

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014 4:32:37 PM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 3:54 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Monday, June 30, 2014 - 15:53

Agency: DEPARTMENT STATE HEALTH SERVICES DSHS

First Name: Merily

Last Name: Keller

Title: Past Chair, Founding Board Member & Current Executive Committee of
the: Texas Suicide Prevention Council

Organization you are affiliated with: Texas Suicide Prevention Council

City: Austin

State: Texas

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

The Texas Suicide Prevention Council agrees with many of the staff recommendations, but the current staff report does not adequately address the suicide prevention needs in our state. Therefore, we've made specific recommendations as "new recommendations" for this agency.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

COMMENTS FROM M.H. KELLER, Austin, TX 78746 , June30, 2014 REPRESENTING THE TEXAS SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL These comments are from the Texas Suicide Prevention Council which was started in 2003 after the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention was developed with 10 local coalitions. Since then, the Council has expanded with more than 50 local coalition and statewide partner groups and is charged with working collaboratively to implement the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention. These comments address the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report on the Department of State Health Services, May 2014.

The Texas Suicide Prevention Council agrees with many staff recommendations and congratulates the Sunset staff on their work. But there are some key areas relating to suicide prevention that are not addressed.

PROGRAMMATIC CHANGE NEEDED TO EXPAND THE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM AND TO ADD A SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR ADULTS Texas has had a Suicide Prevention Plan that emphasizes suicide prevention across the lifespan since 2003, but the Department of State Health Services has only emphasized suicide prevention for youth and not adults with the program primarily being supported through a federal youth suicide prevention grant as well as periodic funds for special projects from Maternal and Child

Health. For sustainability, the Texas Youth Suicide Prevention and Postvention program needs to be supported by state funds and expanded to address suicide prevention in a coordinated, collaborative way targeting high risk groups in each county of the state.

Since the highest rate of deaths by suicide are in the middle ages and seniors for the United States and Texas, it is vitally important that any Texas suicide prevention and postvention program include these ages groups and not just youth so that suicide prevention is addressed across the lifespan and implemented through the key stakeholder group which has coordinated the effort to write and implement the Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention.

ONLINE TRAINING IN SUICIDE PREVENTION NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED LONGTERM More than 20,000 Texas educators have utilized the SAMHSA suicide prevention best practice online, 1 hour interactive suicide prevention and mental health training simulation program entitled, “At-Risk” for middle and high school employees over the past 4 years. Because DSHS has purchased licenses to make this program free for Texas educators, and it is available online for educators to train on their own time or on designated school training days, it is one of the most widely accepted, best practice programs available for educators in the state. Because Texas does not have a best practice program available to address the needs of elementary school educators, we propose that DSHS contract to have a statewide license to make the “At-Risk for Elementary School” program available to all educators and school administrators for both public and non-public schools in Texas and that DSHS allocate funds for the continued purchase of licenses for the program for middle and high school employees.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree