Children & Adolescents Quality, Access & Policy Committee

Key System Challenges Identified

1. Lack of a Cohesive System

- Members repeatedly stated: **"We don't have a system—just islands."**
- Children move between outpatient, intermediate, and inpatient levels without a coordinated, functional continuum.
- Inefficiencies lead to bottlenecks and safety concerns.

2. Workforce Shortages Across All Levels of Care

- Nonprofits cannot compete with private practice or remote work options.
- High turnover and reliance on interns weaken continuity and effectiveness.
- Workforce shortages directly drive **waitlists**, **reduced capacity**, and **limited access**.

3. Insufficient Capacity at Key Levels

- **Outpatient clinics** lose significant money annually while managing high-acuity youth.
- **Intermediate levels (the "missing middle")**—ICAPS, IOP, ICP—are insufficient statewide.
- **High acuity & specialty populations** (substance use, fire-setting, ASD/ID, problem sexual behavior) often have *no viable placement options* and remain stuck in EDs or inpatient units.

4. Data Limitations

- Annual retrospective data does not allow timely course correction.
- Providers seek **real-time, actionable data**, similar to the UCC model.
- Family voice must be incorporated to validate whether services are actually meeting needs.

What's Working Well

1. Urgent Crisis Centers (UCCs)

- Early data is promising; real-time reporting supports rapid learning.
- Strong provider–hospital collaboration—UCCs help **divert unnecessary ED use**.
- Seen as a model for how other services could be evaluated and improved.

2. Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)

- Programs like TFCBT, SBIRT show positive outcomes when delivered by experienced staff.
- Effectiveness varies based on staff training, turnover, and caseload complexity.

Emerging Priorities for Committee Focus (2026)

- **Identifying how planning is currently done for the system,**

- **Diagnosing where it breaks down,**

- **Ensuring the planning process becomes more inclusive, collaborative, and representative of the statewide system and the families it serves.**