

THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS
THE TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

April 12, 2024
Meeting Notebook





**April 12, 2024
Meeting Notebook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	TAB
Agenda	1
Executive Committee, Commissioners, & Collaborative Council	2
January Meeting Minutes	3
Budget	4
Report to the Commission	5
Announcements	6

Tab 1
Agenda



Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health

April 12, 2024

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

AGENDA

<https://txcourts.zoom.us/j/82188436436>

9:00	Welcome	Hon. Jane Bland Hon. Barbara Hervey
9:10	Executive Director Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget and Grants Report• 2024 Legislative Proposals • OCA and Texas Judicial Council• JCMH JIRs and Projects	Kristi Taylor Patrick Passmore Hon. Bill Boyce Professor Brian Shannon Megan LaVoie Hon. John Specia, Jr. Hon. Brent Carr JCMH Team
10:15	Break	Hon. Barbara Hervey
10:30	Presentation: Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities	Ron Lucey
10:45	Partner Organization Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law Enforcement • HHSC • Hogg Foundation for Mental Health• Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute• Texas Veterans Commission• Texas Education Agency• TJJJ• TCOOMMI• Texas Commission on Jail Standards	Hon. Jane Bland Chief Stan Standridge Chief Mike Lee Trina Ita Scott Schalchlin Dr. Octavio Martinez Dr. Andy Keller Dr. Blake Harris Julie Wayman Shandra Carter April Zamora Brandon Wood
11:45	Announcements (Please submit)	Hon. Jane Bland
12:00	Adjourn	Hon. Barbara Hervey

Tab 2

**Executive Committee,
Commissioners,
& Collaborative Council**

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Executive Committee

Hon. Jane Bland, Co-Chair

Justice

Supreme Court of Texas

Hon. Barbara Hervey, Co-Chair

Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Hon. Bill Boyce, Vice-Chair

Justice (Fmr.)

Fourteenth Court of Appeals

Alexander, Dubose & Jefferson, LLP

Hon. Brent Carr

Judge (Ret.)

Tarrant County, Texas

Hon. John J. Specia, Jr.

Judge (Ret.)

Mimari Anderson Clifone & Watkins, PLLC

Megan LaVoie, J.D.

Administrative Director

Office of Court Administration

High Court Liaisons

Hon. Rebeca Huddle

Justice

Supreme Court of Texas

Hon. Jesse F. McClure, III

Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

Commissioners

Magdalena Morales-Aina

Director

El Paso County Community Supervision and
Corrections Department

M. Connie Almeida, Ph.D.

Director of Behavioral Health

Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services

Hon. Devon Anderson

President and CEO

Justice Forward

Shandra Carter, L.C.S.W.-S.

Executive Director

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti

Chief of the Mental Health Division

Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's
Office

Hon. Camile DuBose

Judge

Real and Uvalde Counties, 38th Judicial
District

David Evans, M.A.

Chief Executive Officer

Integral Care

Alyse Ferguson, J.D.

Of Counsel

Rosenthal Kalabus & Therrian

Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore

Judge

City of Allen Municipal Court

Stephanie Greger

Deputy General Counsel

Office of the Texas Governor

Hon. Matt Hand

Judge

Potter County Court at Law No. 2

Dr. Blake Harris

*Director of Veterans Mental Health
Department*

Texas Veterans Commission

Courtney Harvey, Ph.D.

*Associate Commissioner of Office of Mental
Health Coordination*

Office of Mental Health Coordination, Texas
Health and Human Services Commission

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Executive Committee & Commissioners

Hon. Bonnie Hellums

Judge (Ret.)
Harris County, Texas

Hon. Joan Huffman

Senator, District 17
Texas Senate

Trina Ita

Interim Deputy Executive Commissioner
Texas Health and Human Services

Hon. Dave Jahn

Judge
Denton County Probate Court No. 1

Hon. Oscar Kazen

Judge
Bexar County Probate Court No. 1

Andrew Keller, Ph.D.

President and CEO
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Adrienne Kennedy, M.A.

Past President
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Hon. M. Sue Kurita

Judge
El Paso County Court at Law No. 6

Beth Lawson

Chief Executive Officer
StarCare Specialty Health System

Chief Mike Lee, M.A.

Chief Deputy Sheriff
Harris County Sheriff's Office

Hon. Elizabeth Byer Leonard

Judge
Midland County, 238th District Court

Hon. Pam Liston

Magistrate Judge
Senior Attorney
Messer, Fort & McDonald, PLLC

Octavio Martinez, Jr., M.D., M.P.H.

Executive Director
Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Hon. Stacey Mathews

Judge
Williamson County, 277th District Court

Hon. Tyra McCollum

Judge
Fort Bend County Court at Law No. 2

Beth Mitchell, J.D.

Litigation Coordinator
Disability Rights Texas

Hon. Joe Moody, J.D.

Representative, District 78
Texas House of Representatives

Hon. Brandy Mueller

Judge
Travis County, 403rd Criminal District Court

Hon. Roxanne Nelson

Justice of the Peace
Burnet County, Precinct 1

Denise Oncken, J.D., M.B.A.

Bureau Chief
Harris County District Attorney's Office

Hon. Larry Phillips

Judge
Grayson County, 59th District Court

Lee Pierson, J.D.

Chief Mental Health Prosecutor
Dallas County District Attorney's Office

Vickie Rice

Mental Health & Specialty Court Supervisor
Dallas County Public Defender's Office

Andrea Richardson

Chief Executive Officer
Bluebonnet Trails Community Services

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH
Executive Committee & Commissioners

Hon. Renee Rodriguez-Betancourt

Judge

Hidalgo County, 449th District Court

Scott Schalchlin, M.Ed., J.D.

Deputy Executive Commissioner for the HHSC

Health and Specialty Care System

Texas Health and Human Services
Commission

Prof. Brian Shannon

Paul Whitfield Horn Professor

Texas Tech University School of Law

Eric Smith

Consultant

Eric W. T. Smith Consulting

Matt Smith

Assistant Executive Director

Williamson County Juvenile Services

Hon. Selena Solis

Judge

El Pas County, 243rd District Court

Chief Stan Standridge, M.P.A.

Chief of Police

San Marcos Police Department

Hon. Charles Stephens

Judge

Comal County Court at Law No. 2

Hon. Victor Villarreal

Judge

Webb County Court at Law No. 2

Julie Wayman

Director, Mental and Behavioral Health

Texas Education Agency

Hon. Cynthia Wheless

Judge

Collin County, 417th District Court

Steve Wohleb

General Counsel

Texas Hospital Association

Brandon Wood

Executive Director

Texas Commission on Jail Standards

Hon. J.R. Woolley

Justice of the Peace

Waller County Precinct 2

Wayne Young, M.B.A., L.P.C., F.A.C.H.E.

Chief Executive Office

The Harris Center

April Zamora, M.Ed., L.C.D.C.

Director

Reentry and Integration Division, Texas
Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical
or Mental Impairments, Texas Department of
Criminal Justice

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Collaborative Council

Hon. Laura Barker

Judge

Williamson County Court at Law No. 2

Kelsey Bernstein

Legislative Consultant

Texas Association of Counties

Hon. Elizabeth Berry

First Assistant Public Defender

Concho Valley Public Defender's Office

Catherine Bialick, M.P.Aff.

Director of Behavioral Health and Justice Initiatives

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Alison Mohr Boleware, L.M.S.W.

Director of Policy

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Tim Bray, J.D.

Vice President for Justice and Health Policy

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Hon. Clifford A. Brown

Judge

Travis County, 147th District Court

Virginia Brown, Ph.D., M.A.

Research Scholar in Social Justice and Population Health

The Hastings Center

Hon. Sarah Bruchmiller

Judge

Williamson County, 368th District Court

Sonja Burns

Mental Health Advocate

Angel Carroll

Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships

MEASURE

Hon. Jennifer Cates

Judge

Canyon Municipal Court

Hon. Brad Clark

Judge

Tarrant County Criminal Court #5

Armando Colombo

President and Chief Executive Officer
The Menninger Clinic

Hon. Marla Cuellar

Judge

Hidalgo County, 275th District Court

Leah Davies, L.M.S.W.

Cause Programs Manager
CLEAN Cause Foundation

Colleen Davis, J.D.

Assistant County Attorney

Burnet County Attorney's Office

Hon. Karen Diaz

Justice of the Peace

San Patricio County Precinct #4

Dep. Shawn Edwards

Training Coordinator, Crisis Intervention Unit #920

Burleson County Sheriff's Office

Lesli Fitzpatrick, J.D.

Director of Special Litigation

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Hon. Neal Franklin

County Judge

Smith County

Gilbert Gonzales, L.P.C.

