




Wonder



THE HACKETT CENTER
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Highlights from the
2019 MMHPI Annual Report

MEADOWS
MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY INSTITUTE



Our sense of **wonder** needs to be cherished and nurtured in our children, and **we are dedicated to that cause.**

Our History, **MISSION, AND VISION**

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute provides independent, nonpartisan, data-driven, and trusted policy and program guidance that creates systemic changes so all Texans can obtain effective, efficient behavioral health care when and where they need it.

The Institute grew out of The Meadows Foundation's unyielding concern for the people of Texas. In 2014, The Meadows Foundation established the Institute as an independent nonprofit organization. With offices in Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio and projects in every region of the state, the Institute has become Texas's most trusted source for results-oriented information and analysis of effective and efficient mental health policy and programs.

We work at the state, regional, and local levels to help mental health systems improve, share best practices, develop resources, and increase public awareness on the most effective ways to treat mental illness and help people recover. The Institute's vision is for Texas to be the national leader in treating people with mental health needs.



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THE HACKETT CENTER

FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The Hackett Center: Unlocking Barriers to **MENTAL HEALTH**

Recognizing that half of all mental illnesses begin in childhood, The Hackett Center is elevating early prevention initiatives for lasting impact. Perhaps at no other time in history has awareness of the far-reaching impact of mental health been greater. Starting with its inaugural effort to heal communities traumatized by Hurricane Harvey, The Hackett Center for Mental Health has advanced mental health initiatives to significantly benefit families across Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast.

Within two years, The Hackett Center has supported implementation of trauma-informed care, worked to improve student mental health in schools, conducted community assessments, and addressed the needs of youth in child welfare and juvenile justice systems. One especially significant achievement in 2019 was the formation of data-driven recommendations and partnerships to create a comprehensive system of care to serve children and youth who experience serious mental health conditions. By forming key partnerships and successfully acquiring private, state, and federal funding, The Hackett Center is working to expand access and increase treatment capacity for the more than 310,000 children and youth who experience mental illnesses and substance use disorders each year in Harris County.

EXPANDING HARVEY RECOVERY THROUGH AMERICAN RED CROSS PARTNERSHIP

The Hackett Center underwrote and coordinated post-Hurricane Harvey grant applications that secured nearly \$3.2 million in American Red Cross funding to support mental health recovery in affected school districts, along with training to build sustainable infrastructure to improve trauma and crisis response. Partnering with the Texas Education Agency and the Hurricane Harvey Task Force, The Hackett Center provided technical assistance to support the grant's goals, including securing two behavioral health coordination specialists for each affected district to provide

outreach, recovery education, and emotional support and to build community partnerships. As a result, more than 3,700 students from seven participating school districts received care for critical mental health needs through grant-supported services. Grant-supported training prepared educators and staff to better identify trauma- and crisis-related symptoms as well as how to best access local mental health support.

Together, the American Red Cross grants and The Hackett Center established local networks to ensure improved access to mental health services and supports. "Two years after Harvey, when several schools re-flooded as a result of Tropical Storm Imelda, the Harvey-related supports we helped establish proved their efficacy and sustainability by reducing the risk of re-traumatization and long-term mental health issues in students within those impacted school systems," said Marcy Melvin, MMHPT's Director of Program Implementation for Child and Family Policy for The Hackett Center.

TRUSTED GUIDANCE ON EMOTIONAL WELLNESS FOR TEXAS STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

The Region 4 Educational Service Center (Region 4), which serves more than 1.2 million students and nearly 100,000 professional staff across The Hackett Center's region, helps 87 school districts and charter schools improve student performance, operate more efficiently, and support



school leaders in their mission to provide the highest quality education to Texas students. Region 4 is also a long-standing leader statewide in promoting emotional wellness, pioneering the use of positive behavioral supports, leading much of the state response to schools devastated by Hurricane Harvey, and standing alongside district leaders, parents, students, and a community grieving after the Santa Fe High School shooting. Recognizing the central role schools play in developing emotional wellness; detecting and addressing mental health needs early; and implementing broad-based interventions such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), an evidence-based framework to support each student's academic, emotional, and behavioral needs; Region 4 initiated a partnership with The Hackett Center to develop a comprehensive strategic mental health framework.

Using MMHPI's *Mental and Behavioral Health Roadmap and Toolkit for Schools*, which provides Texas schools and school districts with state-of-the-art knowledge on research-driven, evidence-based practices and practical guidance to assess and address student mental health needs, The Hackett Center partnered with Region 4 leadership to develop a strategic framework to organize and prioritize their current mental health activities and objectives into a sustainable, integrated set of strategic priorities. The *Texas Region 4 Emotional Wellness Strategic Implementation Framework* identified current mental health supports, service gaps and needs, and opportunities for Region 4 to

implement preventive, targeted, school-based programs to effectively assess and address student mental health needs.

