

THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS
THE TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH



October 6, 2025
Meeting Notebook



**October 6th, 2025
Meeting Notebook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	TAB
Agenda	1
Executive Committee, Commissioners, & Collaborative Council	2
April Meeting Minutes	3
Budget	4

Tab 1
Agenda



Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health Commission Meeting

October 6th, 2025

1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria
2222 W Loop S, Houston, TX 77027

AGENDA

1:00	Welcome	Hon. Jane Bland Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III Hon. Rebeca Huddle Hon. Gina Parker
1:10	Executive Director Report • Budget • 2025 Legislative Session • OCA and Texas Judicial Council • JCMH JIRs and Projects	Kristi Taylor Patrick Passmore Hon. Bill Boyce Jeffrey Tsunekawa Hon. John Specia, Jr. Hon. Brent Carr JCMH Staff
1:40	Partner Organization Updates • Law Enforcement • Health & Human Services Commission • Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute • TCOOMMI • Texas Commission on Jail Standards	Hon. Jane Bland Chief Mike Lee Trina Ita Dr. Jennie Simpson Yolanda Lewis April Zamora Brandon Wood
2:25	Announcements	Hon. Jane Bland
2:30	Adjourn	Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III

Tab 2

**Executive Committee,
Commissioners,
& Collaborative Council**

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Executive Committee

Hon. Jane Bland, Chair

Justice

Supreme Court of Texas

Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III, Chair

Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Hon. Bill Boyce, Vice-Chair

Justice (Fmr.)

Fourteenth Court of Appeals

Partner

Alexander Dubose & Jefferson, LLP

Hon. Rebeca Huddle, Deputy Liaison

Justice

Supreme Court of Texas

Hon. Gina Parker, Deputy Liaison

Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Hon. Brent Carr

Judge (Ret.)

Tarrant County Criminal Court 9

Hon. John J. Specia, Jr.

Judge (Ret.)

225th District Court

Of Counsel

Mimari Anderson Clifone & Watkins,
PLLC

Megan LaVoie, J.D.

Administrative Director

Office of Court Administration

Commissioners

Magdalena Morales-Aina, L.P.C.-S.

Director

El Paso County Community Supervision
& Corrections Department

M. Connie Almeida, Ph.D.

Director of Behavioral Health

Fort Bend County Behavioral Health
Services

Hon. Devon Anderson

President & CEO

Justice Forward

Hon. Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt

Judge

449th District Court

Jason Bramow, J.D.

Assistant General Counsel

Office of the Governor

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti

Chief of the Mental Health Division

Tarrant County Criminal District
Attorney

Shandra Carter, L.C.S.W.-S.

Executive Director

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Hon. Camile DuBose

Judge (Ret.)

38th Judicial District

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Hon. Alyse Ferguson

Of Counsel

Rosenthal Kalabus & Therrian

Associate Judge

Collin County Probate Court

Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore

Judge

City of Allen Municipal Court

Hon. Matt Hand

Judge

Potter County Court at Law No. 2

Courtney Harvey, Ph.D.

State Mental Health Coordinator &

Associate Commissioner

Office of Mental Health Coordination,

Texas Health & Human Services

Commission

Hon. Joan Huffman

Senator, District 17

Texas Senate

Trina Ita, M.A., L.P.C.

Deputy Executive Commissioner for

Behavioral Health Services

Texas Health & Human Services

Commission

Hon. David W. Jahn

Judge

Denton County Probate Court No. 1

Hon. Oscar J. Kazen

Judge

Bexar County Probate Court No. 1

Adrienne Kennedy, M.A.

Past President; National Board Member

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Hon. M. Sue Kurita

Judge

El Paso County Court at Law No. 6

Beth Lawson, M.B.A.

Chief Executive Officer

StarCare Specialty Health System

Chief Mike Lee, M.A.

Director of Research & Development

Harris County Sheriff's Office

Hon. Elizabeth Byer Leonard

Judge

238th District Court

Yolanda Lewis, MPA

Executive Vice President for Justice &

Health

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Hon. Pam Liston

City Attorney

City of Decatur

Associate Judge

Town of Fairview

Octavio Martinez, Jr., M.D., M.P.H.,

M.B.A.

Executive Director

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Hon. Stacey Mathews

Judge

277th District Court

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum

Judge

Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2

Beth Mitchell, J.D.

Litigation Coordinator

Disability Rights Texas

Hon. Joe Moody

Representative, District 78

Texas House of Representatives

Hon. Brandy Mueller

Judge

403rd Criminal District Court

Hon. Roxanne Nelson

Justice of the Peace

Burnet County Precinct 1

Denise Oncken, J.D., M.B.A.

Bureau Chief (Ret.)

Harris County District Attorney

Hon. Larry Phillips

Judge

59th District Court

Lee Pierson, J.D.

Chief Mental Health Prosecutor

Dallas County District Attorney

Scott Schalchlin, M.Ed., J.D.

*Deputy Executive Commissioner for the
Health & Specialty Care System*

Texas Health & Human Services
Commission

Prof. Brian Shannon, J.D.

Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished

Professor

Texas Tech University School of Law

Eric Smith, M.S., M.S.W.

Founder

Eric W. T. Smith Consulting

Matt Smith, L.P.C.-S.

*Director of Statewide Youth Services
Continuum*

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Hon. Selena Solis

Judge

243rd District Court

Chief Stan Standridge

Chief of Police

San Marcos Police Department

Hon. Charles Stephens

Judge

Comal County Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Victor Villarreal

Judge

Webb County Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Cynthia Wheless

Judge

417th District Court

Steve Wohleb, J.D.

General Counsel

Texas Hospital Association

Brandon Wood

Executive Director

Texas Commission on Jail Standards

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Hon. J.R. Woolley

Justice of the Peace

Waller County Precinct 2

Wayne Young, M.B.A., L.P.C., F.A.C.H.E.

Chief Executive Officer

The Harris Center

April Zamora, M.Ed., L.C.D.C.

Reentry & Integration Division Director

Texas Correctional Office on Offenders

with Medical or Mental Impairments,

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Collaborative Council

Hon. Sheila Garcia-Bence

Judge

Cameron County Criminal Court No. 4

Kelsey Bernstein

Chief of Government Relations

Texas Council of Community Centers

Hon. Elizabeth Berry

First Assistant Public Defender

Concho Valley Public Defender's Office

Catherine Bialick, M.P.Aff.

Deputy Associate Commissioner

Office of Forensic Services &
Coordination, Texas Health & Human
Services Commission

Alison Mohr Boleware, L.M.S.W.

Director of Policy

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Tim Bray, J.D.

Vice President for Justice & Health Policy

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Amanda Britton, M.Ed., L.P.C., N.C.C.

Clinical Director

Ector County Juvenile Probation
Department

Virginia Brown, Ph.D., M.A.

*Research Scholar in Social Justice &
Population Health*

The Hastings Center

Hon. Sarah Bruchmiller

Judge

368th District Court

Sonja Burns

Mental Health Advocate

Christine Busse, MSW

Peer Policy Fellow

NAMI Texas

Angel Carroll

*Director of Community Engagement &
Partnerships*

MEASURE

Hon. Jennifer Cates

Judge

Canyon Municipal Court

Uche Chibueze, Psy.D., A.B.P.P.

Assistant Director of Health Services

Harris County Juvenile Probation
Department

Hon. Brad Clark

Judge

Tarrant County Criminal Court No. 5

Armando Colombo

President & Chief Executive Officer

The Menninger Clinic

Hon. Adolfo Cordova

Judge

197th District Court

Bill Cox, J.D.

Director of Public Defense Improvement

Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Leah Davies, L.M.S.W.

Cause Programs Manager

CLEAN Cause Foundation

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Colleen Davis, J.D.

Assistant County Attorney
Burnet County Attorney's Office

Hon. Karen Diaz

Justice of the Peace
San Patricio County Precinct 4

Dana V. Drexler, J.D.

Deputy Division Director
Harris County Attorney's Office

Sgt. Shawn Edwards

President
Texas CIT Association

Hon. Drue Farmer

Board Chair
StarCare Lubbock

Lesli Fitzpatrick, J.D.

Director of Special Litigation
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Eric Fox

Law Enforcement Liaison
Central Counties Services

Tucker Furlow, J.D.

Assistant District Attorney
Civil Division, Hays County Criminal
District Attorney's Office

Lori Gallo, L.M.S.W.

Forensic Social Worker
Bexar County Managed Assigned
Counsel

Krishnaveni Gundu

Co-Founder & Executive Director
Texas Jail Project

Rachel Hampton, L.M.S.W.

Chief Mission Officer
Lone Star Justice Alliance

Greg Hansch, M.S.W.

Executive Director
NAMI Texas

Hon. James C. Henderson

Judge
Grayson County Court at Law No. 1

Michaela Himes, J.D., M.T.S.

Special Programs Division Deputy Chief
Dallas County Public Defender's Office

Hon. Echo Hutson

Judge
Montgomery County Court at Law No. 4

Hon. Sandra Jackson

Judge
302nd District Court

Lee Johnson, M.P.A.

Chief Executive Officer
Texas Council of Community Centers

Windy Johnson

Program Manager, IGR
Texas Conference of Urban Counties

Hon. Rocky Jones

Judge
203rd District Court

Louise Joy, J.D.

Member
Reed Claymon, PLLC

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Leah Kelly

Certified Family Partner
Integral Care

Hon. Evelyn Keyes

Justice (Ret.)
First Court of Appeals

Sgt. Michael Krogmann

Crisis Intervention Team Sergeant
Round Rock Police Department

Hon. Kirsten Legore

Judge
Guadalupe County Court at Law No. 2

Jonathan Lemuel

Director of Forensic Services
Bluebonnet Trails Community Services

Scott LePor, D.O.

Medical Director
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

**Patricia Lerma, N.C.C., L.P.C.,
L.C.D.C.**

*Doctoral Student; Research & Teaching
Assistant*
University of Texas Health Rio Grande
Valley

Katrina LeVert, J.D.

Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County Attorney's Office

Chris Lopez, J.D.

Assistant General Counsel
State Hospital, Texas Health & Human
Services Commission

Hon. Lela Mays

Judge
283rd Judicial District Court

Rosie Medina, J.M.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
El Paso County Juvenile Probation
Department

Kristin Meeks, J.D.

Senior Policy Analyst
Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Joanna Mendez, M.S.S.W., L.C.S.W.

Assistant Adjunct Professor
Steve Hicks School of Social Work,
University of Texas at Austin

Officer Brittany Moreno, M.A.

Mental Health Officer
Sugar Land Police Department

Jeffery Murray

Domestic Security Strategist
National Threat Assessment Center,
United States Secret Service

Hon. Rita Noel

Student Support Services
Denison Independent School District

Evan Norton, Psy.D.

Deputy Executive Director
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Patricia Ortiz, M.D.

*Assistant Professor, Psychiatry Clerkship
Director*
Texas Tech Health El Paso

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Keely Petty, CPsy.D.

Training Coordinator
WestCare

Officer Terry Qualls

Crisis Intervention Coordinator
McKinney Police Department

Chris Ritter, J.D., M.Ed.

Chief Legal Counsel
State Bar of Texas

Trish Rivera

Rural Health Specialist
Texas Department of Agriculture

Michelle Romero, M.P.A.

Associate Director
Texas Medical Association

Simone Salloum, J.D.

Policy Attorney
Texas Health & Human Services
Commission

Melissa Schank, M.A.

Executive Director
Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers
Association

Jonas Schwartz, M.S.

Program Manager
Texas Workforce Commission

Susan Scott, Ph.D., L.P.C.

*Manager of Community Interventions &
Supports*
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Melissa Shearer, J.D.

Director
Travis County Mental Health Public
Defender's Office

Mike Shirley, J.D.

Chief Prosecutor
Montgomery County District Attorney's
Office

Hon. Mike Smith

Judge
35th District Court

Sandra Smith, Ph.D.

Chief Programs Officer
One World Recovery Center

Lt. Scott Soland

Patrol Lieutenant
Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

Hon. Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez

Judge
Bexar County Court at Law No. 13

Hon. Nancy Tanner

County Judge
Potter County

Jennifer Toon

Executive Director
Lioness Justice Impacted Women's
Alliance

Haley Turner, M.S.W.

*Deputy Executive Commissioner for
Community Services*
Texas Health & Human
Services Commission

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Hon. Ryan Kellus Turner

Executive Director

Texas Municipal Courts

Education Center

Jay Wooten, J.D.

Chief Public Defender

Galveston County Misdemeanor Mental

Health Public Defender's Office

Hon. Brian Keith Umphress

County Judge

Jack County

Andrea Wright, M.D.

Chief of Forensic Medicine

Office of Forensic Services &

Coordination, Texas Health & Human

Services Commission

Sally Uncapher, J.D.

Assistant District Attorney

Bexar County District Attorney's Office

Hon. Michael York

Justice of the Peace

Lee County Precinct 2

Krista Varney, M.S.W.

Public Policy Coordinator

Texas Council on Family Violence

Kyle Walker

Legal Systems Manager

Ending Community Homelessness

Coalition

Nicole Weaver

YES Waiver Manager, Mental Health and

Substance Use Programs

Texas Health & Human Services

Commission

Thea Whalen, J.D.

Executive Director

Texas Justice Courts Training Center

Hon. Deborah Wigington

Judge

Comal County Court at Law No. 3

Hon. Angela Williams

Justice of the Peace

Williamson County Precinct 2

Thomas Wilson, J.D.

Assistant District Attorney, Civil Division

Smith County District Attorney's Office

Tab 3

April Meeting Minutes

**TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING**

April 9th, 2025

10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Texas Law Center

1414 Colorado St, Austin, TX 78701

Commissioner Attendees

Hon. Jane Bland, *Chair, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas*

Hon. Jesse F. McClure, *Chair, Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals*

Hon. Rebeca Huddle, *Deputy Liaison, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas*

Hon. Gina Parker, *Deputy Liaison, Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals*

Hon. Bill Boyce, *Vice-Chair, Justice (Fmr.), 14th Court of Appeals; Partner, Alexander Dubose & Jefferson*

Hon. Brent Carr, *Judge (Ret.), Tarrant County Criminal Court No. 9*

Hon. John Specia, Jr., *Judge (Ret.); Of Counsel, Mimari Anderson Clifone & Watkins*

Megan LaVoie, *Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration*

Dr. M. Connie Almeida, *Director, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services*

Hon. Devon Anderson, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Justice Forward*

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti, *Chief of the Mental Health Division, Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office*

Dr. Evan Norton for **Shandra Carter**, *Executive Director, Texas Juvenile Justice Department*

Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore, *Judge, City of Allen Municipal Court*

Hon. Matt Hand, *Judge, Potter County Court at Law No. 2*

Dr. Courtney Harvey, *Associate Commissioner, Texas Health & Human Services Commission*

Hon. Dave W. Jahn, *Judge, Denton County Probate Court No. 1*

Hon. Oscar Kazen, *Judge, Bexar County Probate Court No. 1*

Adrienne Kennedy, *Past President, National Alliance on Mental Illness*

Hon. M. Sue Kurita, *Judge, El Paso County Court at Law No. 6*

Beth Lawson, *Chief Executive Officer, StarCare Specialty Health System*

Yolanda Lewis, *Executive Vice President for Justice and Health, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute*

Hon. Stacey Mathew, *Judge, 277th District Court*

Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum, *Judge, Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2*

Beth Mitchell, *Litigation Coordinator, Disability Rights Texas*

Magdalena Morales-Aina, *Director, El Paso County Community Supervision & Corrections*

Hon. Brandy Mueller, *Judge, 403rd Criminal District Court*

Denise Oncken, *Mental Health Bureau Chief (Ret.), Harris County District Attorney's Office*

Hon. Larry Phillips, *Judge, 59th District Court*

Lee Pierson, *Chief of Mental Health Division, Dallas County District Attorney's Office*

Vickie Rice, *Mental Health and Specialty Court Supervisor, Dallas County Public Defender's Office*

Dr. Jennie Simpson for **Scott Schalchlin**, *Deputy Executive Commissioner, Texas Health & Human Services Commission*

Prof. Brian Shannon, *Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, Texas Tech University School of Law*

Eric Smith, *Founder, Eric W.T. Smith Consulting*

Matt Smith, *Director of Statewide Youth Services Continuum, Texas Juvenile Justice Department*

Hon. Selena Solis, *Judge, 449th District Court*

Chief Stan Standridge, *Chief of Police, San Marcos Police Department*

Hon. Victor Villarreal, *Judge, Webb County Court at Law No. 2*

Hon. Cynthia Wheless, *Judge, 417th District Court*

Steve Wohleb, *General Counsel, Texas Hospital Association*

Brandon S. Wood, *Executive Director, Texas Commission on Jail Standards*

Wayne Young, *Chief Executive Officer, The Harris Center*

April Zamora, *Director, Re-entry and Integration Division, Texas Department of Criminal Justice*

Welcome and Announcements

Justice Jane Bland opened the meeting and announced the appointment of Judge Gina Parker, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, as Deputy Liaison to the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health. Judge Parker has extensive experience with the criminal justice system as a prosecutor and criminal defense attorney.

Judge Gina Parker shared how mental illness and substance use disorders underlie many of our society's struggles as seen through her experience as a prosecutor, criminal defense attorney, and judge. Judge Parker previously started a manufacturing company that hired people who have been incarcerated to help reduce recidivism. She recognized the importance of the JCMH's work and expressed optimism for the future.

Judge Jesse F. McClure III reintroduced himself to attendees. He serves as a JCMH Chair after his elevation from Deputy Liaison. He served as the Deputy Liaison from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals since 2021. Judge McClure has experience serving as a prosecutor and as a District Court Judge.

Justice Rebeca Huddle shared updates from the Supreme Court's Children's Commission, where she serves as Deputy Chair. The Children's Commission has started a Consortium on Trauma Informed Court Practices. The Consortium provides a statewide bi-monthly forum for judges handling child welfare cases to learn about trauma-informed and trauma-responsive court practices.

Executive Director Report

Kristi Taylor, Executive Director, thanked all attendees for their work and support of the commission. Ms. Taylor provided an update on the Court Liaison Program. This was a pilot program that supported three counties by funding a Court Liaison role with step-downs in financial support over the 3-year program. JCMH piloted the program in Grayson, Denton, and Smith counties. JCMH included in its legislative request an exceptional item for additional funding to expand the program to five more counties. Additionally, JCMH has contracted with the National Center for State Courts to write an evaluation of the first cohort of the program and an implementation guide. This guide would provide a step-by-step process to counties to implement the program in their courts, either receiving funding from JCMH or through other grants.

Ms. Taylor spoke at the Treatment Advocacy Center's (TAC) National Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Symposium with Collaborative Council members Daniela Chisolm and Dr. Patricia Ortiz on March 27th. TAC is hosting an AOT Workshop on June 5th and 6th in San Antonio, Texas. Ms. Taylor provided an explanation of AOT courts. It is a program that is run by the judge with probate jurisdiction through civil commitment laws. The program aims to facilitate treatment options for defendants accused of low-level offenses and assist

those who are possibly incompetent, but don't qualify for Mental Health Court. Judge Elaine Brown, Hays County Court-at-Law #3, who holds general jurisdiction, is opening an AOT Court in addition to her Mental Health Treatment Court. Her unique jurisdiction allows her to evaluate both programs for the best fit for each defendant.

Ms. Taylor noted that there are not many AOT Courts currently operating in Texas, but those operating or those interested in learning more or creating their own are welcome to join the Texas AOT Collaborative. Ms. Taylor leads the Collaborative with Daniela Chisolm. The next meetings are April 15th and August 15th.

Ms. Taylor announced the resignation of Molly Davis, Director of Operations. Ms. Davis will be leaving the JCMH to join an Office of General Counsel for Juvenile Probation. Ms. Taylor thanked Ms. Davis for her service.

Budget Update

Patrick Passmore provided an overview of the JCMH budget. As of March 2025, the JCMH had approximately 60% of its budget remaining and is on track with expenditures. JCMH ended Fiscal Year 2024 with approximately \$5,000 in unexpended funds and will carry those into the current fiscal year as unobligated funds.

Mr. Passmore reviewed the exceptional item requests for JCMH included in the Supreme Court's legislative appropriations request. The requests included operating costs, an additional full-time employee position, and a new and expanded phase of the Court Liaison Program. The Senate version of HB 1 included funding for all JCMH requests, but the House version of HB 1 only included funding for operating expenses. Mr. Passmore will provide an update on the outcome of the legislative session and JCMH budget at the next meeting.

Legislative Update

Justice Bill Boyce, JCMH Vice-Chair and Chair of the Legislative Research Committee, informed attendees that the Commission proposed thirteen pieces of legislation or amendments, and all were adopted the Texas Judicial Council.

Professor Brian Shannon, Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, Texas Tech University School of Law, informed attendees that those recommendations were sponsored and introduced in the legislature by Senator Zaffirini in SB 1164 and SB 2213. They have been referred to the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice. SB 1164 contains proposals A-D and focuses on civil related provisions. SB 2213 contains the criminal related JCMH proposals. In the House, Representative Moody filed the respective companion bills HB 5463 and HB 5465.

Professor Shannon noted bills that were not drafted based on the JCMH recommendations but contain the same language or concepts:

- SB 643 from Senator Johnson, and its companion, HB 3163 from Representative Leach, match JCMH proposals for the clarification of venue for court ordered mental health services. As of April 3rd, the House bill has been voted favorably from the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence, and the Senate bill has been referred to committee but not had a hearing.
- HB 1583 from Representative Hull would make similar changes to the Peace Officer Notification of Emergency Detention form as the JCMH proposed changes. This bill has been voted favorably as substituted from the House Committee on Homeland, Public Safety, and Veterans.

Professor Shannon announced that his book, the 7th edition of *The Texas Criminal Procedure and the Offender with Mental Illness*, has been published by NAMI.

JIR Update

Hon. John J. Specia, Jr., Judge (Ret.) and JCMH Jurist in Residence, shared that he remains interested in the role of Judges as leaders and conveners. Judge Specia announced he and JCMH staff are creating a video and other resources for judges and others to learn how judges can be leaders while adhering to the judicial ethics.

Hon. Brent Carr, Judge (Ret.) and JCMH Jurist in Residence, reported that because a majority of Texas counties are not urban, he is interested in evaluating how to best help rural communities. To do so, Judge Carr is gathering a discussion group to brainstorm ideas and may form a committee.

Staff Updates

Molly Davis, Director of Operations, announced that on April 4th, JCMH finished the second cohort of the Treatment Courts Collaborative. This online discussion group is for judges interested in starting or improving a new a treatment court. The judges receive education on grants and data collection and are paired with experienced treatment court judges for mentorship. Over two years, ten judges have participated – serving 36 counties. Ms. Davis thanked Judge Carr for leading the Collaborative and Judge Elizabeth Leonard, Judge Camille Dubose, and Judge Selena Solis for serving as mentors.

Ms. Davis shared a heartfelt goodbye, and thanked the Executive Committee, Commissioners, Collaborative Council, and JCMH staff for their support over the years and dedication to the mission.

Kama Harris, Director of Policy and Education, informed attendees that registration for the Summit was open, and that the Summit had 300 registered attendees as of April 9th. JCMH is accepting scholarship applications and speaker proposals for the Summit. Ms. Harris announced the Summit Curriculum Committee will meet May 22nd.

Ms. Harris announced that the Adult Bench Committee will meet following the legislative session and complete the book before the Summit.

Andy Perkins, Staff Attorney, informed attendees that the JCMH continues to send out resource letters and Jurist-in-Residence letters to update recipients on programs, events, and resources across the state. JCMH continues to update the Innovations Map and asks attendees to help add more resources to the map.

Mr. Perkins provided updates on the Substance Use Disorder and Data committees. The Data Committee created a Best Practices Guide and is collaborating with the Office of Court Administration to further develop data collection guidance.

Kristi Taylor announced that Rose McBride received the Award of Excellence from the Texas CIT Association for her work on the JCMH podcast – Reimagining Justice.

Rose McBride, Communications Manager, reported that representatives from 120 out of 254 counties in Texas have registered for the Summit. Ms. McBride reported that JCMH is celebrating two years of the podcast, *Reimagining Justice*, with 24 published episodes. The podcast has been streamed 1471 times, and the top three episodes are “Multisystemic Therapy (MST) with Bailey Hagler,” “Whole Person Project with Kirk Noaker,” and “Pretrial Intervention with Lee Pierson.” Ms. McBride presented a video highlighting the Reimagining Justice podcast.

OCA and Texas Judicial Council Update

Megan LaVoie, Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration, informed attendees that OCA signed a contract for a text reminder program in August, and the program provides reminders for all case types. Forty counties are signed up for the program and two counties (Tarrant & Cameron) have implemented it. The program is free for counties to opt into. Data has shown that text reminders can be one of the best ways to improve court appearances.

Ms. LaVoie informed attendees that OCA has published the 6-month reports for District and County Court performance. These reports are required per Section 72.083(b) of the Texas Government Code (HB 2384 88th R). The final reports to gather the full year are due November 1st.

Ms. LaVoie informed attendees that Erin Morgan, Specialty Courts Program Manager, OCA, is presenting to the Governor's Specialty Court Advisory Council on June 6th regarding best practices and data.

Ms. LaVoie provided a legislative update to attendees. There were over 5,600 House bills filed, over 3,00 Senate bills filed, and with some joint resolutions, the total was over 9,100 bills filed in the 89th Session. As of April 9th, 28 bills had already been sent to the Governor for signature. OCA had 1,983 fiscal note requests and had completed over 1,500 as of April 9th. The legislature has introduced eleven data positions to aid each administrative judicial region with data collection and case management in their budget, The Senate included funding for specialty court case management systems in their budget. Ms. LaVoie highlighted some additional Texas Judicial Council recommendations for the Commission to monitor although not related to mental health: SB 1996, HB5078; SB 2070; HB 5128; HB 1761, SB293; SB1575, HB452.

Justice Jane Bland highlighted the dedication of Megan LaVoie and the OCA staff and thanked them for their work.

Commissioner Updates

Hon. Oscar Kazen, Judge, Bexar County Probate Court No. 1, reported that his court has been working with Office of Court Administration to develop methods for accurately counting probate data. Judge Kazen will present at the Treatment Advocacy Center workshop in San Antonio on June 6th.

Professor Brian Shannon informed attendees that he and Kristi Taylor will be presenting at the Treatment Advocacy Center workshop. Professor Shannon reported that the Legislative Research Committee proposed legislation to transfer those facing nonviolent charges to outpatient civil commitment.

Steve Wohleb, General Counsel, Texas Hospital Association, noted that he has been hearing of problems from some of his constituent hospitals regarding the timeliness of medication orders with court-ordered mental health treatment. Mr. Wohleb called for the support of the Commission to lead discussions addressing this issue.

Hon. Devon Anderson, CEO, Justice Forward, noted a discrepancy between the waiting time for expunctions between people in drug and veterans' courts compared to mental health courts. People wait two years after probation in drug and veterans' courts compared to five years for mental health courts. Ms. Anderson informed attendees that Representative Ann Johnson filed HB 3261 to address this discrepancy.

Brandon Wood, Executive Director, Texas Commission on Jail Standards, reported that his commission is collaborating with Texas Commission on Law Enforcement on training

classes for justice-involved veterans and IDD) training for jailers. Mr. Wood reported the IDD Advisory Committee remains active and there were bills filed relating to IDD. He reported that they continue to monitor the impact of federal funding cuts on local mental health authorities and local IDD authorities as it relates to treatment services for those in the county jail.

Vickie Rice, Dallas County Public Defender's Office, reported that she will return to her previous role as a new chief public defender has been named. Dallas County is starting an AOT Court which will have a dedicated full-time position. Ms. Rice noted that there is much enthusiasm in the county for the program.

Lee Pierson reported that Metrocare Services received the grant to start that AOT Court in Dallas County and his office looks forward to utilizing the program.

Hon. Matt Hand, Judge, Potter County Court at Law No. 2, asked for ideas on ensuring defendants report to the local mental health authority on a personal recognizance (PR) or surety bond. He said the data shows that on PR bonds close to zero percent report to the local mental health authority and low participation on surety bonds.

Eric Smith, Founder, Eric W.T. Smith Consulting, stated that his clients are facing some of the challenges he faced himself over 15 years ago with AOT programs. These clients and their family often experience the criteria for emergency detention or civil commitment as too high a bar, and he hopes we can address these issues and better serve those with mental health needs.

April Zamora, Director of the Reentry and Integration Division, Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), reported that her division is revamping many programs following the sunset process. The division is evaluating programs focused on substance use disorders, including Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility Program (SAFPF) programs for those on probation, and mental health screenings. Ms. Zamora reported that she will remain in charge of rehabilitation, re-entry, and the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI). Her division has also picked up the youthful offender program, aka Champions Youth Program, and the division is evaluating how to adequately serve those in the program with mental health needs. Ms. Zamora reported that TDCJ included funding for additional duly diagnosed residential beds in their legislative request, but they are nearing 37,000 people in their system that have a mental health condition.

Chief Stan Standridge, Chief of Police, San Marcos Police Department, reported frustration that his agency has been required to shift their focus to immigration, when there are other high priority issues. He stated that many police departments are in a fiscal predicament as the ad valorem tax revenue is decreasing and grants are being frozen, even while more work is being demanded.

Dr. Jennie Simpson, on behalf of **Scott Schalchlin**, Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC), reported a continued decline of the forensic waitlist by 32% from 2500 to 1700, but noted that demand has increased every year since 2021. She reported that HHSC is making the Jail In-reach Learning Collaborative a statewide program available to all counties. She also reported that forensic support teams are currently being piloted in Dallas and Travis counties.

Dr. Evan Norton on behalf of **Shandra Carter**, Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), reported that TJJD have almost completed implementation of dialectical behavior therapy at all five secure facilities. Since 2022, TJJD has almost doubled its mental health professionals working in the state secure facilities. TJJD is in year two of a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for a mapping project with Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI). TJJD will collaborate with MMHPI to develop a 10-year strategic plan following the mapping project.

Matt Smith, Director of Statewide Youth Services Continuum, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, announced his new role at TJJD and thanked his former colleagues from Williamson County for 23 years of incredible work. He reported that Williamson County completed a three-year youth SIM-mapping project in partnership with Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. An emerging issue he sees in most regions is school vaping. It is overwhelming the system and utilizing many detention beds. They are working with DFPS and schools to keep kids shallow in the system.

Hon. Tyra McCollum, Judge, Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2, has a juvenile court and a veterans' court that hears both felonies and misdemeanors. The veterans court launched a peer mentor program. They wait six months after graduation to ensure stability before graduates become peer mentors. She also reported on a Fort Bend County program that presents a digital banner to advertise veterans' courts and other treatment courts on tablets utilized by the Sheriff's office at booking.

Hon. Victor Villareal, Judge, Webb County Court at Law No. 2, informed attendees his court has a DWI specialty court and a juvenile drug rehab rehabilitation court. He noted that the juvenile drug rehabilitation court is known as the Youth Success Court to avoid stigma or negative connotations. In May, the court will have its first graduating class with seven individuals.

Dr. Courtney Harvey, Associate Commissioner, Texas Health & Human Services Commission, thanked Brandon Wood for his incredible work. She noted that there are additional provisions in the legislature that would expand HHSC's efforts and provide funding for programs such as dialectal behavioral therapy, multi-systemic therapy, and intensive outpatient treatment. Dr. Harvey reported that HHSC is collaborating with TJJD and the Department of Family & Protective Services to evaluate barriers to the work of juvenile justice and mental health providers and implement solutions.

Hon. Selena Solis, Judge, 449th District Court, reported on INSPIRE, an adult felony mental health court of two years. The specialty courts in El Paso are working together to evaluate alternate funding sources in the face of uncertainty. She is participating in the OCA workshop for best practices and needs ideas on developing buy-in from community stakeholders, including district attorneys. She also reported on a project with the University of Texas at El Paso called Shadows to Light, where poetry and literature are used to deal with trauma and expression of emotions. She recommended that the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health consider El Paso as a future Summit location.

Beth Mitchell, Litigation Coordinator, Disability Rights Texas, reported that she anticipates a decision in October following a bench trial in the ongoing lawsuit claiming unconstitutional pretrial detention in incompetency cases. She also commented on the need for more judicial training on IDD and related statutes and processes.

Hon. Cynthia Porter-Gore, Judge, City of Allen Municipal Court, reported an influx of 15-to-28-year-old men hallucinating after use of THC. She pointed to research that vaping concentrates THC and may result in the onset of schizoaffective disorders.

Magdalena Morales-Aina, Director of Community Supervisions and Corrections Department, El Paso County, stated that El Paso repurposed their gang unit to be FORGE (Fortitude, Opportunity, Responsibility, Gratitude, and Empowerment), for the 17 to 25-year-old transitional ages, who are difficult to reach and to treat. The unit has partnered with Big Brothers and Big Sisters to facilitate mentorship of those in 17 to 25-year-olds. Ms. Morales reported that she has partnered with the Sheriff's Office to pilot provides computers for those who are in custody for violations to complete the Texas Risk Assessment. This allows for them to identify what programs they are eligible for and approach the courts with this information, rather than wait on the court to order the assessment. Also, AllRise has a project with the Bureau of Justice Administration to create a new assessment for violence predictions and mental health to determine if a candidate must be detained pretrial. She would like to see Texas be involved as a validator.

Hon. Brandy Mueller, Judge, 403rd Criminal District Court, has a specialty court for emerging adults ages 17 through 24 in partnership with the probation department and the district attorney's office. They have monthly court settings, provide counseling, and include individuals with mental health, substance use disorders, or IDD. She noted that the wait time between arrest and when the services start for a defendant in her county can sometimes be years. For defendants, especially juveniles, this wait time can escalate the violence of their crimes faster without treatment. She asked for good ideas on how to confront the long wait times. Judge Mueller also noted that many jurors are experiencing trauma from the increase in body camera technology where jurors experience violent crimes during trials. She would like information and ideas around supporting jurors who have been traumatized, including exit interviews with counselors for jurors to help decrease mental health impact post-jury service.

Wayne Young, CEO, Harris Center, reported on Hospital to Homes, a crisis residential program for the unhoused discharging from psychiatric hospitals. They've had 50 to 70% reduced recidivism, 50 to 60% fewer new bookings, and 50% reduced utilization of services. He noted the abrupt withdrawal of funding amounting to a \$7.9 million reduction has forced the Harris Center to close 1/3 of those Hospital to Homes beds. Mr. Young announced that there would be an IDD juvenile justice virtual training in June.

Beth Lawson, CEO, StarCare Specialty Health System, reported a concern that the DEA might be rolling back flexibilities on telehealth. She commented that telehealth is the lifeblood of providing mental health treatment to rural or frontier counties.

Hon. Cynthia Wheless, Judge, 417th District Court, stated the JCMH Rural Issues Committee should look for ways to implement the regionalization that has occurred in 35 secured juvenile detention centers across the state because the program could serve as a good model for the rural counties. She also thanked the Commission staff and her peers on the Commission for the contributions that have guided her work.

Dr. Connie Almeida, Director of Behavioral Services, Fort Bend County, informed attendees about the history of her department. It was founded fifteen years ago by the Council of Judges to focus on the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice. Today it is under the Commissioner's Court and has a staff of approximately 20 people who provide trainings focused on criminal justice. She reminded the Commission that Fort Bend County received a grant from the Department of Justice through the Office of Justice Programs for Second Chance, which supports children of incarcerated parents to promote successful reintegration. At a national conference at Arizona State University, she learned that a study in Minnesota showed that one of every six kids had been impacted by a parent who had been incarcerated. She is working on parenting programs in jail that support caregivers, address trauma, and ensure in-person visitation with children of incarcerated parents. She also noted that in Texas, more data around the subject is needed.

Hon. Larry Phillips, Judge, 59th District Court, has an adult felony mental health court and a competency court for status hearings—if anyone is found incompetent in Grayson County, they get transferred to his court. He informed attendees that he stepped down as president of the Texas Association of Specialty Courts at their annual conference in March, which had 550 attendees. The Texas Association of Specialty Courts accomplished one of its goals by ensuring that OCA had a dedicated specialty courts position. Judge Phillips highlighted the development of a specialty courts case management program. At the request of Rosie Medina, Judge Phillips recognized House Bill 1831 and Senate Bill 1431, which will allow more juveniles to enter specialty courts. Judge Phillips thanked JCMH staff and Commissioners for their work and highlighted the impact the JCMH has had in his community.

Denise Oncken, Mental Health Bureau Chief (Ret.), Harris County District Attorney's Office, announced her retirement after 39 years of service. She is currently serving on the board of the Albert Switzer Fellowship foundation and trying to recruit law, medical, and

public health students to work in the mental health field. Ms. Oncken is also working on homelessness in Harris County. She highlighted that the Houston Bar Association has a wellness committee.

Hon. Stacey Mathews, Judge, 277th District Court, noted that there were not as many ideas to borrow and share before the commission. She reported seeing cases and research about THC contributing to schizoaffective disorder occurrence. To address vaping and THC juvenile cases, Hutto ISD has partnered with the juvenile services department and the prosecutor's office to conduct a first offender program with additional juvenile services. She reported that a child welfare judge in Williamson County has created listening groups and public and private partnerships that are developing into a hub with resources for parents of youth in the juvenile justice system. The collaboration is breaking down silos between people who all want to help kids and their families. Regarding juror trauma, Williamson County created a handout and received approval from county commissioners to support the needs of jurors when they have experienced trauma, such as short-term bereavement counselors.

Hon. Sue Kurita, Judge, El Paso County Court at Law No. 6, announced she has been named the local administrative judge for El Paso and hopes to start right away with projects that better coordinate courts in the county and improve awareness with a training and CLE for judges.

Yolanda Lewis, Executive Vice President for Justice and Health, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, encouraged commissioners by saying other states are jealous that Texas has a Judicial Commission on Mental Health. Ms. Lewis noted that parental incarceration is a great risk factor for youth and MMHPI is striving to connect youth and these families with better grief response resources. Ms. Lewis reported MMHPI collaborated with Fountain House to conduct a study on the feelings of those calling 911 and the response was for behavioral or mental health concerns. The goal is to learn how to better respond to these calls, with publication of results soon. She noted that those with lived experience in the study did express concern for the wellness of the first responders too.

Hon. Rosie Speedlin-Gonzales, Judge, Bexar County Court at Law 13, reported on the REFLEJO Court. It is a trauma-certified court which offers treatment and substance abuse programming for first-time offenders of family violence. Graduates of the court have their case dismissed on the day of graduation and their expungement process begins right away. This is made possible by an agreement with the district attorney and the district clerk. Additionally, the court is adding a mental health track and expanding with a court director and new program manager. The court provides time management training for participants in phase one and incorporates art therapy for phases three and four. There will be a documentary and ten-episode podcast about the REFLEJO court to be released in 2026.

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti, Chief of the Mental Health Division, Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office, reported she would like to see more education and training on justice-involved IDD populations, and specifically requested training on state-supported

living centers (SSLCs) so that courts and parties will know how they are being served. She would like attorneys and judges to understand what all is considered when deciding to transfer someone into the community from the SSLCs. Ms. Cacciotti reported that the attorneys in her unit visited their State Hospital and SSLC to bridge the gap in knowledge and communication. She reported an increase in questions on chemical dependency warrants and thinks there needs to be more discussion around this.

Adrienne Kennedy, Past National President, NAMI, has lived experienced and seen both the best and worst outcomes of AOT. Ms. Kennedy noted that in her son's case the AOT period was too short and at 90 days of treatment through AOT was just enough to make him upset and defiant, and not enough to really help him. Ms. Kennedy also reported that a local psychiatrist is very concerned about jury instructions on the insanity defense under Texas law. She recommends a book called "Nowhere to Go," which is free online. She also suggested education on anorexia as a mental health issue.

Guest Presentation

Justice Rebeca Huddle introduced Brian East, Senior Attorney at Disability Rights Texas. He has tried many cases in both state and federal courts, written and lectured extensively on disability rights, is a life member of the Texas Bar Foundation, and is an adjunct professor at the University of Texas School of Law.

Brian East presented a historical overview of the ADA before its 35th anniversary (July 26, 2025), covering the evolution of disability rights in the U.S., the shortcomings of constitutional protections, and how the ADA expanded civil rights for people with disabilities. He discussed *Buck v. Bell* (1927), a Supreme Court case that upheld forced sterilization of people labeled with intellectual disabilities, reflecting the influence of eugenics and minimal constitutional protections recognized for disabled individuals at the time. Later cases reaffirmed that disability receives the lowest level of protection under the Equal Protection Clause. Progress began with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which applied to federally funded entities and later to federal agencies. Other regulations were continually delayed until a series of protests from disability activists, including the historic 1978 San Francisco sit-in. The ADA emerged in the late 1980s following nationwide advocacy from the National Council on Disabilities, including the "Capitol Crawl," where disabled activists crawled the Capitol steps to show their dedication to the mission. Signed in 1990, the ADA has a much wider breadth and includes Title I (employment), Title II (state/local government), and Title III (private businesses/public accommodations). It mandates nondiscrimination, reasonable modifications, effective communication, and accessibility. It covers a broad range of public services—from courts and prisons to law offices—and enforces both architectural and communication access. Though the federal government is covered under different provisions, most state and local entities are fully subject to the ADA. The law is enforced by the DOJ and through private suits, with limited

immunity for state governments. President George H.W. Bush called the ADA a long-overdue “Independence Day” for Americans with disabilities.

Meeting Adjourned

Judge Jesse F. McClure thanked attendees for coming and announced the next commission meeting on October 6th, before the 8th Annual Summit, at the Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria in Houston, Texas.

Tab 4
Budget

Judicial Commission on Mental Health

September 2025 - August 2026

FY2025 Funding

Total FY2025 Current Assets	\$	411,895.88
Total FY2025 Liabilities	\$	411,895.88
FY2025 Lapse Estimate	\$	-

FY2026 Funding (Estimate)

FY2026 Base Appropriation	\$	1,415,025.00
El: Inflation Relief	\$	47,191.00
RI: Attorney Increase	\$	28,573.61
El: Program Specialist	\$	74,806.00
El: Operating Cost Increase	\$	52,000.00
El: Court Liaison Expansion	\$	1,453,500.00
Texas Tech Grant - Training	\$	25,000.00
FY2026 Available Funds	\$	3,096,095.61

FY2026 Budget

	Budget
Operating	969,909.36
Commission Projects	
TIEMH - JCMH Projects	200,000.00
JCMH Summit	232,337.49
Juvenile Justice Bench Book	24,250.00
Mental Health Bench Book	25,000.00
Mental Health Code Book	22,000.00
Mental Health - Courtroom Curriculum Project	25,000.00
SIM Mapping	126,000.00
Total Commission Projects	\$ 654,587.49
Grants	
Court Liaison Pilot Expansion	1,453,500.00
Total Grants	\$ 1,453,500.00
Scholarships	
JCMH Attorney and Stakeholder Scholarships	5,000.00
JCMH Judicial Education Scholarships	5,000.00
Total Scholarships	\$ 10,000.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 3,087,996.85

FY2026 Available Funds	3,096,095.61
FY2026 Proposed Budget Expenditures	3,087,996.85
FY2026 Unobligated Funds	\$ 8,098.76

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