



JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2, 2021 VIRTUAL MEETING

Co-Chair, Justice Jane Bland, Supreme Court of Texas
Co-Chair, Judge Barbara Hervey, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals
Deputy Liaison, Justice Rebeca Huddle, Supreme Court of Texas
Deputy Liaison, Judge Jesse F. McClure, III, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

JCMH Staff:

- Kristi Taylor, Executive Director
- Kama Harris, Staff Attorney
- Molly Davis, Staff Attorney
- Liz Wiggins, Program Manager
- Michael Sipes, Paralegal

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Judge Hervey opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Judge Hervey congratulated the JCMH on the successful Mental Health Summit that was held in October. Judge Hervey then introduced Judge Jesse F. McClure of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Judge McClure has been appointed to serve as Deputy Liaison to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for the JCMH.

Justice Bland welcomed the attendees and thanked everyone for attending the Summit. She reiterated that the conference was a great success and informed the members that Kristi Taylor would be providing a more in-depth analysis of the Summit's evaluation results. Justice Bland then turned to the next important issue, the upcoming legislative session. The JCMH is gathering legislative proposals and making plans in preparation for the 88th Regular Legislative Session. Justice Bland then introduced Justice Rebeca Huddle, of the Texas Supreme Court. Justice Huddle has been appointed to serve as Deputy Liaison to the Supreme Court for the JCMH.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME

New members were welcomed to the Collaborative Council:

- Hon. Grace Uzomba, *Presiding Judge, Bexar County Court 2*
- Colleen Davis, *Assistant County Attorney, Burnet County Attorney's Office*



- Kathleen Casey Gamez, *Texas Indigent Defense Commission*

2021 JUDICIAL SUMMIT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Approximately 245 people attended the 2021 Judicial Summit on Mental Health in-person and over 1,000 people registered and attended via the livestream. The Summit was recorded and will be available on the JCMH website soon. The Summit offered CLE (including ethics), CEU, TCOLE and continuing judicial education family violence credit for those who attended, both in-person and via livestream. The Summit could not have been a success if not for the tremendous efforts of the JCMH staff, especially staff attorney Kama Harris who led the presentation organizing and content coordination.

2021 SUMMIT EVALUATION RESULTS

98% of evaluations came back as excellent or very good, with only a small percentage reporting “good”. Most respondents had positive comments about the organization of the Summit and approximately 80% reported that the length of the Summit was good, while 16% reported that it was too long, and 3% reported that it was too short. Given these results JCMH leadership is considering changes to the 2022 Summit, specifically commencing the sessions on Wednesday afternoon, having a full day on Thursday with two separate topic tracks, and ending on Friday at noon to allow attendees some additional travel time.

The most popular speakers were the lunchtime speakers, Dr. Wendy Ellis and Chris Orton. The most popular panel was the Eliminate the Wait competency restoration panel. Other popular presentations included Professor Shannon’s legislative update, Judge Oscar Kazen’s AOT presentation, and the RISE Court presentation.

2021-2022 JCMH BENCH BOOKS

The 2nd and 3rd edition of the JCMH’s juvenile and adult bench books, respectively, debuted at the Summit. During the conference we distributed approximately 400 copies of each. Printing and shipping the bench books is an expensive undertaking but it is worthwhile if they are going to individuals and organizations that benefit from them. We encourage members, stakeholders, and any interested parties to utilize the electronic versions that can be found at the JCMH website. However, if you would like to order a hard copy of either bench book, please contact us at JCMH@txcourts.gov.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals [Mental Health Resource Guide](#) is a comprehensive volume of mental health and behavioral health resources and providers across the state of Texas.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR'S SUMMIT

- **Judge Hervey (JCMH Chair, Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals):** Judge Hervey recommended a lived experience presentation on substance use disorders.
- **Trina Ita (Assoc. Commissioner, Medical & Social Services Division, Behavioral Health Services, HHSC):** Ms. Ita recommended ending the Summit early on Friday, which would allow for a greater attention to Friday's presentations. Ms. Ita also suggested a more robust discussion, or an interactive session, about the juvenile justice system.
- **Kama Harris (JCMH Staff Attorney):** Ms. Harris gave an overview of suggested topics for next year's Summit that were taken from the evaluations. Suggested topics are: social worker involvement in the justice system, lived experience from individuals who have been through the NGRI process, social workers within a public defender's office, court ordered medications, and information sessions on advocating for individuals with mental health issues to a judge.
- **Kristi Taylor (JCMH Executive Director):** The JCMH is also considering a greater focus on the creation of diversionary courts and diversion programs.
- **Hon. Deborah Wigington (Judge, Comal County Court at Law #3):** Judge Wigington agrees that it would be beneficial to have either a whole session or a small breakout session for judges to learn about and discuss the creation of speciality courts for mental health.
- **Sheriff Dennis Wilson (Sheriff, Limestone County):** Sheriff Wilson suggested a breakout session for law enforcement officers so that they can better understand the state hospital waitlist system. A breakout session for law enforcement officers would also help to establish a better understanding of the roles of social workers, and the courts in the waitlist process.
- **Sonja Burns (Advocate):** Ms. Burns echoed the concerns raised by Sheriff Wilson regarding the waitlist. She also reiterated the importance of resource allocation and how that effects the competency restoration and diversion process. Ms. Burns recommended a presentation by a community that has been successful in diversion, so that communities that are struggling can gain insight into successful systems and processes.
- **Hon. John Specia (JCMH Jurist-in-Residence):** Judge Specia supports the idea of breakout sessions by discipline, but raised a concern about the logistics of such



sessions. However, Judge Specia recommended some type of interactive time for the dominant disciplines.

- **Melissa Shearer (Director, Travis Co. Mental Health Public Defender):** Ms. Shearer suggested a presentation on the issues related to IDD diagnosis when school records are not available. She also suggested a focus on young men of color who are misdiagnosed with a general emotional disturbance, when they should have been diagnosed on the Autism or IDD spectrum. This type of misdiagnosis can lock these young men out of a lot of services and causes them to struggle as adults. Ms. Shearer also recommended the topic of data collection for the Stepping Up Initiative, specifically presentations by different counties about how they are collecting data. Ms. Shearer also recommended the topic of outpatient competency restoration and recruiting and retaining service providers that reflect the diversity of the client population.

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Julie Wayman (Mental & Behavioral Health Manager, Texas Education Agency):** The Texas Education Agency is developing a school mental health website, <https://schoolmentalhealthtx.org>. The website is a toolkit that shows the TEA's vision and statutory responsibilities concerning mental health. The website is part of TEA's Project Aware. Project Aware is focused on prevention through the multi-tiered system of support. The website illustrates the concepts of the tiers of support systems and relays important information on support services and prevention strategies. The website also showcases safety planning resources and referrals. The TEA is also working with the Child Mental Health Care Consortium to install telehealth services in Texas school districts. The goal is early intervention before the need for the courts and judges become involved.
- **Hon. Evelyn Keyes (Ret. Justice, 1st Court of Appeals):** Justice Keyes gave her support of the JCMH but asked if the focus could expand to be more systemic and statewide, as opposed to a localized approach which seems to be dominant. Justice Keyes also had questions about the processes of the JCMH's Legislative Research Committee and how legislative proposals are created, evaluated and developed into legislation.
- **Justice Bland (JCMH Chair, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas):** Justice Bland echoed Justice Keyes' concerns and stated that the issues of funding and services are always examined through the lens of the judiciary. It is the goal of the JCMH to ensure that those issues intersect with their mission. Another important issue is the provision of information and access to that information, especially in regards to mental health law. Justice Keyes' grand vision is the creation of a stand alone Mental Health Code.



Creating such a code is a large undertaking which requires the inclusion of a multitude of disciplines. Justice Bland held up the JCMH Bench Book as an example of an early effort to create a compendium of mental health law.

- **Kristi Taylor (JCMH Executive Director):** Ms. Taylor informed members that if anyone is interested in joining the JCMH Legislative Research Committee (LRC) they should send an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov . The LRC is having its first meeting on Friday, November 5th, from 12:00pm-2:00pm. Interested members of the Collaborative Council are invited to attend. Also, Collaborative Council and Commission meeting dates have been selected for 2022, those dates are as follows:

Upcoming JCMH Commission Meeting Dates

DATE	TIME
2/11/2022	10:00am-2:00pm

JCMH Collaborative Council Meeting Datesⁱ

DATE	TIME
3/1/2022	12:00pm-1:00pm
6/6/2022	12:00pm-1:00pm
10/3/2022	12:00pm-1:00pm

CLOSING

Kristi Taylor thanked the Collaborative Council for their valuable input and hard work. The JCMH looks forward to the coming new year and working with the Collaborative Council to further its goals.

ⁱ These dates are tentative and subject to change if the High Courts' schedule conflicts. Updates will be sent if there is a change.