

Help & Hope for YOUth Alliance

Advocacy and Policy Task Force Report

Meeting Date: March 3, 2020, noon

Location: Casa de los Ninos

Task Force Leadership and Membership:

Interim Chair: Cindy Godwin

Attendees: Sheri Bauman, Megan Kasper, Anthony Cicchino

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 April – August 2020

- Monitor legislation being introduced in Arizona and review for whether or not bills advance Help & Hope for YOUth goals.
- Develop recommended changes to Arizona Health Standards to include mental health to discuss with state legislators.
- 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
- 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. Identify state legislators who could potentially sponsor a bill requiring mental health education in schools.
- 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
- Legislative update and next steps
 - MEC Youth visit to Capitol
 - Other organizations to inform/collaborate with
- Report on Pima County school counselors meeting February 19

- Review draft spreadsheet of mental health programs and providers in middle and high schools in four counties
- Short-term objectives and assignments

Highlights of Discussion, Review of Assignments

- Arcy Cornidez included the full Teen Town Hall Report in the February newsletter.
- The updated theme data from Text Talk Act was sent by Raquel Goodrich and will be posted on the HH4Y website.
- Raquel Goodrich, Mark Person and Anthony Cicchino will continue to meet to develop recommended mental health language to incorporate into state health standards. Sheri Bauman will join this subcommittee. The goal is to have recommended changes prepared by the end of August so meetings with legislators can be arranged in the fall.
- An email with brief information and recommended action on mental health and education bills we are tracking was sent to all HH4Y members and supporters.
- Mark Person has invited us to attend the April meeting of the School Justice Partnership.
- The HH4Y policy and advocacy document is available at <https://helphopeforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/Arizona-Increasing-Mental-Health-Education-in-Schools-Jan-2020.pdf> for comment and distribution.
- A Legiscan report on the bills we are tracking was distributed. Since the meeting, Jake's Law, SB 1523, has been signed into law by Governor Ducey.
- Sheri Bauman reported on attending the Pima County School Counselors meeting held at the Superintendent's office. We learned about mental health curricula currently being used in schools. Attendees are interested in receiving our list of curricula. How mental health is incorporated into classes varies, but primarily is included in health class. Title IV-A was discussed as a source of funds for mental health education.
- A list of other organizations to connect with regarding advocating for mental health education was reviewed. Additions included SAAF, YOTO, Arizona Trauma Institute and Tu Nidito.
- The format for the list of schools with what mental health education they offer and what behavioral health providers provide services was reviewed. At this time we will not add other programs from the AHCCCS list for suicide prevention, but add an "other" column to see what programs are most common.
- The AHCCCS list of suicide prevention trainings to meet the SB 1468 legislative mandate will be referred to the Education & Training Task Force for review and addition to our list of mental health programs for use in schools. Anthony noted that there is a state website where all these trainings can be previewed.
- For future advocacy communications, we want to include more specifics on what to do, with sample email that can be sent legislators. We agreed that we want to focus on funding for more school counselors.

Assignments

- Megan Kasper has agreed to chair the Advocacy & Policy Task Force. Megan, Cindy and Arcy will meet to discuss the role of the Task Force Leader.
- Raquel Goodrich, Mark Person, Anthony Cicchino and Sheri Bauman to continue to meet to develop recommended language to incorporate into state health standards.
- All members to continue to contact legislators and advocate for support for identified bills.

Recommendations to the Alliance:

- Expand HH4Y to elementary school age children

Next Meeting: TBD

Location: Casa de los Ninos