



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

EDUARDO J. SANCHEZ, M.D., M.P.H.
COMMISSIONER

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April 26, 2006

Dear Mental Health Transformation Partner:

Thank you for your participation in the Transformation Working Group (TWG) meeting on March 9th, 2006. Excellent participation and attendance by all TWG member agencies/ entities appointed by the Governor bodes well for the success of the TWG process. This level of interaction reflects our state's commitment and the momentum necessary to face the unique issues and challenges inherent in transforming systems. As we embark on this journey to find a shared language and the significance/impact of mental health to our respective service populations and constituencies, and as we strive to develop an infrastructure that supports systemic change through linking together the efforts of education, justice, children's services, labor and others, we hope you continue to find the TWG a comfortable forum through which this work will be facilitated.

The theme of our last TWG meeting was the impact of the war on the Mental Health of returning Veterans and their families. With a high deployment rate for Texans and intense combat operations in Iraq, Dr. Kathryn Power with SAMHSA spoke about the increased risk and impact of combat related physical and mental health problems, the increased use of healthcare services, and federal strategies in progress to address the impact of war on returning Veterans and their families. Dr. Kathryn Kotrla and Dr. Wanser gave an overview of the statewide focus and federal-state partnerships that are underway to address these impacts for Veterans and their families in Texas. At the next TWG, in follow-up to this discussion and your input, we will present a draft inventory of statewide initiatives that are underway and/or planned across TWG agencies to improve outcomes for returning veterans and their families who utilize our services. In some cases you identified unaddressed needs for Veterans and their families, and offered potential solutions through new and enhanced collaborations and partnerships. This will also be reflected in the inventory presented at the next TWG meeting. In addition to this discussion, the importance of incorporating behavioral health issues into our respective strategic plans was also highlighted.

The next Texas TWG meeting is scheduled on Friday, May 19, 2006 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room (Rm.739) **at the Robert D. Moreton building of DSHS (formerly TDH), 1100 West 49th Street, Austin, TX. 78756.** The theme for this TWG is: ***The Impact of Behavioral Health on costs and outcomes across our respective target populations and constituencies. Recognition of these impacts will be highlighted through a PowerPoint presentation that will include one-two slides from each of your agencies that reflect how your agency will be addressing behavioral health issues in your strategic plans for the upcoming fiscal year or biennium.*** This may include any aspect of your strategic plan that shows how your agency is acknowledging the impact of Behavioral Health issues on your costs, operations and/or outcomes for your target populations, and does not require that you necessarily reflect specific initiatives with which your agency/entity is involved.

Please provide your slides to Wendy Andreades no later than Monday, May 8th, 2006 so that we may compile them, and solicit your assistance in giving a presentation at our next TWG meeting that highlights our cross agency strategic focus and acknowledgement of the impact of behavioral health on our respective target populations.

At our upcoming TWG, Heidi McConnell, the Governor's Advisor and TWG representative, will give a status report on identification of TWG member agency interested stakeholders and timeline for a meeting with these groups. You will be receiving a letter from Ms. McConnell in the next week requesting a mailing list of your advisory committee members who may have an interest in mental health issues. In addition, as a regular part of each TWG agenda, a **Texas transformation initiative** will be presented. Please inform me of transformation initiatives you would like to present at the upcoming or future TWG meetings. A draft agenda for the upcoming TWG is forthcoming.

As we prepare for the next TWG meeting, we encourage you to visit the MH transformation website for additional information on federal transformation activities; Texas TWG meetings, presentations, and transformation references and materials. We look forward to your feedback on how this website is working to keep your organizations and constituents abreast of the activities and progress of the Texas TWG. We also encourage you to post information from your agency about relevant activities supporting transformation. Requests to post information on the website may be sent via e-mail to:

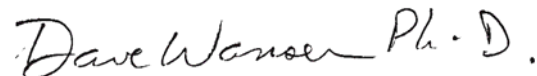
Wendy.Andreades@dshs.state.tx.us or by phone at (512) 458-7111, ext. 6085.

Again, the temporary MH transformation website address is: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhtransformation>

If you have questions, or suggestions for the upcoming agenda, please contact me directly at 512-458-7376 or via e-mail at dave.wanser@dshs.state.tx.us.

A DSHS executive staff member will be calling you to confirm receipt of this letter and your attendance at the upcoming TWG meeting. We recognize the value of your participation in the TWG process as the basis for this unique opportunity to transform the face of mental health care in Texas. I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming meeting of the Texas Mental Health Transformation Working Group. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,



Dave Wanser, Ph.D.

Chair, Texas Mental Health Transformation Working Group
Deputy Commissioner for Behavioral and Community Health Services

cc: Heidi McConnell, Governor's Office
Rudy Arredondo, Ed.D. New Freedom Commissioner and State Health Services Council Chair
Nancy Speck, Ph.D., New Freedom Commissioner
Deanna Yates, Ph.D., New Freedom Commissioner
Eduardo J. Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner, Department of State Health Services