EXPANDING THERAPY FOR YOUTH ON JUVENILE PROBATION

No group of youth in Texas has suffered more trauma or have more mental health needs than those in the juvenile justice system, and the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD) has been a leader in providing the youth and families they serve with state-of-the-art, evidence-based care. HCJPD pioneered the use of Multisystemic Therapy (MST) in Texas, the gold standard treatment for youth with the greatest needs, proven to reduce offending overall by over 50% and violence by over 75%. Unfortunately, because MST is not covered by Medicaid and counties are left alone to fund it, out of more than half of the 1,900 youth on probation in Harris County who need intensive mental health care, only 150 receive MST each year.

"Assessing children from a systems perspective includes all their interactions — family, school, health care, social networks — which is how MST evolved," said Bill Schnapp, Ph.D., a Senior Policy Advisor for MMHPI and a Commissioner on the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health. "Its multi-systems approach requires varied expertise, which is expensive and therefore has not become the standard of care yet in Texas, even though research supports its outcomes and cost-effectiveness."

A Hackett Center analysis of MST payment options found that if HCJPD directly enrolled Medicaid-eligible youth in treatment with a Medicaid provider, such as The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, the number of youth receiving MST could be doubled. As a result of this finding, a pilot program was launched that applies recommendations from the analysis, and it is expected that the program's revenues from Medicaid reimbursements will fund additional MST treatment services and extend this proven treatment to other Harris County youth on probation.

REIMAGINING FOSTER CARE THROUGH A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

In preparation for the statewide rollout of Community-Based Care (CBC), a key reform for Texas child welfare systems to shift responsibility for care to the communities where families live, The Hackett Center and Houston Endowment funded an assessment to identify and describe the needs of children and youth in foster care, and the region's capacity to meet these needs. Aimed at improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of the region's most vulnerable children and youth, CBC offers communities the flexibility to customize delivery of foster care services through a local nonprofit that serves as the Single Source Continuum Contractor. The nonprofit organization is responsible for developing capacity, building a service provider network, engaging the community, placing children and youth in homes, and coordinating the delivery of services to children and youth in foster care and their families.

"CBC is a tremendous opportunity for Harris County to improve outcomes for nearly 3,200 children and youth in foster care," said Kate Volti, MMHPI Vice President for Child and Family Policy. "It requires intentional focus and informed strategies to strengthen our foster care system and provide better outcomes."

The assessment brought together information from 65 stakeholders from child and family-serving organizations across the region; focus groups with youth in foster care and their families; and data from over 40 organizations, including child-placing agencies, judges, experts on education and mental health, and other youth service organizations.

Findings from the public-private endeavor identified core community beliefs that are central to successful CBC implementation, including:

- Better care through cross-system partnerships between juvenile justice, education, health, and mental health care systems;
- Opportunities for typical, positive childhood experiences;
- Connections to strong, caring adults; and
- Access to timely services and supports to prevent the need for higher-level care.


"Children in foster care have already experienced at least two major traumas — abuse or neglect and removal from their family. The greatest opportunity for positive mental health outcomes is early intervention, which they desperately need," said Volti. "Critical mental health supports for older youth, who often experience negative outcomes from multiple disruptions in care, repeated placements, and aging out without a permanent placement, were also prioritized by the community."

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE SYSTEM OF CARE FRAMEWORK

Until now, identifying children and youth who are at risk for severe mental illnesses and serious emotional disturbances early and connecting them with resources and intensive home and Community-Based Care has been difficult in Houston, as in most American communities. This is now changing with an unprecedented collaboration, newly adopted legislation, and a \$4 million grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This four-year federal grant allows the City of Houston, hospital systems, mental health providers, advocacy and education organizations, schools, and community support entities to create a sustainable system of care for Houston-area children and youth with serious mental health conditions, particularly those who experience bipolar disorder or first-episode psychosis.

"The Hackett Center was instrumental in connecting us with city, community, and school partners essential to supporting the coordination required for successfully attaining and implementing this system of care grant," said Dr. Laurel Williams, Division Head for Child and Family Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine, and SAMHSA grant program lead. "It's evidence-based, in-home treatment model allows young people to stay engaged with their community and schools through relational, medical, and community supports, allowing for a better trajectory to manage chronic mental illness across their lifetime."

Under the grant, school screenings and assessments by mental health providers will ensure that young people with serious mental health disorders receive timely, appropriate treatment in their homes or through telehealth services. Their families and those identified as needing less intensive mental health services may also receive coordinated care through the newly created Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC), which has developed a telehealth network that links primary care providers with psychiatrists and telehealth screening programs to help schools identify students' mental health needs and facilitate access to care. The SAMHSA grant significantly impacts the lives of children, youth, and their families, positioning Houston and surrounding areas to advance children's mental health care. MMHPI will serve as the evaluator for this project and will support the system of care through continued work on TCMHCC and other policy initiatives.



“CBC is a tremendous opportunity for Harris County to **improve outcomes for nearly 3,200 children and youth in foster care.**”

—*Kate Volti*

Q&A with The Hackett Center Executive Director **GARY BLAU**

In September 2019, Gary M. Blau, Ph.D., assumed the role of Executive Director for The Hackett Center for Mental Health after serving as Chief of the Child, Adolescent and Family Branch of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in Maryland. Gary has earned a reputation as the nation's foremost thinker on creating systems of care that work for children, families, and communities alike. He has written more than 75 professional publications and edited nine books. His most recent volume, *Transforming Residential Interventions: Practical Strategies and Future Directions*, was released in February 2020.

Q: *What attracted you to be a part of The Hackett Center's vision to transform systems and influence mental health care policy through unprecedented collaboration?*

GB: Mental illness transcends everyone. It doesn't matter your background, race, ethnicity, geographic location, or socioeconomic status, mental illness impacts us all. What attracted me to MMHPI and serving as executive director of its first regional center is the amazing commitment to the importance of mental health shared throughout the organization, and by Maureen and Jim Hackett. To work alongside people with the vision, passion, and commitment that reflect the importance of this work, and to invest the skills I learned working in government at the state and national levels to benefit Greater Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast, were what drove me to be excited about this opportunity.

Q: *What visionary difference did you connect with that makes The Hackett Center different from what is being done elsewhere in addressing mental health?*

GB: The idea that MMHPI and The Hackett Center are independent, nonpartisan organizations that serve as trusted, data-driven entities, focused on "putting policy into practice" to transform systems, is really up my alley. It's exactly what I've done in my career. What I see for The Hackett Center is being able to use our expertise to serve as a facilitator and convener of varying entities, including policy makers, in a consensus-oriented way to make progress on improving the mental health of our communities.

Q: *Would you agree that there is a new level of understanding of mental health that has created a welcome opportunity for what MMHPI and The Hackett Center are doing?*

GB: Absolutely. The good news is that the entire country is turning its attention to the importance of mental health and making the connection that there really can be no health without mental health. It's also why MMHPI's Okay To Say™ campaign has gained traction in addressing the historical prejudice and discrimination that has been held against people with mental illness. For systemic change to take hold, people must speak out and share the hope that they've experienced from the many forms of therapies and support that are available to help.

Q: *From your 30-plus years in mental health as a clinician and in state and federal government, what do you believe The Hackett Center is uniquely poised to address?*

GB: Mental illness is really a pediatric issue. Half of all adult mental illnesses present by the age of 14 and 75% are present by the age of 24. A significant driver for launching The Hackett Center was Hurricane Harvey's impact on children's mental health. Promoting positive mental health and preventing mental illness from occurring through early intervention represents a significant opportunity for advancement. The work we are doing with the region's school districts to help address the mental health challenges for students and families, and identifying funding sources for effective therapy for young people in the juvenile justice system, is part of why I was excited to join this great team.



Related to that is the concept of integrating behavioral and mental health into primary care, which I consider to be a top priority. It has particular relevance for early intervention because for 75% of children, their first contact with a helping professional for a mental health issue is with their pediatrician. We can't separate health from mental health. The data are clear that the mind and body are truly interconnected. For instance, we know that people with depression are significantly more likely to have cardiovascular disease and respiratory issues. In reverse, a person with diabetes or cancer is much more likely to experience depression or anxiety. We need policies that address this so that people get the right services when and where they need them.

Q: *Integrated care is certainly a concept that has universal relevance, but its success is heavily dependent on established – or even nurtured – relationships. Is that an important advantage of The Hackett Center's region-specific focus?*

GB: Definitely. We're cultivating relationships with local government entities, doctor and physician groups, medical centers, researchers, provider organizations, and members of the business and faith communities. We cannot address mental health in silos. Mental health has to cut across all systems and we need relationships and partnerships with many sectors to have an impact on people's lives. I have often said, mental health is a business of relationships, and we need to make every relationship count.

Q: *And what about the business community itself?*

GB: Businesses are definitely more interested than ever before in how to improve mental health in their workforces. There are really good data for how costly mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety are to business. They understand that if they address mental health as a health care issue, they're going to improve recruitment efforts, realize greater productivity, and retain employees. Helping the business community is the hallmark of The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use, which is another great example of MMHPI's vision to improve the way mental health care is delivered.

Q: *What do you see ahead?*

GB: I see the 2020s as a great opportunity for The Hackett Center to make a huge impact. We're about creating solutions to complex problems, addressing social determinants of health, improving our understanding of our neurobiology, increasing the use of evidence-based practices and technologies, and improving the way we measure success. Our goal is to make this decade a time when the best practices in mental health are being developed and implemented right here in the Greater Houston and Texas Gulf Coast area. My hope is to demonstrate success and then share that knowledge across Texas and throughout the country.



Nantucket **CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT**



The Hackett Center: Second Annual **NANTUCKET CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT**

Across the country, suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and the prevalence of major depression in children and youth is increasing. In Texas, 65% of the children and youth who report symptoms consistent with a major depressive episode go untreated. In the summer of 2019, the second Nantucket Children's Mental Health Summit, hosted by The Hackett Center, provided needed hope by bringing together leading minds in children's mental health from Massachusetts and Texas to discuss solutions to these pressing issues.

The Summit's inaugural meeting in 2018 reinforced support for proposed legislation that would establish a statewide Child Psychiatry Access Network (CPAN) in Texas, modeled after a Massachusetts program introduced more than 15 years ago and successfully implemented in 30 states, to help pediatricians identify children and youth with mental health needs and respond with more evidence-based care. In 2019, CPAN was signed into law as part of a landmark school safety bill (Senate Bill 11) aimed at preventing school violence, funding \$200 million in mental health support for children and youth in schools, and establishing the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC).

"Texas was dealing with really hard issues. We were still recovering from Hurricane Harvey and then there was a tragic school shooting — this gained real commitment from the legislature that changes needed to be made," said Andy Keller, Ph.D., MMHPI President and CEO. "Having already brought people together, Nantucket helped us be ready to offer solutions and move forward quickly when the opportunity presented itself the next year to adopt significant legislation in support of children's mental health."

In 2019, the focus of the Summit was on getting children, youth, and families access to care when urgent needs



Photos by Ron Lynch Photography.

like suicidal thinking or other crises emerged. In addition to CPAN, SB 11 established the Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHAT) program to respond to urgent psychiatric needs in schools through telehealth. Massachusetts had just completed a comprehensive analysis to drive a redesign of its approaches to respond to urgent needs, so the Summit provided an opportunity to learn from advances happening in both states.

Formation of the Nantucket Children's Mental Health Summit was inspired from the knowledge that dialogue and collaboration can spur even greater opportunity for solutions.

"As an advocate for mental health for many years, I began to realize there was only so much impact I could have on my own," said Maureen Hackett, who, with her husband, Jim Hackett, established The Hackett Center, which sponsors the Summit. "Bringing together these leading mental health experts to collaborate on best practices and better policy seemed a good start to moving the needle on mental health and potentially impacting legislation that could help for years to come."

The Hackett Center is already working with MMHPI and the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health to plan the third Summit for Summer 2020 (which will be held virtually because of COVID-19). In addition to addressing supportive policy initiatives, the Summit will continue to focus on strategies to improve outcomes by connecting young people with care at the first sign of crisis, since 75% of all mental illnesses emerge by age 24.

The Hackett Center Leadership Cabinet

October 1, 2019

Maureen & Jim Hackett
Co-Founders and Chairs
The Hackett Center

Eric Boerwinkle, Ph.D.
Dean
*The University of Texas Health Science Center
at Houston School of Public Health*

Vicki Huff, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Julie Boom, M.D.
Director, Immunization Project
Texas Children's Hospital

Marc Boom, M.D.
President and CEO
Houston Methodist

David Callendar, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.S.
President and CEO
Memorial Hermann Health System

Tonya Callendar, F.N.P., M.S.N.
Health Provider

Mary Klotman, M.D.
Dean
Duke School of Medicine

Paul Klotman, M.D., F.A.C.P.
President, CEO,
and Executive Dean
Baylor College of Medicine

Linda & Jim McIngvale
Co-Founders and Co-Owners
Gallery Furniture

Leila Mischer
Community Advocate

Walt Mischer
Partner
Mischer Investments, L.P.

Chase Untermeyer
Former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar and Chairman
Qatar-America Institute

Diana Untermeyer
Cultural Advisor
Qatar America Institute

Mark Wallace
President and CEO
Texas Children's Hospital

Shannon Wallace
Community Advocate

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