

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2014 5:23:23 PM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2014 4:59 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 - 16:58

Agency: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION HHSC

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Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or
Opposed:

Issue 1

The Vision for Achieving Better, More Efficiently Run Services Through Consolidation of Health and Human Services Agencies Is Not Yet Complete.

1.1 Consolidate the five HHS system agencies into one agency called the Health and Human Services Commission, with divisions established along functional lines and other features as described below.

COMMENTS: The Texas Council supports Sunset staff recommendations in Issue 1, with the expectation that measures are put in place to ensure agency focus and leadership relative to community-based mental health, substance use and intellectual disability services in a consolidated organization. We note the Sunset report reflects the transition legislative oversight committee and executive commissioner must ensure all populations, such as people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or behavioral health issues [and others] do not lose the visibility or attention they need.

A modification to create a governing board over the Health and Human Services Commission would provide another important mechanism for ensuring the agency remains on course over time (see Issue 13 comments).

1.2 Require development of a transition structure, including formation of a transition legislative oversight committee, and development of a broad transition plan and a detailed work plan to guide HHSC in setting up the new structure.

COMMENTS: We support this recommendation.

1.3 Continue the basic functions of the health and human services agencies in the single, reconstituted Health and Human Services Commission for 12 years.
COMMENTS: We support this recommendation.

Issue 9

NorthSTAR's Outdated Approach Stifles More Innovative Delivery of Behavioral Health Services in the Dallas Region.

- 9.1 Transition provision of behavioral health services in the Dallas area from NorthSTAR to an updated model.
- 9.2 The Sunset Commission should recommend that the Legislature include a rider to transition NorthSTAR funds to DSHS behavioral health funding strategies.
- 9.3 Require the state to assist with maintenance of Medicaid eligibility statewide.
- 9.4 Require HHSC to ensure behavioral health services are integrated into managed care organizations statewide.

COMMENTS: We agree with Sunset staff that the healthcare landscape has changed significantly over the past several years in Texas and across the nation. The report specifically notes the growing recognition that integration helps ensure the higher incidence, severity and cost of physical health issues in people with mental illnesses are addressed more effectively.

The report also reflects that Medicaid managed care outside the NorthSTAR region has structurally integrated primary care, mental health and substance use disorder benefits for some time.

The Texas Council studied various approaches to managed care as part of an effort to advance policy proposals that move the service delivery system forward and improve quality of care for people with serious mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual disabilities. As a result of this effort, Community Center executive and board leadership unanimously supported a carve-in managed care model for Medicaid Mental Health Rehabilitative Services and Targeted Case Management, per SB 58 (Nelson, 83rd R).

Previously, we supported the NorthSTAR exception in SB 58 that allowed the seven (7) county service area to not participate in an integrated care model.

However, Sunset staff make a compelling case for changing the NorthSTAR financial structure. Their recommendations promote local control of indigent care funds through a local public entity, create opportunity to integrate Medicaid physical health care with mental health and substance use disorder services, and significantly increase leveraging opportunity for federal funds in the 1115 Transformation Waiver.

The Texas Council supports Sunset staff recommendations on Issue 9 with the expectation that vital elements of local control remain intact in final recommendations and implementation, including the process for designating the public entity that meets established criteria for managing indigent care and participating in the 1115 Transformation Waiver.

Issue 13

HHSC's Advisory Committees, Including the Interagency Task Force for Children With Special Needs, Could be Combined and Better Managed Free of Statutory Restrictions.

- 13.1 Remove advisory committees from statute, including those with Sunset dates, and allow the executive commissioner to re-establish needed advisory committees in rule.
- 13.2 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 from statute.
- 13.3 Require HHSC to create a master advisory committee calendar, stream advisory committee meetings, and ensure access to online meeting materials.

COMMENTS: The Texas Council opposes recommendations 13.1 and 13.2 and supports 13.3.

Regarding 13.1, we recommend a modification that creates a governing board (appointed by the Governor) for the consolidated Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Providing an important mechanism for ensuring the agency remains on course over time, the structure and scope of the governing body should reflect a balance of authority between the executive and legislative branch of government and ensure meaningful public input.

Regarding 13.1 and 13.2, we recommend a modification directing a review of advisory committees and a more considered approach to removing committees from statute.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: See above.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree