

# **Help & Hope for YOUth Alliance**

## **Advocacy and Policy Task Force Report**

Meeting Date: February 4, 2020, noon

Location: Casa de los Ninos

### **Task Force Leadership and Membership:**

Interim Chair: Cindy Godwin

Attendees: Judy Keagy, Mark Person, Raquel Goodrich, Anthony Cicchino, Arlene Benavidez, Arcy Cornidez

### **Overall Task Force Goals & Objectives**

- Develop fact sheets and resources to inform community about policy issues in youth mental health, include social media and vaping information
- Advocate for policy adoption to decrease stigma and increase help seeking activity
- Engage provider community in increasing and coordinating access to care

### **Intermediate Task Force Objectives for January 2020 – March 2020**

- Gather research and information to develop a document outlining current youth mental health issues in Arizona, other states' mandates for mental health education in schools and our recommendations for legislation and policy in Arizona
- Work with MEC Youth Advisory Council and Help & Hope for YOUth Youth Task Force to develop the youth advocacy voice to champion legislative and policy changes
- Monitor legislation being introduced and review for support by Help & Hope for YOUth
- Prepare for meeting with State Senators and Representatives to discuss the need for mental health education in schools, and the need for additional funding for counselors and social workers
- Inventory what mental health programs are being used in what schools, and what behavioral health providers are serving those schools

### **Meeting Agenda:**

- Review assignments from last meeting
- Legislation introduced that affects education and mental health, HH4Y position and advocacy
- Short-term objectives and assignments

### **Current Overall Task Force Goals & Objectives**

- Develop fact sheets and resources to inform community about policy issues in youth mental health
- Advocate for policy adoption to decrease stigma and increase help seeking activity
- Engage provider community in increasing and coordinating access to care

### Highlights of Discussion, Review of Assignments

- Mark Person brought up the need for better communication as youth re-enter schools following inpatient mental health care. The schools need to know that children and teens have been in hospitals or are participating in outpatient programs to provide improved coordination of care. This needs policy change for behavioral health to be more like how law enforcement works with schools.
- Research and information
  - MEC: The full Teen Town Hall report is now available. Links to the full report were included in the February HHFY newsletter. Mental health is one of four topics that will be covered when members of the Youth Advisory visit the legislature on February 24. Increasing school counselors and social workers is also a legislative priority.
  - Raquel Goodrich: Theme data from 20,000 TTA participants has been compiled and will be shared. Analysis of where Ending the Silence and TTA fit into State Health Standards has been posted on [www.helphopeforyouth.org](http://www.helphopeforyouth.org).
  - Arcy Cornidez: The State School Safety Task Force is working with CASEL on incorporating SEL, mental health and school climate into school safety plans.
  - Dustin Williams shared a list of education bills being introduced in 2020 legislative session
  - Mark Person provided some statistics:
    - 260 suicides in Pima County in 2019; 60% were by firearms
    - In 2018, there were 221 total suicides; 16 suicides in youth under age 18, 38 in age 20-29, with 20-29 age group having the highest rate of suicide, especially young adult black males
    - Overdose among young adults is also a significant issue, especially among ages 20-25, with the combination of meth and fentanyl being especially lethal.
    - Mark suggests focusing on zip codes and school districts with incidence of suicide
  - Judy Keagy: Keeps us informed about advocacy priorities of Arizona Education Association and Children's Action Alliance. We are invited to attend a legislative site visit and forum at Amphi High School on February 28 from 5:30 – 7:30; mental health and special education funding will be topics of discussion. Governor Ducey is committing more funding for counselors and SROs.

- Sheri Bauman, Lynn Hall and Cindy Godwin will meet with the local school counselors at the Pima County Superintendent's Office on February 19 to discuss mental health curricula currently in use and referral processes.
- Raquel Goodrich, Anthony Cicchino and Mark Person created a subcommittee specifically to draft recommended mental health language to include in Health Standards. Mark pointed out the need to define "health." Youth and families will be asked to review the suggested recommendations prior to distributing publicly. Developing a graphic representation, similar to what was developed for the science curriculum, was also suggested.
- Mark involving Judges Quigley and Hochuli and the school justice work group. Mark will provide contact information for Jennifer Torchia, and invite her to attend Alliance and Task Force meetings.
- The spreadsheet of what mental health programs and what providers are in middle and high schools in four counties will be discussed at the next meeting.
- The updated Help & Hope for YOUth policy backgrounder and recommendations has been distributed to the Task Force for review and comment.

### **Review of Proposed Bills in 2020 Legislative Session**

A list with summaries of legislation proposed related to education and mental health was discussed with Task Force consensus reached on the following recommendations:

Support: HB2250 Grants, Behavioral Health Treatment Services; HB2275 School Safety, School Resource Officers; HB2450 Early Childhood Mental Health, Appropriations; SB1169 School Health Program, Appropriation; SB1216 School Counselors, Grants; SB1264 Community Schools Pilot Program. Oppose: HB2033 Community School Programs, Prohibition.

Subsequent to the meeting, the following bills were added to the list to support: SB1523 and HB2764 Mental Health Omnibus; HB2256 Safe Schools, Plans; SB1445 Suicide Prevention Training, School Employees; SB1446 Student Identification Cards, Suicide Prevention. The list of bills needing support will be emailed to the full Help & Hope list of members and supporters.

### **Assignments**

- Arcy Cornidez to include the full Teen Town Hall Report in the February newsletter.
- Raquel Goodrich to send updated theme data from Text Talk Act.
- Arlene Benavidez to take recommendation of developing legislation to mandate mental health education to the Youth Advisory Council for consideration for their legislative agenda.
- Raquel Goodrich, Mark Person and Anthony Cicchino to continue to meet to develop recommended language to incorporate into state health standards.
- Cindy Godwin to prepare advocacy email to send to members and supporters.
- Mark Person to connect HH4Y with Jennifer Torchia and Juvenile Court.

- All members to review HH4Y policy and advocacy document and provide comments to Cindy Godwin.

**Recommendations to the Alliance:**

- Expand HH4Y to elementary school age children

**Next Meeting: March 3, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.**

**Location: Casa de los Ninos**