

# Mental Health Connection: A Community Strategy for Transformation

## 1999

Mental health providers accepted the challenge when Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr asked them to create a plan for improving access to quality mental health services in Tarrant County for citizens of all ages.

### Catalyst for Change

In September 1999, a man suffering from untreated mental illness went on a shooting rampage at Wedgwood Baptist Church, killing seven and then himself. Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr turned to local mental health providers, requesting a plan for improving access to quality mental health services for all residents of Tarrant County.



Cook Children's Medical Center, Lena Pope Home, MHMR of Tarrant County, the City of Fort Worth, Fort Worth ISD, Tarrant County and the Child Study Center provided leadership and financial resources to accept Mayor Barr's challenge. This initial group determined parameters for collaborative planning, recruited organizational and individual members, created task forces and developed a fee structure.

## 2000



Sixteen beds for adolescents 13 and over re-opened at JPS. Community providers committed services for discharged youth.

Lena Pope Home agreed to provide in-home services, with MHMR providing medication management. Cook Children's Medical Center continued to provide emergency and in-patient psychiatric services to children birth to 12 years.

## 2001

Texas Integrated Funding Initiative (TIF) grant of \$203,000 awarded to the collaboration.

The Texas Department of Health and Human Services provided for the administration of wraparound services through Lena Pope Home.

### Formal strategic planning process began

Task forces were organized for Programs and Services, Technology, Funding, Advocacy/Education/Prevention, Connectedness, Addictions and Legislative Initiatives.

## 2002

Six-year \$9.5 million System of Care Grant (Community Solutions) awarded by SAMHSA

Mayor Barr worked closely with Mental Health Connection (MHC) leaders to advocate and secure a System of Care grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The City of Fort Worth provided fiscal management and staffing through its Public Health Department, while MHC provided support services and secured the required local match. The grant targeted technology, training, social marketing, research and evaluation, and other infrastructure needs. A portion of the funds was used to provide wraparound services for 400 children aged 6-18 with Serious Emotional Disturbance. Because the collaboration exceeded its requirement for in-kind contributions, the cumulative resources invested in the community from Community Solutions totaled \$20,256,517 over the seven-year period ending September 29, 2009.

### Community Advisory Board (CAB), a family organization, was formed

To ensure inclusion of the family voice in strategic planning, monthly meetings were held with family members and providers to discuss issues and create solutions.



Report card to the community  
In December 2002, a group of 400 elected officials, service providers and parents gathered to discuss the status of mental health care in Tarrant County

## 2003

MHMR Research Division recruited and trained family members to conduct evaluation interviews with participants in the Community Solutions Program.

### No Wrong Door curriculum created

MHC, with leadership from Staff of The Bridge, United Way 211, The Women's Center, MHMR and others created a curriculum for training front-line staff (first point of contact) in the No Wrong Door approach. Over 300 staff received training to ensure a "warm hand-off" for individuals who call to connect to services and resources.

### Community Solutions Management Information System (CSMIS) began exploring technology options for creating a virtual No Wrong Door to mental health services.

The Parenting Center, Santa Fe Youth Services, Catholic Charities, Lena Pope Home and ACH Child and Family Services agreed to pilot the creation of

a web-based client information-sharing database. Each agency committed its technology staff to determine data fields to be included, as well as policies and procedures for utilization. The goal was to decrease the number of times families had to tell their stories while increasing the speed of access to services through the web-based referral system.

### FWISD, in collaboration with MHC, opened its first Family Resource Center (FRC) at Riverside Middle School

Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) established the campus-based center to provide behavioral healthcare and other family supports. MHC agencies relocated staff to a center built through funding provided by the Amon Carter Foundation, and FWISD also relocated existing student support personnel. FWISD's vision has assured that students have the opportunity for academic and emotional readiness for learning. Students participating in FRC services have demonstrated improved attendance, grades and behaviors.

### Second strategic planning cycle commenced

Community stakeholders developed a plan focusing efforts on system accountability, better understanding of available resources and gaps in services, improving communication, developing a comprehensive database of all mental health services in Tarrant County, and changing public opinion about mental health.

## 2004

MHC contracted with the University of North Texas to conduct a telephone survey of 1,100 households to establish a baseline about community attitudes regarding mental health and mental illness. The study results were used to create, implement and evaluate a social marketing strategy for reducing stigma and educating the public about mental illness.

### Funding Maximization Group established

The Public Consulting Group (PCG) of Boston was engaged to conduct a study on behavioral health funding streams into Tarrant County and consider additional funding opportunities. PCG proposed a Title IV-E waiver, enabling funds to be used for wraparound services for children rather than for out-of-home placements. After negotiations and discussions with state officials, the relevant state agency determined not to pursue it at that time.



### Kenneth Barr Awards established

In honor of Kenneth Barr, MHC established an award to recognize exemplary collaborative efforts and extraordinary contributions to improving mental health services in Tarrant County. FWISD was given the first award to recognize its work in establishing the Family Resource Centers.

### MHC invited to participate in National Policy Academy

Tarrant County participated in a National Policy Academy on Improving Services for Justice-Involved Youth with Mental Health and Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorders in Washington, D.C. The Academy was co-sponsored by SAMHSA, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute of Health and the U.S. Department of Justice.

### MHC initiated a community discussion about evidence-based practices

Patrick Kanary, director of the Center for Innovative Practices in Canton, Ohio, addressed MHC members about "Building Systems of Care on Evidence-Based Practice."

## 2005

### MHC continued the discussion about evidence-based practices

Robert Brooks, Ph.D., professor of clinical psychology at Harvard Medical School, addressed mental health providers, community leaders and family members on building resilience in children.

### "Open Minds Open Doors" anti-stigma campaign launched

Community Solutions funded the creation and production of the award-winning "Open Minds Open Doors" anti-stigma campaign. The campaign targeted adolescents through posters, billboards, bus ads, public service announcements, a supplement in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and a five-day curriculum for use in classrooms.

### "We Need to Talk" policy luncheon and roundtable

Awards for the campaign included the Texas Public Relations Association Silver Spur Award and four Excellence in Community Communications and Outreach (ECCO) awards.

## 2006



MHC collaborated with the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History to coordinate a three-month photographic exhibit of individuals with mental illness. Over 75,000 people visited the exhibit and the accompanying educational lectures MHC presented at the museum. The marketing campaign for "Fine Line" received several awards, including the Silver Anvil Award from the Public Relations Society of America.

### Blue Ribbon Committee formed

State and local elected officials called on business leaders to recommend strategies for improving mental health in the workplace and to address future mental health workforce shortages. The Committee presented a final report to the community in December 2007.

### Convened first Bridging the Gap Symposium

MHC collaborated with Texas Christian University to plan a five-year series of symposia for the purpose of "Bridging the Gap between Research, Practice and Policy." The goal was to shorten the

## 2007

### Texas Mental Health Transformation Grant from DSHS awarded

MHC was selected as one of seven community collaboratives representing Texas' mental health transformation activities.



### Learning Communities formed

Following the first Bridging the Gap Symposium, MHC organized Learning Communities that met monthly to review the research in six areas: at risk/prevention, autism, addictions, externalizing disorders, internalizing disorders and trauma. More than 125 practitioners, health professionals, faith leaders, researchers, policy makers and family members volunteered over 4,000 hours, with each Learning Community proposing an evidence-based-practice pilot for Tarrant County.

### Convened second Bridging the Gap Symposium

The program focused on the implementation of evidence-based practices, cultural competence within the treatment community, and the use of cost-benefit analysis in strategic planning.

### 80th Texas Legislature and Tarrant County provided \$7,757,614 for a significant expansion of crisis services through MHMR

New services included a Mobile Crisis Outreach Team, Outpatient Competency Restoration, Crisis Stabilization, Crisis Residential Services and Crisis Respite Services.

acknowledged 17-year gap between publication of research and the application of that knowledge at the practice level. The symposium targeted approximately 200 mental health care agency administrators, practitioners and family members to incorporate the latest research in adolescent mental health care, to advocate effectively for public policy, and to transform a mental health system at the community level.

### Tarrant County was awarded a second System of Care grant by SAMHSA (Hand in Hand)

Community stakeholders developed a proposal for an initiative targeting children from 0 through 6 in a five-county area. MHMR serves as the lead agency for the program.

### CSMIS fully operational

The FWISD Family Resource Centers joined the pioneer agencies on the system, and began making referrals to services.

### Open Society Institute (OSI) of Baltimore, Maryland, awarded \$600,000 to Tarrant County Challenge, Inc., to Expand Treatment for Drug and Alcohol Addiction

In support of the MHC goal of better integrating mental health and substance abuse services, Tarrant County Challenge submitted a collaborative proposal with MHC to the Open Society Institute to expand comprehensive treatment systems and to improve quality of treatment. The goal was to mobilize public support for expanded treatment by increasing public funding, broadening insurance coverage and achieving greater program efficiency. Specifically, the community would work to expand Texas' Medicaid Plan to cover outpatient addiction treatment and increases in state appropriations to provide treatment. Other key partners were Lena Pope Home, the Recovery Resource Council and the local treatment community.



### Implementation Teams formed

After the Learning Communities completed their reports and made their recommendations, teams were formed to plan for implementing the suggested pilots in Tarrant County. Each team was asked to select an expert trainer in the evidence-based practice, plan for ongoing consultation, develop social marketing strategies to support the pilot, make suggestions for individuals to be trained in the practice, recommend an evaluator to determine outcomes of the one-year pilot and create a budget. MHC's commitment was to find the resources to implement the plans.

### "Friendships Count" anti-stigma campaign for adolescents launched

The "Friendships Count" campaign for adolescents included posters, book-marks, a Web site, a YouTube video and an original song created by local youth.

### Evaluation Team receives national awards

The Community Solutions Evaluation Team received a Gold Award for Evaluation Operations and a Silver Award for Involving Family Members and Youth in Evaluation from SAMHSA.

### Family-run Qualitative Survey conducted

Family members who received services through Community Solutions designed and conducted a qualitative study, interviewing 40 families with the goal of determining what worked and what did not work.



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## 2000

Collaboration was named Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County (MHC)

16 psychiatric beds for adolescents re-opened at JPS



Extra-Extra  
Fort Worth Star-Telegram published a series of articles on mental illness to raise community awareness

## 2001

Strategic planning started

## 2002

Six-year \$9.5 million System of Care Grant (Community Solutions) awarded by SAMHSA



Community Advisory Board (CAB), a family organization, was formed

## 2003

No Wrong Door curriculum created

FWISD opened its first Family Resource Center (FRC) at Riverside Middle School

## 2004

Standards of Care adopted

MHC hosted policy retreat to focus national advocacy efforts

## 2005

Public Attitudes Survey conducted

Kenneth Barr Award established and presented to FWISD

## 2006

MHC continued the discussion about evidence-based practices with Dr. Robert Brooks

"Open Minds Open Doors" anti-stigma campaign launched

## 2007

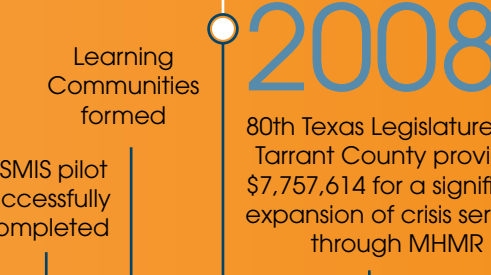
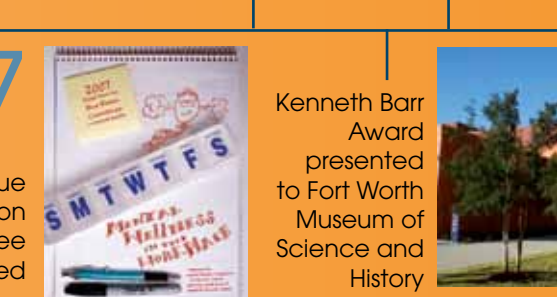
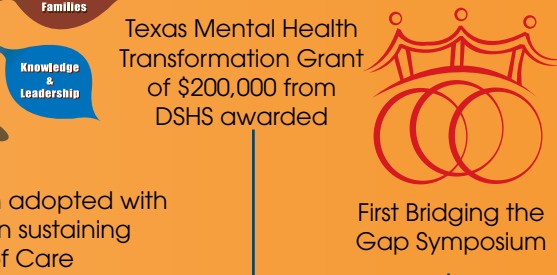
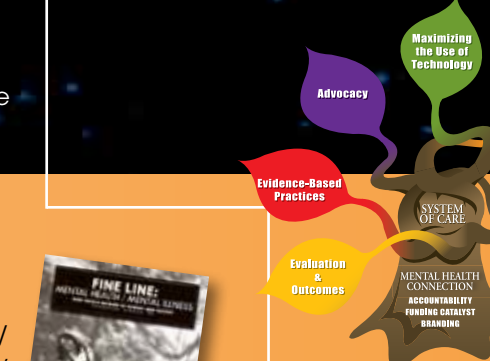
Blue Ribbon Committee formed

Fourth FWISD Family Resource Center opened at Western Hills Elementary School

## 2008

80th Texas Legislature and Tarrant County provided \$7,757,614 for a significant expansion of crisis services through MHMR

Open Society Institute (OSI) of Baltimore, Maryland, awarded \$600,000 to Tarrant County Challenge, Inc., to Expand Treatment for Drug and Alcohol Addiction



2009

81st Texas Legislature and Tarrant County provided \$4,876,651 for significant expansion of MHMR Crisis Services

Based on input from community stakeholders, transitional services and intensive ongoing services were added to the service array.

**Research Council forms**

In an effort to more closely align the research and mental health provider communities, MHC created a Research Council. The group met quarterly to discuss shared interests, potential research needed and possible venues for local research to be presented to the community. UT Arlington, University of North Texas (UNT) Health Science Center, Texas Wesleyan University, Texas Christian University, Cook Children's Medical Center, UT Southwestern, UT Austin and the MHMR Research Division joined the Council.

**Research Roundtables held**

Research Council members conducted four research roundtables throughout the year to present local research findings. Topics included:

- "Family Stories as Research Tools: Collecting and Using Stories as Evaluation Data," presented by Kirstin Painter, Ph.D., assistant professor, School of Social Work and Sociology, Texas Women's University, and director of Evaluation and Outcomes, MHMR of Tarrant County; Barbara Perry, family evaluation specialist, MHMR of Tarrant County; and Sean Allen, Ph.D., assistant director, Evaluation and Outcomes Division, MHMR of Tarrant County
- "Antipsychotic Efficacy in Bipolar Disorder with Cocaine or Methamphetamine Dependence," presented by Vicki Nejtcek, Ph.D., associate professor, director of Co-occurring Disorders Research, Department of Psychiatry, UNT Health Science Center


• "Brief Solution-Focused Therapy's Effect on an Individual's Productivity at Work," presented by Jon C. Crook, Ph.D., CEAP, assistant professor, Texas Wesleyan University, and Clinical Director, Employee Assistance Programs, Life Synch, Inc.

• "Interactions between Neurobiological and Psychosocial Factors in the Onset and Course of Psychiatric Disorders in Youngsters: Adversity and Brain Development," presented by Uma Rao, M.D., professor of psychiatry, Sarah M. and Charles E. Seay Chair in Child Psychiatry, Director, Division of Child and Adolescent Addictions Research, UT Southwestern Medical Center.

**Implementation Teams began implementing the evidence-based practice pilots suggested by the Learning Communities**

*Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy pilot initiated*  
54 providers representing 13 agencies, two hospitals and one private practitioner were trained and provided with consultation by the developer of the curriculum. More than 80 Tarrant County children are participants in a national evaluation study conducted by UT-Austin. Carolyn Hanke, community advocate, managed the work in TF-CBT.

*Stay on TRAC Alcohol Diversion Program planned for Keller ISD*  
Stay on TRAC (Treatment, Responsibility and Accountability on Campus) is an alcohol diversion program designed to provide students an option to alternative school for alcohol rules infractions. MHC partners ACH Child and Family Services, Lena Pope Home, Santa Fe

Youth Services and MHMR of Tarrant County Youth Recovery Campus, agreed to organize existing services to meet the needs of the project. Tarrant County Juvenile Services is the lead agency in managing this work.

*Cultural Competency Training presented*  
Forty-two practitioners and 36 executives from MHC member agencies attended retreats to receive training from Dr. Gloria Morrow in the California Brief Multicultural Competency Scale (CBMCS). Ten individuals applied for additional training to become CBMCS facilitators. Santa Fe Youth Services is the lead agency in this work.

*Autism Pilot progresses*  
Cook Children's Physician Network agreed to reimburse its 250+ physicians for autism screenings at 18 or 24 months.



**CSMIS renamed DataLink and expanded**  
New users were added to DataLink, including the Arlington Police Department Victims Assistance, Hand in Hand, MHMR, the Fort Worth Police Department Victims Assistance, The Women's Center, Dispute Resolution Services, First Baptist Church of Burleson, Ruth's Place of Granbury and Safe Haven of Tarrant County. Enhancements and reporting capabilities have been added to the system.

**Convened Third Annual Bridging the Gap Symposium**  
The program focused on evidence-based mental health practices for younger children, the effect of early trauma and poverty on infant brain development, and the science of implementation.

### Leveraging Mental Health Resources for Tarrant County

MHC members started by investing in ourselves. Because of our success and accomplishments, others have invested in our work: private foundations; social service agencies; local, state and federal government; businesses and corporations; and individuals

Year	Funding Source	Purpose	Amount
2000	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	TIFI - wraparound services	\$203,000
2002	SAMHSA <sup>6</sup>	System of Care - Community Solutions (CS)	\$9,555,136
2002	John Ryan Foundation	Cash match for CS	\$10,000
2003	Gil and Doby Weaver Foundation	Cash match for CS	\$15,000
2003	Sid Richardson Foundation	Planning	\$50,000
2003	Amon Carter Foundation <sup>3</sup>	Infrastructure for FWSD Family Resource Centers	\$200,000
2003	Amon Carter Foundation	Planning	\$50,000
2003	Anonymous	Planning	\$15,000
2004	Sid Richardson Foundation	Planning	\$100,000
2004	Colonial Charities	Autism Camps in 2004 & 2005	\$10,000
2007	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)	Fine Line Exhibit	\$85,000
2007	Open Society Foundation <sup>4</sup>	Policy transformation	\$600,000
2007	DSHS	Mental Health Transformation	\$200,000
2008	DSHS <sup>2</sup>	Crisis Services	\$4,376,651
2008	Tarrant County <sup>2</sup>	Crisis Services match	\$500,000
2008	SAMHSA <sup>5</sup>	System of Care - Hand in Hand	\$8,300,000
2009	DSHS	TF-CBT pilot	\$250,000
2009	Sid Richardson Foundation	Evidence-based practices	\$100,000
2009	DSHS <sup>2</sup>	Crisis Services	\$6,440,067
2009	Tarrant County <sup>2</sup>	Crisis Services match	\$817,547
10 years	Membership dues and sponsorships		\$2,000,000
2004	CRCG coordination	\$2,000/agencyx10 agencies/6 years	\$120,000
<b>TOTAL CASH SECURED</b>			<b>\$33,997,401</b>
	In-Kind match for CS	2002-2009	\$10,701,380
	In-Kind match for Hand in Hand	2008-2009	\$415,535
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES SECURED BY MHC FOR PAST TEN YEARS</b>			<b>\$45,114,316</b>

All monies were secured through the collaborative efforts of MHC members.

1. Administered by Lena Pope Home
2. Administered by MHMR of Tarrant County
3. Administered by MHMR of Tarrant County
4. Administered by FWSD
5. Administered by MHMR of Tarrant County
6. Administered by City of Fort Worth Public Health Department

2008

The collaboration was awarded a second \$8.5 million System of Care grant by SAMHSA (Hand in Hand)

CSMIS fully operational

Evaluation Team received national awards

Kenneth Barr Awards honored Ted Blevins, founding chair of MHC, and the City of Fort Worth.

Stay on TRAC Alcohol Diversion Program planned by Keller ISD

Cultural Competency Training presented

Cook Children's Physician Network agreed to reimburse its 250+ physicians for autism screenings at 18 or 24 months

Convened Third Annual Bridging the Gap Symposium

Family Connection changed name to Family and Consumer Connection

CSMIS renamed DataLink and expanded

Research Roundtables held

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Pilot Initiated

Research Council formed

Friendships Count anti-stigma campaign for adolescents launched

Family-Run Qualitative Survey conducted

Convened second Bridging the Gap Symposium

Implementation Teams formed for evidence-based practice pilots




2009



Mental Health Connection is a collaboration of public and private agencies, as well as individuals who need mental health care services and their caregivers. The organization works to revolutionize the mental health delivery system, with a vision of creating No Wrong Door to the Right Mental Health Resources.

For more information about Mental Health Connection, go to [www.mentalhealthconnection.org](http://www.mentalhealthconnection.org) or call 817.927.5200