Director

Bexar County Department of Behavioral and Mental Health

Krishnaveni Gundu

Co-Founder & Executive Director
Texas Jail Project

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH Collaborative Council

Rachel Hampton, L.M.S.W.

Chief Mission Officer
Lone Star Justice Alliance

Greg Hansch

M.S.W.
Executive Director
NAMI Texas

Hon. James C.

Henderson
Judge
Grayson County
Court at Law #1

Angelita Hunter

Victim Advocate
Grayson Crisis Center

Lee Johnson, M.P.A.

Chief Executive Officer
Texas Council of Community Centers,
Inc.

Windy Johnson

Program Manager, IGR
Texas Conference of Urban Counties

Hon. Rocky Jones

Judge
Dallas County, 203rd District Court

Louise Joy, J.D.

Attorney/Partner
Joy & Young, LLP

Hon. Evelyn Keyes

Justice (Ret.)
First Court of Appeals

Sgt. Michael Krogmann

Crisis Intervention Team Sergeant
Round Rock Police Department

Hon. Kirsten Legore

Judge
Guadalupe County Court at Law #2

Scott LePor, D.O.

Medical Director
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Katrina LeVert, J.D.

Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County Attorney's Office

Yolanda Lewis, M.P.A.

*Executive Vice President for Justice and
Health*
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Hon. Lora J. Livingston

Interim Executive Director
Texas Access to Justice Commission

Chris Lopez, J.D.

Assistant General Counsel, State Hospital
Texas Health and Human
Services Commission

Charles Mathias, Ph.D.

Associate Professor
University of Texas Health Science
Center San Antonio

Hon. Lela Mays

District Judge
Dallas County, 283rd Judicial District
Court

Rosie Medina, J.M.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
El Paso County Juvenile Probation
Department

Kristin Meeks, J.D.

Senior Policy Analyst
Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Joanna Mendez, M.S.S.W., L.C.S.W.

Assistant Adjunct Professor
Steve Hicks School of Social Work,
University of Texas at Austin

Trooper Bianca Morales

Highway Patrol
Texas Department of Public Safety

Officer Brittany Moreno, M.A.

Mental Health Officer
Sugar Land Police Department

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Collaborative Council

Jennifer Mudge, M.S.W.
Public Policy Coordinator
Texas Council on Family Violence

Hon. Kirk Noaker, Sr.
Consultant
National Task Group on Intellectual
Disabilities and Dementia Practices

Hon. Rita Noel
Student Support Services
Denison Independent School District

Evan Norton, Psy.D.
*Director of Integrated Treatment and
Support*
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Lemuel Odom, L.P.C.-S.
*Clinical Supervisor-Psychological &
Social Services*
Harris County Juvenile Probation
Department

Susan Palacios, Ph.D., L.P.C.
*Manager of Community Interventions &
Supports*
Texas Juvenile Justice Department

John Petrila, J.D.
*Senior Executive Vice President
of Policy*
Meadows Mental Health Policy
Institute

Hon. Daphne Previti Austin
Attorney
The Law Office of Shawn C. Brown,
P.C.

Officer Terry Qualls
Crisis Intervention Coordinator
McKinney Police Department

Janis Reinken, J.D.
Chief Clerk (Former)
House Committee on Corrections

Chris Ritter, J.D., M.Ed.
Chief Legal Counsel
State Bar of Texas

Trish Rivera
Rural Health Specialist
Texas Department of Agriculture

Michelle Romero, M.P.A.
Associate Director
Texas Medical Association

Simone Salloum, J.D.
Policy Attorney
Texas Health and Human Services
Commission

Rachel Samsel, M.S.S.W.
*Deputy Associate Commissioner for
Regional & Local Operations*
Texas Department of State Health
Services

Melissa Schank, M.A.
Executive Director
Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers
Association

Jonas Schwartz, M.S.
Program Manager
Texas Workforce Commission

Melissa Shearer, J.D.
Director
Travis County Mental
Health Public Defender's
Office

Jennie Simpson, Ph.D.
*Associate Commissioner and State
Forensic Director, Office of Forensic
Coordination*
Texas Health and Human
Services Commission

Hon. Mike Smith
Judge
Brown County, 35th District Court

Sandra Smith, Ph.D.
Vice President
Via Hope

Lt. Scott Soland
Patrol Lieutenant
Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH Collaborative Council

Justice of the Peace
Williamson County Precinct #2

Hon. Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez
Judge
Bexar County Court at Law #13

Thomas Wilson, J.D.
Assistant District Attorney, Civil Division
Smith County District Attorney's Office

Hon. Nancy Tanner
County Judge
Potter County

Jay Wooten, J.D.
Chief Public Defender
Galveston County Misdemeanor Mental
Health Public Defender's Office

Gloria Terry
Chief Executive Officer
Texas Council on Family Violence

Jennifer Toon
Mental Health Peer Policy Fellow
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

Haley Turner, M.S.W.
*Deputy Executive Commissioner
for Community Services*
Texas Health and Human
Services Commission

Hon. Ryan Kellus Turner
Executive Director
Texas Municipal Courts Education
Center

Hon. Brian Keith Umphress
County Judge
Jack County

Sally Uncapher, J.D.
Assistant District Attorney
Bexar County District Attorney's Office

Nicole Weaver
*YES Waiver Manager, Mental Health and
Substance Use Programs*
Texas Health and Human Services
Commission

Thea Whalen, J.D.
Executive Director
Texas Justice Courts Training Center

Hon. Deborah Wigington
Judge
Comal County Court at Law #3

Hon. Angela Williams

Tab 3

Minutes from January 2024

Meeting

**TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH
MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
January 25, 2024
10:00 A.M.–2:00 P.M.
State Bar of Texas
Austin, Texas**

COMMISSIONER ATTENDEES:

Hon. Jane Bland, Chair, *Justice, Supreme Court of Texas*
Hon. Barbara Hervey, Chair, *Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals*
Hon. Rebeca Huddle, Deputy Liaison, *Justice, Supreme Court of Texas*
Hon. Bill Boyce, Vice-Chair, *Justice (Former), 14th Court of Appeals; Partner, Alexander, Dubose & Jefferson*
Hon. John Specia, Jr., (Ret.), *Of Counsel, Mimari Anderson Clifone & Watkins*
Hon. Brent Carr, *Judge (Ret.), Tarrant County Criminal Court No. 9*
Megan LaVoie, *Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration*
Dr. M. Connie Almeida, *Director, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services*
Hon. Devon Anderson, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Justice Forward*
Hon. Nelda Cacciotti, *Chief, Mental Health Division, Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office*
Shandra Carter, *Executive Director, Texas Juvenile Justice Department*
Hon. Camile G. Dubose, *Judge, 38th District Court*
Alyse Ferguson, *Of Counsel, Rosenthal Kalabus & Therrian*
Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore, *Judge, Allen Municipal Court*
Stephanie Greger, *Deputy General Counsel, Office of the Texas Governor*
Hon. Matt Hand, *Judge, Potter County Court at Law No. 2*
Dr. Blake Harris, *Director of the Veterans Mental Health Department, Texas Veterans Commission*
Hon. Bonnie Hellums, *Judge (Ret.), 247th District Court, Harris County*
Hon. Dave W. Jahn, *Judge, Denton County Probate Court No. 1*
Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum, *Judge, Fort Bend County at Law No. 2*
Hon. Oscar J. Kazen, *Judge, Bexar County Probate Court No. 1*
Yolanda Lewis for Dr. Andrew Keller, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute*
Adrienne Kennedy, *Past President, National Alliance on Mental Illness*
Beth Lawson, *Chief Executive Officer, StarCare Specialty Health System*
Hon. Pamela Liston, *Associate Judge, Town of Fairview*
Dr. Octavio N. Martinez, Jr., *Executive Director, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health*
Hon. Stacey Mathews, *Judge, 277th District Court*
Hon. Joe Moody, *District 78, Texas House of Representatives*

Magdalena Morales-Aina, *Director, El Paso County Community Supervision and Corrections Department*

Hon. Brandy Mueller, *Judge, 403rd Criminal District Court*

Hon. Roxanne Nelson, *Justice of the Peace, Burnet County Precinct 1*

Denise Oncken, *Mental Health Bureau Chief, Harris County District Attorney's Office*

Lee Pierson, *Chief of Mental Health Division, Dallas County District Attorney's Office*

Hon. Larry Phillips, *Judge, 59th District Court*

Vickie Rice, *Mental Health and Specialty Court Supervisor, Dallas County Public Defender's Office*

Andrea Richardson, *Chief Executive Officer, Bluebonnet Trails Community Services*

Jeffrey Matthews for Scott Schalchlin, *Deputy Executive Commissioner for the HHSC Health & Specialty Care System*

Prof. Brian Shannon, *Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, Texas Tech University School of Law*

Eric Smith, *Consultant, Eric W.T. Smith Consulting*

Hon. Selena Solis, *Judge, 243rd District Court*

Hon. Charles A. Stephens, *Judge, Comal County Court at Law No. 2*

Hon. Victor Villarreal, *Judge, Webb County Court at Law No. 2*

Hon. Cynthia Wheless, *Judge, 417th District Court*

Steve Wohleb, *General Counsel, Texas Hospital Association*

Brandon Wood, *Executive Director, Texas Commission on Jail Standards*

Hon. J. R. Woolley, *Justice of the Peace, Waller County Precinct No. 2*

Wayne Young, *Chief Executive Officer, The Harris Center*

Sherri Cogbill for April Zamora, *Director, Reentry and Integration Division, Texas Department of Criminal Justice*

Welcome and Announcements

Justice Jane Bland opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance for the first Commission meeting of 2024. She announced and welcomed the newly appointed Commissioners and outlined the history and structure of the Commission. She stated her background: she served as a trial court judge for over 25 years and was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2019. Upon joining the Court, she became one of two Chairs of the Commission, alongside Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Judge Barbara Hervey.

Justice Bland gave a summary of JCMH history; she stated that JCMH originated from a 2016 Supreme Court directive to the Texas Judicial Council that was tasked with examining justice practices for individuals with mental illness. The Mental Health Committee identified challenges like overcrowded dockets, a lack of collaboration, and the need for training and technology. The Committee recommended creating a permanent judicial commission, leading to a joint hearing by the high courts. The Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals signed an order establishing

the Commission, appointing members for three-year terms. The Executive Committee meets six times a year, and the full Commission convenes three times annually. The Collaborative Council welcomes new members, operates with a broader disciplinary scope, and meets three times a year. She stated that both Commissioners and Collaborative Council members can seek travel reimbursement, with the [forms available on the JCMH website](#).

Judge Barbara Hervey introduced herself as the Co-Chair of JCMH and a Court of Criminal Appeals Judge since 2000. Prior to that, she served as an Assistant District Attorney in the appellate section of the Bexar County District Attorney's Office for 16 years and chaired the Judicial Education Section of the Court of Criminal Appeals, which administered grants for legal education. At that time, there were eight grantee organizations conducting mental health training. She outlined that the JCMH mission was to engage and empower court systems through collaboration, education, and leadership, thereby improving the lives of individuals with mental health needs, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders. She directed everyone to the meeting materials, which included a directory of Commissioners, a [Biennial Report](#), and [meeting notebooks](#). Judge Hervey emphasized the importance of attendance for reappointment decisions and allocated time for announcements from Collaborative Council members.

Justice Jane Bland invited all Commissioners present to introduce themselves, their backgrounds, and their expertise in mental health and criminal justice, and to limit introductions to 2 minutes each.

Commissioner Introductions:

Hon. Rebeca Huddle, Deputy Liaison, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, stated she has been on the Supreme Court for three years, and previously served as a Court of Appeals justice in Houston for six years. Justice Huddle stated she appreciated the wealth of experience and expertise shared around the table. This Commission aims to harness this collective knowledge for collaboration and progress.

Hon. Bill Boyce, Vice-Chair, Justice (Former), 14th Court of Appeals; Partner at Alexander, Dubose & Jefferson, Executive Committee member of the Commission, has a diverse appellate practice and serves as an arbitrator. He led the Texas Judicial Council's Committee on Mental Health, which was integral in the establishment of the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health in 2018.

Hon. John Specia, Jr., (Ret.), Of Counsel at Mimari Anderson Clifone & Watkins, a JCMH Jurist in Residence, has over three decades of public service in child welfare and prevention. He established the Texas Supreme Court Children's Commission and implemented Child Protection Courts. Specia served as Commissioner of the Texas

Department of Family and Protective Services from 2012 to 2016. He is also the executive committee member that handles long range planning for JCMH.

Hon. Brent Carr, Judge (Ret.), Tarrant County Criminal Court No. 9, a JCMH Jurist in Residence and served as a judge for 32 years, after eight years as a prosecutor. He had the privilege of starting three specialty court programs and designing a fourth. He viewed this work as his calling and thanked everyone for their dedication and high level of engagement.

Megan LaVoie, Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration, also a member of the Executive Committee for the Texas Judicial Mental Health Commission. She stated her primary focus lies in collaborating with the Commission and the Texas Judicial Council, which plays a pivotal role in policymaking for the judiciary.

Dr. M. Connie Almeida, Director, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services, began her role in 2010 as the sole staff member, but now oversees several staff members providing support to the courts including specialty courts and crisis response. She has 39 years of experience as a psychologist and a licensed specialist in school psychology, she has a background in supporting individuals with serious intellectual and developmental disabilities before transitioning to the mental health field. She also chairs the Data Committee and is excited to contribute to the Commission's work.

Hon. Devon Anderson, President/CEO, Justice Forward, stated she served as a district court judge, one of the first drug court judges in Harris, a prosecutor for 13 years, a defense attorney, and the District Attorney of Harris County. She later worked with the Harris County Drug Court Foundation and expanded their mission to support all 18 courts in Harris County. They rebranded as Justice Forward, a nonprofit that raises funds to assist with transitional housing, grief and trauma counseling, tuition assistance, and vocational training, and criminal history cleanup. This support is for while individuals are in the program and for a period after. Justice Forward has expanded its reach to all specialty courts in Harris County, two in Galveston County, and four in Fort Bend County.

Hon. Nelda Cacciotti, Chief, Mental Health Division, Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office, has been involved with the JCMH since 2018 but now serves for the time as a commissioner. She began her career in mental health and criminal matters, handling mental health cases and served as a mental health magistrate and staff counsel for about eight years. She focuses on competency restoration, early identification, and consolidated civil and criminal mental health prosecutors into one unit for better collaboration.

Shandra Carter, Executive Director, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, has over six years of experience in the agency and more than 20 years in the juvenile justice field, with a background in direct care, inpatient psychiatry, corrections, and residential settings, including work with victims of sex trafficking. TJJJ has an acute population five secure facilities with over 700 youth. TJJJ partners closely with county juvenile detention centers to provide continuum to serve youth from start to finish.

Hon. Camile G. Dubose, Judge of the 38th District Court in Real and Uvalde Counties, spent sixteen years on the bench, with eleven of those years presiding over a post-adjudication Mental Health Treatment Court. Previously, she held the role of a child protection judge for twelve years.

Alyse Ferguson, Of Counsel, Rosenthal Kalabus & Therrian, shared her journey from working at a local mental health authority straight out of college, then to law enforcement, and onto becoming the managing attorney for the Mental Health Caseload, heavily involved in competency restoration and community education about law enforcement. Last year she branched out to open three residential facilities to serve in the gap between hospital and community services which are often lacking. They provide targeted case management and mental health rehabilitation. She hopes that this will prove to be a model for the state.

Stephanie Greger, Deputy General Counsel, Office of the Governor, shared she brings a decade of experience as a prosecutor, including serving as a Criminal Division Chief Prosecutor in Williamson County. She worked extensively on mental health cases, including competency restoration and mental health dockets. She had a personal connection to mental health through her husband's role as a law enforcement officer and member of the Law Enforcement Peer Network.

Hon. Matt Hand, Judge, Potter County Court at Law No. 2 in Amarillo, two years ago in conjunction with the District Attorney's Office, he formed and presides over of their Panhandle Regional Problem-Solving Court which is a mental health court serving 23 counties. Judge Hand was a graduate of Washburn University in Kansas, has been in legal practice for 35 years, with experience in commercial oil and gas as well as personal injury law. He has been serving on the bench for 6 years and has since built relationships with mental health authorities, local providers, and service organizations, despite the process being slow.

Dr. Blake Harris, Clinical Forensic Psychologist, Director of the Veterans Mental Health Department at the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), discussed TVC initiatives, including certifying professionals, suicide prevention, trauma assistance, and community

partnerships. They oversee programs like Veterans Treatment Courts and create reports to the Governor and Legislature. Dr. Harris has experience in juvenile justice and forensic inpatient settings.

Hon. Bonnie Hellums, Judge (Ret.), 247th District Court, Harris County, a former Dean of Students at Rice University, served as a marriage and family counselor, then an attorney who practiced family law for a decade, and finally a judge for twenty years. She started a family drug court and added to it the Innovative Infant and Toddler Court. She serves as a visiting judge in eight counties and on thirteen boards including the Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD.

