

Public Comment

Texas Sunset Advisory Commission

November 13, 2014



The LifePath Systems Board of Trustees supports the Sunset Staff Report recommendations for Issue #9 related to Behavioral Health Services in the Dallas Region.

PUBLIC COMMENT PRESENTED TO THE SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION



ON THE HHSC AND SYSTEM ISSUES STAFF REPORT

Randy Routon, CEO, LifePath Systems

LifePath Systems is the community center for Collin County and a provider in the NorthSTAR network. Monthly about 1800 individuals with serious mental illnesses and/or addictions receive care through one of our clinics. LifePath is a dba for Collin County Mental Health Mental Retardation Center.

The staff report on Issue #9 outlined significant issues of concern in the current system. It is undeniable that NorthSTAR clients receive less care than in the rest of the state, that a “carve-out” by its definition limits integration and makes healthcare more complex, and that neither clients or providers have a choice in plans. We do recognize that people in all of the related organizations have worked hard with limited funding and have learned from this pilot. Our Board of Trustees (two of whom have family members receiving NorthSTAR services, 3 others who have immediate family members with similar issues, one clinical psychologist, one police chief and one mayor) unanimously approved the attached resolution supporting the Sunset staff’s recommendations.

We all know there is not a local consensus on these recommendations and that makes the decision more difficult. As you consider whether to approve or reject these recommendations, it seems to me that it is critically important that we approach the use of our public funds as an investment. To be a successful investor, one always has to-

- ✓ Plan for the future, not just thinking about today
- ✓ Measure progress toward our goals
- ✓ Reduce administrative costs
- ✓ Find ways to maximize our dollars

Planning for the future

The healthcare environment has changed since the design of NorthSTAR in 1998 and 1999, and is continuing to change at a rapid pace. The future is clearly increased preventative care in an integrated behavioral and primary care system, not a system that has parts “carved out”. Other big states (Florida, New York and California) have recently made that decision.

Measuring progress

NorthSTAR began with only 3 goals, one of which was to “collect data to evaluate the value of the system”. After almost 15 years of operation, the Department of State Health Services still says it is unable to compare the benefits of NorthSTAR to the rest of the State. How long should it take to be able to effectively measure our progress or is it that we just prefer not to compare outcomes?

November 13, 2014



PUBLIC COMMENT PRESENTED TO THE SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION

ON THE HHSC AND SYSTEM ISSUES STAFF REPORT

Randy Routon, CEO, LifePath Systems

Reducing administrative cost

As a provider in the NorthSTAR system, we have to follow all of the DSHS rules plus all of the processes put in place by the single managing Behavioral Health Organization. In addition DSHS has several of its staff devoted to managing the NorthSTAR project and for many years maintained a separate NorthSTAR office. It seems that this duplication of administrative functions only reduces the money available for services to Texans in need and has added to the tremendous financial stress on NorthSTAR providers.

Maximizing resources

Lastly one of the best ways to maximize our funds is to match them with other non-State sources. The Healthcare Transformation 1115 waiver has added some much needed capacity to Texas health providers but the NorthSTAR configuration does not allow for full use or coordination of care. Our best investment strategy should encourage both federal and local participation in meeting local needs.

Thank you for allowing me to comment. LifePath is committed to being a quality provider regardless of the direction you choose.



Collin County, Texas

A RESOLUTION
of the
LifePath Systems Board of Trustees

By this Resolution the Board of Trustees of LifePath Systems hereby supports the Sunset Advisory Commission staff report (*HHSC and System Issues Staff Report*, October 2014) recommendations 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 as submitted.

In addition, the Board supports recommendation 9.1 with one modification, as follows: substitute “entity or entities” for every instance of the word “entity” throughout 9.1. The NorthSTAR model forced several regions/areas together that have dissimilar populations, needs and resources. The LifePath Board supports recommendation 9.1 but believes it should allow for local decision-making about the parameters of the new entities that are formed.

Passed by a majority of the Trustees present on October 23, 2014.


Mary Dell Green, Chairman