



TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

Date:
December 1, 2023

Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Planning and Policy Committee Progress Report

Introduction

The Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee (TCB) is submitting this interim progress report and request for an extension to the recommendations and report required under Public Act 23-90, pursuant to section (g) to the legislative committees of cognizance and the Office of Policy and Management.

PA 23-90 establishes the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee (TCB). The inaugural meeting of this committee took place on July 10, 2023. The leadership of the committee as identified in the legislation, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, and two members of the General Assembly, one each selected by the speaker of the House Representatives and president pro tempore of the Senate, is vested in the Tri-Chairs, namely Claudio Gualtieri, Office of Policy and Management, Sen. Ceci Maher, and Rep. Tammy Exum. The primary mandate of the committee involves the evaluation of the accessibility and effectiveness of prevention, early intervention, and behavioral health treatment services for children aged from birth to eighteen. The committee is tasked with providing recommendations to the General Assembly and executive agencies pertaining to the governance and administration of the behavioral health care system for children.

Public Act 23-90

As per Public Act 23-90, Section (g) states that not later than December 1, 2023, the committee shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, public health, human services and children, and the Office of Policy and Management. According to Section (m), not later than December 1, 2024, the committee shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a, such plan, together with an account of progress made toward the full implementation of such plan, and any recommendations concerning the implementation of identified goals in the plan to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, public health, human services, and children, and the Office of Policy and Management.

To ascertain the committee's capacity to furnish a thorough report, an exhaustive examination of Public Act 23-90 has been conducted. The committee has meticulously allocated tasks to the respective workgroups, which will be incorporated into the 2024 work plan of each identified workgroup. These workgroups are entrusted with the responsibility of gathering data and executing the assigned tasks. *Attached is the draft workgroup Excel sheet (1) that identifies the specific task as identified in Public Act 23-90.*



TCB Operations

The Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) oversees the administration of the committee. Their duties encompass a range of administrative tasks, including managing day-to-day operations, coordinating meetings, preparing reports, and project operations. The team consists of:

- Erika Nowakowski, Executive Director, oversees TCB's strategic direction and ensures day-to-day operations align with legislative directives.
- Aishwarya Sreenivasan, Senior Project Manager, supervises the timely and efficient execution of TCB's projects, the point person and liaison to stakeholders.
- Izarelli Mendieta-Martinez, Project Coordinator, provides administrative support to the TCB team, enhancing communication and workflows for operational efficiency.
- Shelby Henderson, Public Policy Administrator, drafts and analyzes policy proposals, prepares briefs, and tracks legislative developments.
- Karen Snyder, Independent Consultant, a seasoned consultant in children's behavioral health, provides technical guidance, enhancing TCB's effectiveness in fulfilling its legislative responsibilities.

TCB is a diverse body with 48 members from various sectors such as legislative representatives, state agencies, and non-profit representatives. Its structured hierarchy includes Tri-Chairs for leadership, TYJI for administrative support, and workgroups focused on prevention, services, school-based initiatives, system infrastructure, and strategic planning. Given the importance of sustainability and financing of the children's behavioral health system, each workgroup is also charged with considering finance as part of their focus. This streamlined approach enhances the committee's effectiveness.

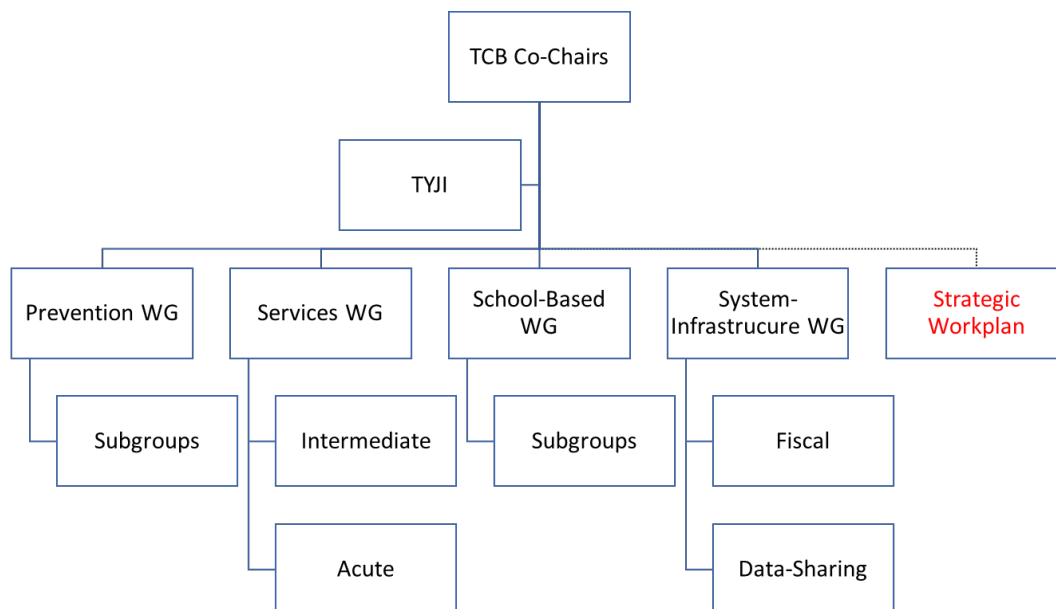


Table 1: Draft TCB Organizational Chart



Per Public Act **23-90**, the TCB Committee has established five workgroups to address critical areas of children's behavioral health: **prevention, services, school-based initiatives, system infrastructure, and strategic planning.**

These workgroups are pivotal in fulfilling the TCB's mandate by providing leadership and direction on practical and policy matters to foster comprehensive community and state-level programming. Each workgroup is tasked with reviewing the needs and developing strategies to leverage opportunities and improve children's behavioral health across the state. Their work is guided by the TCB's overarching goal of transforming the governance and administration of the behavioral health care system for children.

TCB Annual Agenda 2023-2024

The input garnered from the committee members regarding the prioritization of critical subjects within the realm of children's behavioral health needs and services are consistently acknowledged and systematically incorporated into the ongoing formulation of the committee's annual agenda. This dynamic document remains live and is subject to amendments as necessitated by the prevailing exigencies, inclusive of but not limited to impending report deadlines, program imperatives, and service obligations. The comprehensive feedback received from system partners, state agencies, technical support entities, and adherence to legislative timelines collectively contribute to the iterative refinement of the annual agenda. This annual agenda helps in organizing and carrying out the monthly TCB meetings, ensuring that TCB membership, agencies, and providers are well-informed about upcoming sessions for effective planning. *Attached herewith is the Draft Annual Agenda for the fiscal year 2023-24 for your reference (2)*

TCB Monthly Meetings

The committee conducted two productive meetings in September '23 and November '23, subsequent to the inaugural meeting held in July '23.

1. The September meeting focused on the operations of Urgent Crisis Centers, covering their strengths, challenges, and recommendations. The Department of Children and Families and the four Urgent Crisis Centers facilitated the presentation during the September meeting.
 - In accordance with Public Act 23-90 guidelines, the TYJI presented a proposed draft organizational chart. TYJI also distributed surveys for feedback during the meeting and provided opportunities for committee members to sign up for workgroups.
2. The November committee meeting focused on Outpatient services in the Continuum of Care and discussed success, limitations, and possible solutions. The Child Health and Development Institute provided data and level setting. Providers like Community Health Resource, Life Bridge, and Mid-Fairfield Community Care Center presented, and a parent shared their outpatient services experience.
 - TYJI presented the revised draft organizational chart based on committee feedback and identified the workgroups. Karen Snyder presented the TCB Statewide listening session project plan drafts.



3. The December meeting will focus on Medicaid Coverage 101 by DSS, Commercial Insurance Coverage 101 by Anthem, and some national examples of UCC coverage and coding by Carelon.

Findings from the Feedback Survey

On September 2023, TYJI surveyed TCB members and members in the community to gather insights concerning TCB workgroups and priority areas they should focus on. This feedback will be pivotal in shaping the committee's strategic work plan and guiding the workgroups to build their annual agenda effectively. *Attached here are the findings from the feedback survey (3)*

TCB Project Plans 2023-2024

TCB is taking crucial measures toward enhancing children's behavioral health. Enclosed is an overview of TCB's upcoming projects, which showcase their importance and potential impact on children's behavioral health.

Drafting of Legislative Recommendations

TCB aims to reform policies and practices related to children's behavioral health. Evidence-based legislative recommendations will be developed by gathering insights from publications, listening sessions, workgroup feedback surveys, and research. Submission deadline: January 2025

Workgroups and Co-Chairs

Workgroups will improve children's behavioral health statewide by reviewing needs and devising strategies. Members will recommend changes to align programs with policy initiatives to improve outcomes for children and families. Co-chairs are appointed, but workgroups are open and can include interested parties that are not formal/appointed members of TCB. Regular meetings are required to create a work plan and ensure progress. The co-chair candidates submitted their resumes and are currently in the process of scheduling interviews. (November 2023 -onwards)

Strategic Plan

TCB's strategic plan will provide a detailed legislative roadmap for the committee's activities and initiatives. The plan will clearly define the committee's objectives, goals, and priorities, and it will be formulated through a comprehensive process that includes analyzing best practices, gathering feedback from statewide listening sessions, and collaborating with workgroups. Submission deadline: December 2024, however, we are respectfully requesting an extension to allow for a complete analysis and full vetting from the Committee and stakeholders.

Statewide Listening Sessions



To enhance the TCB's strategic plan and legislative recommendations, we seek community input through statewide listening sessions. These sessions will allow chairs of other task forces, public agencies, private non-profit stakeholders, parents, guardians, and youth to express their concerns and opinions. We value all participants' feedback and acknowledge the contributions of previous sessions. We can achieve a better future for our children and the community by working together. (November 2023 - March 2024)

One-Day Level Setting

The TCB will host a one-day level setting to promote a shared understanding of our work across all members. This event will bring together stakeholders to exchange knowledge and discuss challenges. By fostering a learning culture, we aim to enable informed decision-making and innovations in children's mental health. To ensure the event's comprehensiveness and practicality, we will form a panel of experts to guide the curriculum development and topic selection. (January 2024)

Orientation Manual

TCB is developing an orientation manual to provide stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of its legislative mandate, committee structure, operational processes, and work plan. The orientation manual will be an essential resource for new and existing stakeholders, ensuring that everyone is well-informed about TCB's work and how they can contribute to its success. (January 2024)

Technical Support

The committee has engaged the services of the Innovations Institute at the University of Connecticut through a subcontract to assist in formulating legislative recommendations put forth by committee members. The institute will support these recommendations with data-driven results and demonstrate the relevance of each proposal. The committee intends to subcontract technical experts and subject matter specialists to produce evidence-based reports that substantiate the recommendations.

Request for Extension

Given the anticipated scope of this report, an acknowledgment of the challenges encountered by the committee, and a recognition of the substantial organizational endeavors necessary for its culmination, the Tri-Chairs of the committee hereby formally request an extension of the deadline from December 1, 2023, to December 1, 2024. Extending the deadlines will not only allow us to navigate these challenges effectively but also empower us to provide a level of insight and information that aligns with the high standards set by Public Act 23-90. We believe that this extension will contribute significantly to the quality of our submissions and, ultimately, to the success of the overarching goals. We assure you that our team remains fully dedicated to the successful realization of the objectives outlined in Public Act 23-90. The requested extension will enable us to approach the tasks with the attention to detail they require, ensuring that our contributions are not only timely but also of the highest caliber.



Respectfully submitted by:



Sen. Ceci Maher
Children's Co-Chair-Senate



Claudio Gualtieri,
Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Policy and Management



Rep. Tammy Rush Exum
State Representative, 19th District.

CC: The legislative committees of cognizance and the Office Policy and Management

Public Health Co-Chair Senate
Sen. Saud Anwar

Public Health Co-Chair House
Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey

Public Health Ranking Member Senate
Sen. Heather S. Somers

Public Health Ranking Member House
Rep. Nicole Klarides-Ditria

Human Services Co-Chair-Senate
Sen. Matthew Lesser

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Sen. Lisa Seminara

Human Services Ranking Member-House
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Appropriations Ranking Member-House
Rep. Tammy Nuccio

The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management
Sec. Jeffrey R. Beckham

