

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Sunset Commission Review of the Health and Human Services Commission
Date: Thursday, October 09, 2014 7:50:24 AM

From: Sherry.Cusumano@hcahealthcare.com [mailto:Sherry.Cusumano@hcahealthcare.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 08, 2014 9:28 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: RE: Sunset Commission Review of the Health and Human Services Commission

Mr. Levine,

I am very concerned about the content contained in "Issue 9" Entitled "NorthSTAR's Outdated Approach Stifles More Innovative Delivery of Behavioral Health Services in the Dallas Region." I found numerous inaccuracies in this report which I will detail in later communication. I am not sure where the dated or just plain inaccurate information contained in this report was obtained, however, many of us are pulling together factual data needed to correct the misconceptions in this report. This will be communicated at a future time. I have grave concerns about the number of indigent people that would not receive the care they need if these changes were to take place. As a member of the NAMI Texas Board of Directors, I have colleagues and friends throughout the State who have been impacted both positively and negatively by the public system of care in their area. I have seen and heard about services throughout the State that could only be described as consistently excellent and others that have been described as ineffective. Until I see outcome data from across the State showing the effectiveness of one program over another, (and conversely, which programs are not effective) I question how one can require a region of the State to adapt to what "the rest of the State" is doing. The real consistency I'm aware of so far in the rest of the State is that the structure of the "payer source" is that of being a "carve in." Have the outcomes been determined to be better? I saw in the report that DSHS and HHSC could not compare outcomes from NorthSTAR to the rest of the State. Somehow it was decided that the problem was with NorthSTAR rather than with the agencies doing the measuring. As a nurse that has been involved in Quality Improvement projects and developing metrics, I find that to be curious. In looking at the literature about outcome measures, it would seem to me that patient outcomes would not be that difficult to measure once decided upon just because a patient was part of the NorthSTAR system versus being part of the Community Center System of Care.

My desire was that we could focus on coming together throughout the State to appropriately measure outcomes and learn about the strengths and weaknesses of all systems of care so we could learn from one another and improve patient care. Instead, we are debating "carve-in" versus "carve-out" and the focus is about consistency in a system of PAYMENT rather than on people with mental illnesses and their family members. I am very disappointed. I have seen programs that had much promise. I have yet to see a system of care that I believe will better serve our population than NorthSTAR. I definitely don't believe that as many of our patients will receive care if the suggested changes are implemented.

Sherry Cusumano, MS, RN, LCDC
Executive Director of Community Education
Green Oaks

From: Sunset Advisory Commission [<mailto:Sunset@sunset.state.tx.us>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2014 4:15 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Sunset Commission Review of the Health and Human Services Commission

October 7, 2014

Dear Recipient:

The Sunset Staff Report on the Health and Human Services Commission, as submitted to the Sunset Advisory Commission, is available for your review on our website, www.sunset.texas.gov. To request a hard copy of this report, contact our office. The Sunset Commission has scheduled a public hearing on this report for November 12 and 13. At that time public testimony will be taken. An agenda specifying the meeting time, location, and the order of agencies scheduled for discussion will be available on our website as soon as the meeting has been posted.

If you would like to comment on this report, the Commission would appreciate hearing from you. Your feedback would be most helpful if it includes the following elements:

- your position in support or opposition for any recommendation in the staff report;
- a clear, brief statement of suggested changes, if any, to these recommendations; and
- a clear, concise summary of any new issues or recommendations not included in the report that you would like the Sunset Commission to consider.

If you submit your response by Friday, October 17, we can provide this information to the Sunset Commission members before the public hearing. Comments received in response to a staff report are considered public records, and will be posted on the Sunset website and released to the public upon request.

Thank you for your assistance with the Sunset review process.

Ken Levine
Director
Sunset Advisory Commission

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