

# ***THE BRAIN TRUST***

*EL Paso, Texas*

November 21, 2014

The Honorable Jane Nelson, Chairman  
Texas Sunset Advisory Committee  
P.O. Box 13066  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Chairman Nelson:

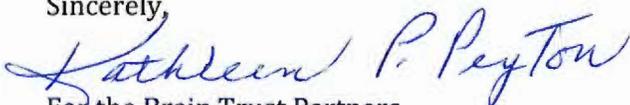
The Brain Trust, a group of advocates representing more than 42 organizations that serve El Paso and Hudspeth Counties in Texas, support recommendations from the Sunset Commission including the following:

- State contracted resources that allow for local control - Not only will this format of funding foster community cohesiveness but also open opportunity to maximize these resources by leveraging funding streams from other sources including federal grants and private sector funded projects.
- Information technology and data management consolidation - The future of medical and behavioral health services must include a streamlined communication system. This arena is so imperative that an entire department should be established to lead a system wide transformation.
- Creating a separate Deputy Commissioner for Behavioral Health - The behavioral health arena is such an integral component to the overall health of Texans that it deserves its own deputy commissioner for both advocacy and accountability.
- Person-centered Integration of behavioral health into primary care - The medical treatment system requires a major overhaul if Texas is to maintain its strength and prosperity. Service delivery must be an interdisciplinary team approach to address each Texas family's needs with excellence.
- An empowered advisory council for the HHSC - The HHSC must maintain a link with stakeholders through a body that can periodically bring recommendations directly to the Commission.

The Brain Trust envisions a United States Mexico border community where mental and emotional well-being are fundamental to the quality of life and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, enabling people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative and active citizens. Brain Trust partners are committed to changing minds and attitudes about mental illness for improved health outcomes for families and individuals afflicted with mental illness. State and local efforts to create person-centered behavioral health systems that allow families to access services when they need them and where they need them play an integral role in making such a paradigm shift.

Congratulations and thanks to the Sunset Commission and staff for your efforts to guide the State on a path toward lasting improvements for Texans today and in the future. We look forward to hearing that The Governor's Office, the Legislative Budget Board and the Legislature are committed to supporting this plan.

Sincerely,



For the Brain Trust Partners

cc: Members of the Sunset Advisory Commission  
Ken Levine, Director, Texas Sunset Advisory Commission  
Members of the El Paso Legislative Delegation