80's the federal government began supporting programs that engaged young people and their families in all planning and services related to their care. Since then evidence shows this kind of family and youth engagement improves treatment outcomes and saves tax payers money by introducing more productive individuals into society. In addition, when families and youth partner with professionals and decision makers at all levels, individual, local, and state, this helps to improve satisfaction the services families and children receive, and equips families to find supports within their communities, improving access to quality care.

Therefore, I urge the Sunset Commission to please reconsider Issue 13.2 which would remove the Texas System of Care Consortium from statute which has been addressing children's mental health with a strong and needed voice. In the past, Texas has treated children's mental illness as if our children do not have a "casserole illness" even though these illnesses are real and chronic. Texas can have better outcomes for children with mental illness and their families,

and an improved mental health care system by allowing youth and family voice to remain through the Texas System of Care Consortium.

Thank you.

Eileene Chappelle