Hon. Dave W. Jahn, Judge, Denton County Probate Court No. 1, has been involved with the Commission since its inception. He served on various committees and brought his experience as a prosecutor, defense attorney, and a county court at law judge.

Hon. Tyra Jones McCollum, Judge, Fort Bend at Law No. 2, served as the Judge of County Court at Law Number 2 in Fort Bend County, a general jurisdiction court, with a term that began in January 2023. With a background of 19 years of juvenile law and prosecution, most recently Chief of the Juvenile Division, she was delighted to see the overhaul of Chapter 55 of the Family Code and looks forward to learning more about how we are going to teach the new laws. Additionally, she focused on revitalizing the Veterans Court in Fort Bend County to support military servicemen and women facing legal issues related to their service.

Hon. Oscar J. Kazen, Judge, Bexar County Probate Court No. 1, reflected on his role in establishing the first Assisted Outpatient Treatment Court in Texas, now evolving independently. He expressed gratitude for collaborative efforts and shared ongoing work with the Health and Safety Code section 462 for chemical dependency commitment, partnering with private beds. He welcomed others to join in this endeavor.

Yolanda Lewis for Dr. Andrew Keller, Executive Vice President at the Meadows Institute for Mental Health Policy, highlighted her two-year tenure there, emphasizing collaboration with jurisdictions statewide to transform mental health care access. In previous roles, she managed criminal and civil policy work at the Pew Charitable Trusts and served on the board of the National Center for State Courts. She also served as the Child Court Administrator for twenty years in Georgia.

Adrienne Kennedy, Past President of the National Association on Mental Illness, is deeply engaged with mental health advocacy, serving as a national trainer on five core programs. She believes strongly in the role of the court system in supporting individuals affected by

mental health disorders, drawing from her personal experience of her son's struggle with mental illness and his passing in 2016. As a legacy of her son, she is committed to advocating for family engagement, community support, and improved treatment opportunities within the court system. Recently elected to the board of All Rise, she emphasizes the importance of courts in providing leadership and support for individuals in crisis.

Beth Lawson, Chief Executive Officer, StarCare Specialty Health System, has been able to leverage innovative thinking to benefit the community west of I-35 and has contributed to various initiatives. She expressed gratitude for Judge Drue Farmer and Judge Rueben Reyes who started the first mental health docket in Lubbock. Having a local inpatient psychiatric hospital allows them to do inpatient competency restoration. They provide all mental health care in Lubbock County jails including a jail-based competency restoration and a new diversion program.

Hon. Pamela Liston, Judge, Fairview Municipal Court, shared her background as a Municipal Court judge and involvement in education as President of the Board for the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center. She emphasized the importance early detection and diversion through CCP 16.22 and 16.23 and implementation of laws to ensure fair treatment for individuals with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorders. She drew parallels to the Sandra Bland case, and advocated for remembering critical lessons in legislative discussions and appreciates collaboration to address challenges and resistance in the state.

Hon. Joe Moody, District 78, Texas House of Representatives, shared his journey from being the youngest member of the Texas House to his current role as Chair of the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee. He stated that efforts to increase mental health conversations in Texas and emphasized the need for healthcare services and perseverance in implementing positive change.

Magdalena Morales-Aina, Director, El Paso County Community Supervision & Corrections Department, stated she served as the first Mental Health Probation Officer in her unit 28 years ago. As a Licensed Professional Counselor and Supervisor, she is committed to engaging the judiciary in trauma-informed care practices, and specialty courts program education through ALL RISE. She is the first commissioner from Probation and is excited to bring a collaborative approach to bridging the gap between probation and the judiciary.

Hon. Brandy Mueller, Judge, 403rd Criminal District Court, was elected as a district court judge a year ago but as a County-Court-At-Law Judge she has been overseeing a specialty

court for young adult diversion programs in Travis County for about 11 or 12 years. The program follows a structure like other specialty court programs across the state, with regular court dates and guest speakers such as Matthew McConaughey to inspire young adults to reach their potential.

Hon. Roxanne Nelson, Justice of the Peace, Burnet County Precinct 1, serves as Justice of the Peace in Burnet County and an associate judge in the city of Burnet. Her role as a full-time magistrate at the county jail exposed her to the harsh reality of dealing with individuals suffering from mental health issues and substance use disorders. She also stated the importance of addressing the significant waitlist for treatment beds and acknowledged the ongoing work needed to improve mental health services in these settings.

Denise Oncken, Executive Bureau Chief, Harris County District Attorney's Office, stated she has been involved with the Mental Health Division for nearly a decade. She has almost 38 years of experience as a prosecutor and has gained extensive knowledge and awareness of the operations within a large district attorney's office.

Lee Pierson, Chief of Mental Health Division, Dallas County District Attorney's Office, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to continue working on mental health initiatives. He stated that his team is focused on diverting individuals from the criminal justice system through pretrial intervention diversion programs tailored to each person's needs. They also handle competency and insanity cases and have been collaborating with crisis intervention teams to divert cases away from jails. Their main project now is reducing the waitlist for services, with significant progress already made.

Hon. Larry Phillips, Judge, 59th District Court, former State Representative for 16 years, stated he oversees one of the JCMH pilot project Community Diversion Coordinators and helped to plan the Grayson County SIM mapping. He shared a story about a case where a young man was found incompetent and has been in jail for two years. Armed with greater education from the JCMH and HHSC, Judge Phillips asked that the defendant be re-evaluated and was found competent but mentally ill. Now his trial is moving forward, and Judge Phillips noted that knowing what he knows now, he probably would not have found this defendant incompetent initially. Additionally, Judge Phillips mentioned he is the incoming president of the Texas Association of Specialty Courts.

Hon. Cynthia Porter Gore, Presiding Judge for the Allen Municipal Court, shared her diverse background, starting as an assistant district attorney before becoming a criminal defense attorney specializing in both adult and juvenile law. Inspired by Judge Wheless, she developed a passion for working with kids. As the presiding judge at Allen Municipal

Court, she innovatively created special dockets for adults and juveniles dealing with mental health and substance abuse issues, despite limited resources.

Vickie Rice, Mental Health and Specialty Court Supervisor, Dallas County Public Defender's Office, stated she is a public defender with 24 years of experience and brings passion and determination to the Commission. With influence from her mother, Chief Richardson, who is a Board member of ALL RISE, Rice transitioned from family court to problem-solving courts and reinvigorated her commitment to justice. She advocated for community-based solutions to behavioral health issues, aiming to close problem-solving courts and redirect resources to community support.

Andrea Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, Bluebonnet Trails Community Services, serves eight counties, expressed gratitude for the impactful work of the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health. She acknowledged the collaborative efforts among members and emphasized the commission's influence on mental health services in Central Texas and looks forward to working with everyone.

Dr. Jeffrey Matthews for Scott Schalchlin, Deputy Executive Commissioner for the HHSC Health & Specialty Care System, introduced himself as the chief medical officer for the Texas State Hospitals with over 30 years' experience as a psychiatrist through various parts of Texas.

Prof. Brian Shannon, Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, Texas Tech University School of Law, reflected on his tenure on the Commission, welcoming new members. He discussed his early days as a lawyer and the impact of mental health services on his family, particularly his brother, whose life was saved by a constitutional county judge in Tom Green County. He acknowledged the profound effect this experience had on his family, with his mother becoming President of NAMI Texas.

Eric Smith, Consultant, Eric W.T. Smith Consulting, expressed gratitude to the Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals for the honor of being among the Commissioners. He highlighted his consulting work and mentioned a People Magazine article featuring his story. He acknowledged the flaws in the system that had led to his psychiatrist advising him to get arrested but emphasized the importance of respecting the rule of law and the humanity of mental illness. Smith concluded by expressing eagerness to work with fellow Commissioners.

Hon. Selena Solis, Judge, 243rd District Court in El Paso, had recently initiated the Inspire Treatment Court, which is the first adult Felony Mental Health Court in El Paso County. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to join the Commission.

Hon. Charles A. Stephens, Judge, Comal County Court at Law No. 2, has been on the bench for twenty years and started a family juvenile court about eight years ago. He is the Presiding Judge of the Comal County Veterans Treatment Court since its inception on August 13, 2015. He was in private practice from 1984 through 2003. He currently serves as the Presiding Judge of the Comal County Juvenile Court.

Hon. Victor Villarreal, Judge, Webb County Court at Law No. 2, thanked the Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals as a new member on the Commission. He handles juvenile cases, critical misdemeanors, family law matters, probate/guardian ship cases, and mental health issues. He has entered his seventh year of presiding over the county's DWI Court Program. This year he is starting a Juvenile Drug Court Program.

Hon. Cynthia Wheless, Judge, 417th District Court in Collin County, thanked the Commission for its focus on youth mental health law. She started a specialty court for youth who have been trafficked and then a youth mental health court, which have both been met with great success and appreciation. She also served as a Mental Health Master Judge and saw that the third prong of the civil commitment statute (suffering severe and abnormal mental, emotional, or physical distress or substantial mental or physical deterioration) was underutilized. From an experience as an undergraduate with a classmate who experienced a psychotic break, she is passionate about spreading awareness of mental health and removing stigma with mental health issues.

Steve Wohleb, General Counsel, Texas Hospital Association, since 2018, praised the Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals for acknowledging private hospitals' role in community mental health services and emphasized the tremendous investment of the Legislature but the continued need for collaboration between public and private sectors.

Brandon Wood, Executive Director, Texas Commission on Jail Standards, works with all the county jails across the state. He highlighted progress in addressing mental health issues in county jails, emphasizing the need for continued diversion efforts and local commitment to implement successful strategies that can be replicated to reduce jail capacity and costs.

Hon. J. R. Woolley, Justice of the Peace, Waller County Precinct No. 2, shared his background in law enforcement, including 23 years of law enforcement service primarily in Waller County. He served as the chief investigator of the district attorney's office and has expertise in emergency detentions and mental health issues. Judge Woolley

acknowledged the progress made in mental health reforms in Texas but emphasized the need for continued improvement.

Wayne Young, Chief Executive Officer, The Harris Center, stated that last year the Harris Center provided a broad range of programs and services to almost 90,000 people, aiming to reduce involvement in the criminal justice system.

Sherri Cogbill for April Zamora, Director, Reentry and Integration Division, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, expressed gratitude for the collaborative work with others in the room.

Executive Director Report

Molly Davis, for Executive Director **Kristi Taylor**, directed attention to the [Biennial Report to the Courts](#), which showcased the Commission's accomplishments over the past two years. The theme "Mapping Our Progress" symbolized the ongoing journey of enhanced processes and justice. Ms. Davis acknowledged Rose McBride's work on the report.

Budget

Willette Sedwick introduced herself. She joined JCMH in 2020 after 14 years of state accounting experience. Ms. Sedwick also serves as the accountant for the Texas Children's Commission. She informed new Commissioners about travel reimbursement and provided details on accessing reimbursement forms. Ms. Sedwick mentioned the absence of the budget overview in the meeting notebook, directing attendees to a separate handout. She highlighted a detailed comparison of expenses in the end-of-year report. She expressed gratitude to Judge Hervey, Judge McClure, and the Court of Criminal Appeals for a grant supporting 33 scholarships for the 2023 Judicial Summit on Mental Health. She concluded by offering to address any questions, along with Kristi Taylor, and encouraged attendees to contact Grant Administrator Patrick Passmore for further inquiries.

Molly Davis reported that in May 2022, the Long-Term Planning Committee convened to develop an updated [JCMH strategic plan](#) for the next five years. On May 2, 2023, the Commission and Executive Committee approved the 2023 Strategic Plan, which retained the organization's mission statement and introduced overarching principles. The plan emphasized equipping Texas judges and attorneys with the knowledge and resources to divert individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities away from the criminal justice system while prioritizing community safety.

The plan was structured around implementation themes of Collaborate, Educate, and Lead, akin to the previous strategic plan. A new section, Organization, detailed principles for governance, human resources, communication, and progress evaluation.

While the short-term policy priorities from the committee were not explicitly included in the formal strategic plan, they influenced the Commission's work and projects, including initiatives focusing on youth work, mental health courts, implicit bias, ethics in judicial leadership, and the development of a video library.

Led by Judge Dave Jahn since December 2019, the Forms Committee standardized mental health forms for statewide use, developing over 60 forms available on the [JCMH website](#). Seven forms were approved for use under Rule 10 (g) of the Texas Rules of Judicial Administration by the Supreme Court Advisory Committee.

Round Table discussions addressed key issues in mental health and IDD law within court settings. These discussions, facilitated by subject-matter experts, covered various topics based on stakeholder interest and emerging issues. In June 2022, a [Round Table on children's mental health issues](#) was co-hosted by the Supreme Court Children's Commission, and in December 2022, a [Round Table on complex issues in Emergency Detention proceedings](#) was held, with reports accessible on the JCMH website.

Cynthia Martinez, paralegal for JCMH, introduced herself, detailing her background in both public and private sectors. In her current role, she manages Commission meetings, events, and special projects, including the Community Diversion Coordinator Program. This initiative aims to enhance coordination between courts and behavioral health providers, with pilot sites in Denton, Grayson, and Smith counties. Ms. Martinez collaborates with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to ensure program efficiency and data collection. Monthly meetings with pilot counties and NCSC staff focus on addressing challenges and refining program implementation.

Kama Harris, staff attorney, introduced herself and her background in criminal defense. Before joining the organization, she practiced criminal defense for adults and worked with the Burnet County Public Defender's office. Ms. Harris has been involved in directing education-based projects, including the publication of the [adult Mental Health and IDD Law bench book](#). She also directs the Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health, a yearly conference focusing on best practices and emerging issues. Ms. Harris emphasized the JCMH's collaboration with other organizations to improve Mental Health Law in Texas and enhance stakeholders' work at the intersection of MH, IDD, and the judicial system.

Andy Perkins a staff attorney at JCMH, introduced himself, stated that he joined the organization last year. Prior to joining JCMH, he worked on child support cases and served as a law clerk for a United States Magistrate Judge in Abilene. He outlined his responsibilities, including leading the Texas County Resources and [Innovations in Mental Health Map](#) project. He highlighted the organization's Video Library, which offers video overviews, webinars, and archived Summits, and the website's resources, including bench cards, letters, legislative sessions, and a [Mental Health Code Book](#).

Judge Hervey and Justice Bland announced the lunch break.

Molly Davis, staff attorney at JCMH, introduced herself and shared her extensive background as a former trial prosecutor specializing in juvenile law. She leads all juvenile law projects at JCMH, including the [juvenile bench book](#). Molly also oversees the Technical Assistance program, which offers services such as SIM Mapping, the Mental Health Courts Collaborative, and Peer Mentorship.

SIM Mapping, a key component of the Technical Assistance program, involves workshops to identify points of diversion for individuals with mental health needs in the criminal justice system. The program has been active since 2021 and plans to focus on mapping more juvenile justice systems in the coming year.

A recent addition to technical assistance offerings is the Mental Health Courts Collaborative, where participant judges meet monthly to discuss challenges in starting and supporting mental health courts. Ms. Davis promised a detailed report on the Collaborative at the April meeting, highlighting the positive outcomes from the first session held earlier this month. Ms. Davis called on Judge Keith Umphress, Jack County.

Judge Keith Umphress, Jack County Judge, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to address the Commission, sharing his experience with the SIM mapping project in Jack County. He emphasized the challenges of explaining SIM mapping to county commissioners but also highlighted the importance of bringing together community partners to address mental health issues in rural areas.

Judge Umphress discussed partnering with Young County and Sheriff Travis Bullock to address mental health crises in their jails, emphasizing the need for collaboration between law enforcement, social workers, and medical staff. He outlined the three main options identified during the SIM mapping process, including in-jail restoration, establishing a response team, and providing mental health training to the community.

He commended the efforts of Faith Community Hospital in providing mental health training and emphasized the importance of accountability through collaborative partnerships. Judge Umphress encouraged other rural counties to participate in SIM mapping as a crucial first step towards finding solutions to mental health challenges in rural Texas.

Ms. Davis expressed gratitude to Judge Umphress for his kind words and recognized Dr. Jennie Simpson's leadership at HHSC in implementing SIM mappings in various communities, including rural areas. She then discussed other technical assistance offerings, including education, training, and peer mentoring, emphasizing the importance of sharing contact information with colleagues for support. She reported that in 2022 and 2023, JCMH received 60 requests for technical assistance, serving over 1,000 stakeholders in 32 counties across Texas, California, and Kentucky. The newest initiative, the Mental Health Courts Collaborative, involves seven participant judges meeting monthly with experienced mentors to discuss establishing and supporting mental health courts. The first session, held two weeks ago, fostered great conversations and meaningful connections.

Communications

Rose McBride shared her background as a former broadcast news reporter and anchor in Wisconsin and Kentucky. She promotes the Commission's work through various channels including the website, social media, and traditional media outlets. Attendees were encouraged to follow JCMH's social media channels for updates on mental health and justice-related resources, workshops, and projects.

Ms. McBride also manages the JCMH website, which houses archives of past meeting recordings, reports, agendas, and recordings of past Judicial Summits on Mental Health. Visitors can access the video library, external resources, standardized forms, and requests for expert consultation, sequential intercept model mapping, and mental health law trainings. She invited attendees to explore the website and reach out with any questions.

Since the last meeting in October, three episodes of the [JCMH Podcast, "Reimagining Justice: Exploring Texas Innovations in Mental Health,"](#) were released. These episodes featured discussions with Hon. Stephanie Sawyer about the Sentencing Foundation, Commissioner Lee Pierson on the Pretrial Intervention Program in Dallas County, and Commissioners Denise Oncken and Wayne Young discussing the fifth year of the Harris County Diversion Center. In February, an episode featuring Sergeant Shawn Edwards from Burleson County about rural diversion practices will be released. Ms. McBride encouraged attendees to suggest innovative programs for future podcast episodes.

Kama Harris provided an overview of the [County Mental Health Law Plan](#). The aim is to address the lack of clarity regarding mental health plans among counties in Texas. This pilot project involves eight participating counties, and the curriculum is being developed to assist them in creating and implementing their mental health law plans.

The plan follows a checklist created by JCMH with a template being created to guide counties through the process. The curriculum aims to provide detailed guidance without overwhelming participants. Classes will cover various aspects of mental health law, with the first class focusing on civil commitment scheduled on Zoom.

Future classes will address topics such as specialty courts, early intervention, competency restoration, and other relevant issues. Following the educational sessions, assistance will be provided to each county to develop their mental health law plan.

Ms. Harris expressed excitement about the program's development and its potential impact on counties, emphasizing the collaborative effort to improve mental health services.

Justice Rebecca Huddle introduced Michelle Fontenot, Director of the Texas Lawyer Assistance Program (TLAP). Ms. Fontenot, a licensed attorney and counselor, plays a crucial role in assisting judges, attorneys, and law students with mental health and substance use issues. She stated that JCMH and the Courts appreciate TLAP's valuable contributions, and warmly welcomed her.

Michelle Fontenot, Director of the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program, presented ["Recognizing Mental Health Issues in the Practice of Law"](#).

Justice Rebecca Huddle thanked Ms. Fontenot for her presentation and introduced the Presiding Judge of Comal County Court at Law No. 2 and JCMH Commissioner Judge Charles Stephens.

Judge Charles Stephens presented ["Paws for Service,"](#) regarding therapy dogs. The presentation covered the training and certification of therapy dogs, and how the dog does its job in court and other settings.

Justice Rebecca Huddle thanked Judge Stephens for his presentation and stated that there were announcements from members from the Collaborative Council.

Announcements

Trish Rivera, Rural Health Specialist, spoke about the AgriStress Helpline, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to discuss it. She highlighted the challenges rural hospitals face, especially in dealing with mental health patients. Ms. Rivera emphasized the unique stressors faced by those in agriculture and introduced the helpline as a 24/7 crisis resource. She mentioned the partnership with the Southwest Edge Center and AgriSafe Network, covering 10 states. Ms. Rivera noted the extensive training of helpline operators and the certification of mental health professionals in agricultural issues. She also mentioned the availability of a searchable database for professionals, invited questions, and provided her contact information.

Greg Hansch, Executive Director, NAMI Texas, updated the Commission on NAMI receiving a grant from the Texas Bar Foundation to produce and distribute an updated seventh edition of Commissioner and Professor Brian Shannon's book, [Criminal Procedure and the Offender with Mental Illness](#). The grant allows for the production of 4,000 copies to be distributed to legal professionals across the state. Every Commissioner will receive a copy, and for the first time, a Kindle version of the book will be available. The timeline for printing and distribution is expected to be in the fall of 2024. Mr. Hansch expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with Commissioner Shannon on this project and looks forward to distributing the book to the Commissioners.

Sonja Burns, Mental Health Advocate, reported that state-supported living centers are experiencing similar challenges as state hospitals, with many clients coming from jails, home and community-based services programs, and other state hospitals. She highlighted a major crisis in the system, noting that forensic clients are often civil and voluntary individuals who couldn't access care when needed. Ms. Burns urged a conversation about secure settings and intentional communities for individuals with higher needs, as relying solely on community care without adequate support is unsustainable and neglects those with the highest needs. She stressed the importance of diverting individuals from the criminal legal system and ensuring they receive appropriate care and support.

Prof. Joanna Mendez, University of Texas at Austin, shared a resource with the Commission, highlighting YouTube courses as a valuable learning tool. She mentioned that anyone in the community can audit a course by filling out a form and obtaining the professor's permission for a fee of \$20. This provides accessibility to online courses and additional learning opportunities, including evening classes and graduate school options. Prof. Mendez encouraged the Commission to utilize this resource for themselves, their colleagues, friends, and family, emphasizing its affordability and accessibility. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share this resource and thanked everyone for their support.

Judge Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez, Bexar County Court at Law No. 13, stated she oversees a Domestic Violence Docket, where the focus is on first-time offenders with histories of substance abuse. Securing funding for the court has been challenging due to misconceptions about the nature of the offenders. However, collaborating with State Legislator Josie Garcia, progress was made towards designating the court as the first trauma-informed court in Bexar County.

Meeting adjourned

Judge Barbara Hervey expressed her gratitude to everyone for attending and announced the upcoming Commission meeting on April 12, 2024, which will be held virtually from 9AM to 12PM.

Tab 4
Budget

Judicial Commission on Mental Health FY2024

April 2024 Financial Report

FY2024 Available Funds

FY2024 JCMH Funding	
FY2024 Appropriation - 13011	\$ 1,350,000
FY2024 COLA - 13011	\$ 34,469
CCA - Summit (10/23)	\$ 20,000
Hogg Foundation - Summit (10/23)	\$ 7,500
FY2024 Funds Available	\$ 1,411,969

FY2024 Budget vs. Actuals

	Actual	Budget	Balance
Operating	\$ 428,562	\$ 790,294	\$ 361,733
Commission Projects	\$ 171,445	\$ 444,253	\$ 272,808
Scholarships	\$ 0	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Grants	\$ 147,308	\$ 160,099	\$ 12,791
Total	\$ 747,314	\$ 1,404,646	\$ 657,332

Financial Status as of January 2024

FY2024 Funds Available	\$ 1,411,969
Expenditures to Date	\$ (747,314)
FY2024 Fund Balance	\$ 664,655
Budgeted Expenditures Outstanding	\$ (657,332)
FY2024 Estimated UB 2025	\$ 7,322

Tab 5
Report to the
Commission



REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

April 12, 2024

www.texasjcmh.gov

Report of the Executive Director

The mission of the Judicial Commission on Mental Health is to engage and empower court systems through [collaboration](#), [education](#), and [leadership](#), thereby improving the lives of individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. The following report will provide an overview of the projects the JCMH has undertaken to further these objectives.

Collaboration

The JCMH has many initiatives created to bring together experts to solve systemic problems. The JCMH legislative committees are an example of multi-disciplinary stakeholders working together to create legislation recommendations for the Texas Judicial Council. Below are descriptions of the legislative committees as well as other collaborative efforts of the JCMH.

1. Commission

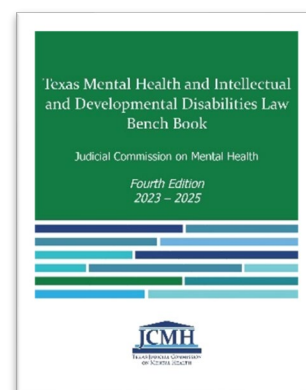
JCMH Commissioners provide a deep well of collaboration through their diverse backgrounds and experiences. Commissioners meet at least three times a year, providing information to promote best practices and improve the function of the judiciary for those with mental health, substance use, or IDD needs. The Commissioners often participate in additional collaborative events when needed. Commissioners typically serve three-year renewable terms and were most recently appointed or reappointed on January 1, 2024.

2. Collaborative Council

The Collaborative Council keeps the JCMH updated on emerging issues in the field. JCMH staff holds online meetings in which the 82 Collaborative Council members can share their organization's conferences, projects, and best practices from around the state. The Collaborative Council will meet three times in 2024: February 6, May 14, and September 10. After each meeting, JCMH staff produce a summary that highlights announcements from partner organizations, as well as links to resources that were mentioned during the meeting. [Materials](#) from past meetings and upcoming scheduled meetings are provided on the JCMH website.

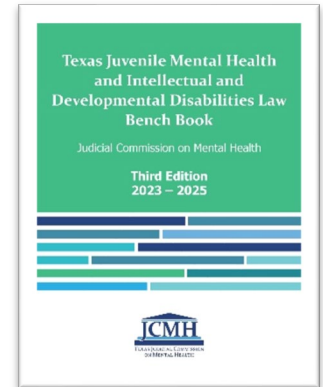
3. JCMH Bench Book Committee

The JCMH Bench Book Committee is chaired by Judge Camile DuBose. The Committee began its work in early 2018 to develop the first edition of the Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law Bench Book. In October 2023, the Committee published its 4th Edition in print and [online](#). To date, over 500 copies have been distributed. The Committee will begin preparations for the 5th Edition during the Summer of 2025.



4. Juvenile Bench Book Committee

The Juvenile Bench Book Committee is chaired by Judge Cynthia Wheless. The Committee began in 2020 to launch the Texas Juvenile Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law Bench Book (commonly called the Juvenile Bench Book). In 2023, the Committee published the 3rd edition in print and [online](#). To date, over 400 physical copies have been distributed.



5. Summit Curriculum Committee

The Summit Curriculum Committee, chaired by Judge Brent Carr, advises on speakers and curriculum for the Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health. The Committee works to ensure that the presentation topics promote the JCMH mission and lead the way in this ever-changing legal field. The Committee will meet up to three times in summer 2024 to work on the 7th Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health.

6. Legislative Research Committee

JCMH Vice Chair Bill Boyce chairs the Legislative Research Committee (LRC) which creates proposals for the Texas Judicia Council to improve the administration of justice. Professor Brian Shannon leads the drafting subcommittee. In November 2023, the LRC began preparing for the 89th Legislative Session. Many proposals are currently being discussed, drafted, and debated. The LRC met most recently on April 10, 2024, to vote on which will move forward with for the upcoming legislative session subject to approval from the JCMH Executive Committee.

7. Forms Committee

The Forms Committee, chaired by Judge Dave Jahn, was established in December 2019. Tasked with examining common mental health forms, the Committee sought to produce a set of standardized forms that could be used in any county in the state. The Forms Committee met regularly and developed over 60 [forms](#) related to mental health, which are available on the JCMH website. The Supreme Court Advisory Committee specifically considered seven forms related to mental health and approved these forms for use under Rule 10 (g) of the [Texas Rules of Judicial Administration](#), a rule that prohibits the rejection of these seven forms if they are properly completed. A [report](#) of all Commission activities related to S.B. 362 (86th Reg. Sess. (2019)), including that of the Forms Committee, is available on the website.

8. Long-Term Planning Committee

The Long-Term Planning Committee, chaired by Judge John Specia, Jr., has focused on long-term goal setting and offering input on possible new JCMH projects. Specifically, the Committee discussed how to support judicial leaders in their work: (i) as judicial leaders within with their communities; (ii) creating and augmenting mental health courts and dockets; (iii) incorporating best practices for youth; and (iv) including best practices related to improving disparate outcomes for diversities such as race, geography, gender, and economic factors. On May 19, 2022, the Long-Term Planning Committee met to create an updated JCMH strategic plan with these topics at the forefront. On May 2, the [2023 Strategic Plan](#) was approved by the Commission and Executive Committee.

9. Data Committee

The Data Committee, chaired by Dr. Connie Almeida, met in September 2023 and January 2024 to finalize work on the 16.22 Data Project and launch a new project focused on determining data collection best practices for mental health courts and general jurisdiction courts in mental health-related cases.



The Committee helped to create a Step-By-Step Guide to encourage counties to utilize the 16.22 process for early identification of individuals with mental illness or IDD in the local criminal justice system and to ensure proper reporting to OCA, which is now available [here](#) on the JCMH website and in print. The data collection best practices guide will help courts appropriately collect, store, and use data to improve program effectiveness.

10. JCMH Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is comprised of Justice Jane Bland, Judge Barbara Hervey, Justice Rebeca Huddle, Judge Jesse McClure III, Justice Bill Boyce, Judge John Specia, Judge Brent Carr, Megan LaVoie, and Kristi Taylor. It meets at least quarterly, or more if needed, to advise on JCMH operations, projects, and policy.

Education

The JCMH creates specialized training, resources, and tools for judges, attorneys, court personnel, and other stakeholders.

1. 7th Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health

The 2024 Summit will take place on November 20-22, 2024, at the Marriott Dallas Allen Hotel and Convention Center in Allen, Texas. As in prior years, the Summit will offer a web simulcast for attendees who are unable to travel in person. Applications for proposals open on May 1, 2024, and all submissions are due by May 31 to be considered for the 2024 Summit.

2. Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law [Bench Book](#)

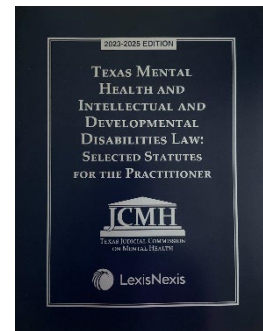
The Bench Book is a 358-page book for Texas judges hearing cases regarding persons with mental illness and/or IDD. Each section contains applicable statutory processes, relevant best practices and guidance, and cross-references to mandatory forms. The fourth edition of the Bench Book added over 100 pages of new material and forms, including an index, and was released in October 2023 at the Judicial Summit on Mental Health. Print copies of the Bench Book and all other JCMH publications can be ordered by sending an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov, and a digital version of the 4th Edition is currently available on the JCMH website.

3. Texas Juvenile Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law [Bench Book](#)

The Juvenile Bench Book is a 190-page book for Texas judges hearing cases regarding youth and adolescents with mental illness and/or IDD. Each section contains applicable statutory processes, relevant best practices and guidance, equity considerations, and suggested forms. The third edition of the Juvenile Bench book was released at the 2023 Judicial Summit on Mental Health. Print copies can be ordered by sending an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov and a digital version of the 3rd edition is currently available on the [JCMH website](#).

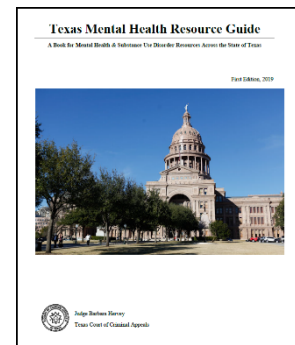
4. Mental Health [Code Book](#)

The JCMH, building on the work of Chris Lopez at HHSC, created the *Texas Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law: Selected Statutes for the Practitioner*, a collection of Texas statutes related to mental health and IDD in one convenient volume. The Code Book was updated and streamlined following the 88th Legislative Session. Print copies can be ordered by sending an email to JCMH@txcourts.gov and a digital version is available on the [JCMH website](#).



5. Texas Mental Health Resource Guide

The [Texas Mental Health Resource Guide](#) was created from Judge Barbara Hervey's vision and provides an explanation of mental health services and lists resources indexed by type, region, and county. The Resource Guide is intended to be continually updated, and information or resources for the benefit of those with mental health challenges can be sent to the Court of Criminal Appeals at Mentalhealthresource@txcourts.gov.



6. Jurist in Residence Letters

Judge John Specia, Jr., Senior District Judge (Ret.) and Judge Brent A. Carr (Ret.) distribute letters throughout the year to keep judges, attorneys, and other stakeholders updated on relevant changes to the law and share helpful resources and tools. Five JIR letters were sent in 2023 and recent topics include legislative updates, emergency detentions, and Summit registration details. All previously released Jurist-in-Residence letters are available on our website, [here](#).

7. Resource Letters

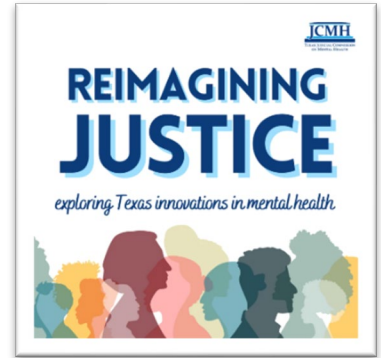
JCMH has issued three Resource Letters in 2024. Resource Letters are short communiques designed to quickly disseminate information and announcements about resources and training opportunities for stakeholders. The 2024 letters included information on available grants, helpful publications, and training and education opportunities, and all previous Resource Letters are available [here](#).

8. JCMH [Website](#)

The JCMH website highlights the JCMH’s body of work. The site showcases JCMH’s [events](#), [publications](#), various [technical assistance](#) offerings, and [news](#) related to the Commission. By utilizing forms on the website, requests for [technical assistance](#) have been streamlined to allow users to make a request directly from the page. Our [Beyond the Bio](#) page adds a unique touch by sharing personal information about our commissioners and collaborative council members. The Video Library section of the site gives users access to educational materials in a video format. The JCMH’s webinar about starting a mental health court is featured, as well as a brand-new section that organizes past Summit presentations from 2018 – 2023 by topic.

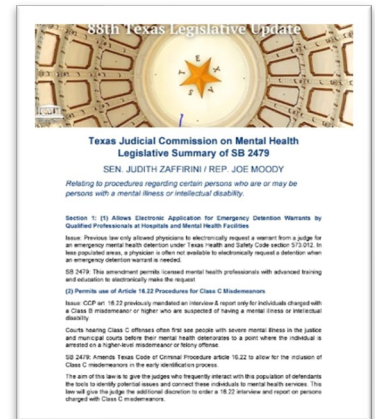
9. JCMH Podcast

In 2023, JCMH launched its podcast called: *Reimagining Justice: Exploring Texas Innovations in Mental Health*. Each month, we highlight a program or practice that other counties can learn from and replicate. So far, 12 episodes have been released. Our latest episode was with Travis County DA Jose Garza about the Travis County Transformation Project: a pre-arrest, community-based pilot program for 15 to 16-year-olds involved with family violence in the home. Email JCMH staff if you have an innovative program in your county that you would like to see highlighted.



10. Legislative Materials

The JCMH prepares tools and resources regarding mental health and IDD legislation. You can find summaries of the bills passed in the last legislative session from JCMH proposals, as well as a summary of passed mental health legislation organized by sequential intercept [here](#).



11. Presentations to Partner Organizations

JCMH leaders have been featured speakers at national and statewide events. JCMH staff have also been invited to speak on mental health topics, specialty courts, and collaborative leadership at many conferences and events in the past few months:

- March 29, 2024, Molly Davis presented “Mental Health in Juvenile Court” at the Texas Association of Counties Spring Judicial Education Session in Lubbock, TX.
- March 27, 2024, Kristi Taylor presented “Ethics in Mental Health Courts” at the Texas Association of Specialty Courts Conference in Fort Worth, TX.
- March 26, 2024, Molly Davis presented “Ethics in Juvenile Court” at the Texas Association of Specialty Courts Conference in Fort Worth, TX.
- March 12, 2024, Kama Harris presented “The Importance of Early Intervention for Competency Restoration” to the Texas HHSC Jail In-Reach Learning Collaborative.
- February 28, 2024, Kama Harris presented “Mental Health Law: Looking Toward the Next Legislative Session” to the National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) State Advocacy Network.

- February 27, 2024, Molly Davis presented “Ethics in Complex Chapter 55 Cases” at the 37th Annual Juvenile Law Conference in Galveston, TX.
- February 22, 2024, Kristi Taylor and Molly Davis presented “Mental Health in Municipal Courts” at the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center Regional Prosecutors Seminar in Austin, TX.
- January 26, 2024, Molly Davis presented “An Introduction to the JCMH” at the Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities Quarterly Meeting.
- Each month throughout the 2023-2024 training year, Kama Harris and Andy Perkins are teaching municipal court clerks across Texas how to build a Mental Health Toolkit through the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center’s Regional Clerks Seminars.

To request a JCMH staff member to speak at your event, please complete the [speaker form](#) on our website.

Leadership

The JCMH recognizes that judicial leadership is essential to furthering our mission and supports statewide and local initiatives to provide courts with the tools and resources they need.

1. Texas County Mental Health Law Plan Pilot Program

The JCMH has launched another pilot program called the Texas County Mental Health Law Plan, where the eight participating counties receive four classes on Texas Mental Health Law, a checklist for self-analysis, and in-person workshops offer hands-on assistance, tools, and resources to support their work in creating a template outlining County Mental Health Law Plan. The goals of the pilot are to determine if creating such a plan encourages discussions that add collaboration, efficiency, cost-savings, and accountability to county mental health law systems.

Administrative Judges are asked to create a multidisciplinary team, if one does not already exist, that would review the JCMH Mental Health Law Checklist and then complete a template reflecting the county’s current and future plans related to the relevant mental health law issues according to the Sequential Intercept Model.

2. Community Diversion Coordinator Pilot Project

The JCMH, in partnership with HHSC, granted funds to three counties for a pilot project intended to divert individuals with mental illness who are charged with nonviolent misdemeanor offenses from the criminal justice system. Three test sites were selected for implementation: Denton County, Grayson County, and Smith County. Each county hired a Coordinator in Fall 2021. In 2022, JCMH hosted SIM workshops for all three counties and each coordinator has an action plan. The program counties are receiving technical assistance from the National Center for State Courts to assist with evaluation of the programs as well as the development of a blueprint for other counties to follow to create a community diversion coordinator.

3. Round Table Series

Round Table discussions are designed to address key issues affecting mental health and IDD law and the courts that hear those cases. The discussions are usually a half-day program facilitated by a subject matter expert. The topics vary year to year and the number of Round Tables hosted each year also varies according to the interest of stakeholders and issues demanding attention. A Round Table on children’s mental health issues was co-hosted by the Supreme Court Children’s Commission in June 2022; the [report](#) is available on both commissions’ websites. In December 2022, a Round Table on complex issues in Emergency Detention proceedings was held; the [report](#) is available on the JCMH website.

4. Technical Assistance for Courts and Communities

JCMH continues to provide Technical Assistance services, including connecting judges with experts and peers, and assisting in the creation of mental health court programs. In 2024, JCMH held the first-of-its-kind Mental Health Courts Collaborative, an online peer mentorship and collaboration forum for judges who want to start a mental health court, that culminated at the Texas Association of Specialty Courts Conference in March 2024 in Fort Worth. Judges from seven counties participated in the Collaborative.



JCMH also provides Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping Workshops to communities, and in 2024 and 2025 will target juvenile justice systems for mapping workshops. So far in 2024, JCMH has completed mappings of the Lubbock County adult criminal justice system and the juvenile justice systems of Blanco and Llano Counties, with plans to map the juvenile justice systems of Smith, Grayson, and Cameron Counties. JCMH will partner with the Texas Justice Court Training Center to complete mappings of the adult criminal justice systems in Brazos, Burleson, and Duval Counties later this year.



5. Innovations Map

The County Resources and Innovations in Mental Health Map (Innovations Map) was published in 2022. On August 18th, 2022, new and improved features customized how data is entered and then displayed to the public. JCMH continues adding resources to this map, and the map is being retooled to enable focus specifically on juvenile-specific resources as well as a section to highlight notable milestones and innovations, both locally and statewide.

Tab 6

Announcements

COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH LAW PLAN

TEXAS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

The laws relating to persons with mental illness or intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) are complex and span several different codes affecting multiple, diverse stakeholders. For this reason, the JCMH created the County Mental Health Law Plan (CMHLP) program. The CMHLP is a JCMH pilot program that offers technical assistance, tools, and resources including a checklist and template to support eight counties in their work to create a County Mental Health Law Plan over a six-month period. The goals of the pilot are to determine if creating such a plan encourages discussions that add collaboration, efficiency, cost-savings, and accountability to county mental health law systems.

By participating in this program, a county will: identify gaps and resources, clarify roles within the county, streamline complex MH processes, provide access to FREE resources, identify MH best practices, and create accountability.

Pilot Counties

Burleson

Burnet

Duval

El Paso

Hays

Henderson

Medina

Travis

PROGRAM CLASSES:

January 26*: Civil Commitment (Emergency Detention, OPC)
CLE Course #: 174228907

February 9*: Early Intervention (CCP 16.22, CCP 17.032)
CLE Course #: 174230100

February 23*: Specialty Courts
CLE Course #: 174230105

March 9: Competency Restoration
CLE Course #: 174230112

**Video replays linked*

WORKSHOP DATES:

Burleson Wednesday, June 26

Burnet Thursday, July 11

Duval Tuesday, September 10

El Paso Wednesday, July 24

Hays Wednesday, August 7

Henderson TBD

Medina Wednesday, May 8

Travis Wednesday, September 18

Aligning Health and Safety: The Building Blocks

A tool for states to support local systems improvements at the intersection of criminal justice and behavioral health

State-level policy actions through all three branches of government can help establish the building blocks for initiating or advancing local efforts to improve outcomes for people with behavioral health needs. These policy actions include not just legislation and regulatory changes, but also budgets, rule-making, administrative policies, and leadership approaches. Essential building blocks that localities must have in place include:

- **Effective collaboration structures;**
- **Cross-system data collection and information sharing capacity; and**
- **Aligned funding to strengthen care and supports.**

This tool is designed to help state policymakers and staff:

- **Understand levers available across all three branches of state government to support localities' foundational needs;**
- **Learn what strategies other states have used to advance similar priorities; and**
- **Gather key resources and best practices to support effective implementation.**

By aligning priorities, plans, and funding across systems, states can help communities break cycles of incarceration, hospitalization, and housing instability for people with behavioral health needs. The result is healthier people and safer communities.

Follow JCMH on social media!

Scan the QR codes to follow us on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram

