



BYLAWS

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SYSTEMS OF HOPE BYLAWS

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ARTICLE 1

SYSTEMS OF HOPE

Section 1.1 Name, Area of Service, Fiscal Year

- A. The name of this unincorporated organization shall be the Harris County Systems of Hope (SOH). It shall be constituted as required by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services' Cooperative Agreements for the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program (SM-05-010) (Grant).
- B. The area served by SOH shall be Harris County, Texas. The governing body of Harris County is the Harris County Commissioners' Court which is a body politic and corporate under the laws of the State of Texas and which has the authority to direct funding for providing mental health programs for all of Harris County including all municipalities located within Harris County.
- C. The fiscal year of SOH shall begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

Section 1.2 Vision

The vision of SOH is an accepting and embracing community that promotes optimal development and emotional well-being of all children and their families through the creation of a successful, accessible, and integrated care system.

Section 1.3 Mission

The mission of SOH is to provide effective support and care which is youth-guided and family-driven to children who are experiencing serious emotional and behavioral problems. SOH shall utilize integrated, holistic, and individualized methods based on strengths and an appreciation of the many cultures represented in the community.

ARTICLE 2

GOVERNING BOARD: PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 2.1 Purpose

The governing body of SOH shall be called the Governing Board. The purpose of the Governing Board shall be to oversee and ensure that SOH effectively carries out its vision and mission.

Section 2.2 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Governing Board shall include but not be limited to:

- A. Develop a logic model and strategic plan for transforming the individual agency services into an integrated collaborative partnership between providers and families and reassess at least annually;
- B. Ensure and participate in the social marketing of SOH;
- C. Oversee the annual budgeting of all SOH funds;
- D. Review the progress and outcome reports from the Evaluation Team to ensure that SOH is adhering to the principles of systems of care and that SOH is able to deliver effective services and supports;
- E. Provide direction to the SOH Project Director;
- F. Promote the SOH vision and mission into state and local government human service agencies and community service organizations;
- G. Ensure that SOH complies with the SAMHSA Grant;
- H. Establish mechanisms for addressing grievances with respect to SOH;
- I. Approve contracts with SOH that are equal to or in excess of \$100,000;
- J. Ensure the sustainability of SOH; and
- K. Perform any other duties as appropriate in accordance with Article 3.

ARTICLE 3

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Section 3.1 Members

- A. The Governing Board shall be composed of no more than 20 voting members.
 - 1. The Governing Board membership goal is to be reflective of the community in terms of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, and inclusiveness of various types of mental illness.
 - 2. There shall be two Youth Advisory Council representatives on the Governing Board.

3. Governing Board Members shall be 18 years of age or older except for the representatives elected by the Youth Advisory Council to the Board.
- B. In order to transact any business or to exercise any power vested in the Governing Board, a quorum of no less than 51% of voting members must be present at the start of the meeting.
- C. Membership Categories
1. Houston Federation of Families [for Children's Mental Health \(HFFCMH\)](#)
 2. ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ [HFFCMH Family Member](#)
 3. ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ [HFFCMH Family Member](#)
 4. ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ [HFFCMH Family Member](#)
 5. A local NAMI Affiliate
 6. Served Family Member
 7. Served Family Member
 8. Served Family Member
 9. Served Family Member
 10. Youth Advisory Council
 11. Youth Advisory Council
 12. City of Houston Health and Human Services Department
 13. DePelchin Children's Center
 14. Harris County Hospital District
 15. Harris County Juvenile Probation Department
 16. Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults
 17. Joint City/County Commission on Children
 18. Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County
 19. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
 20. TEA/HISD/Harris County Department of Education

Section 3.2 Appointment/Election of Members and Alternates

Members and Alternates shall be elected as follows:

- A. Organizations shall each appoint one Member and one Alternate, each of whom has the authority to make decisions committing the organization, including financial and resource commitments.
- B. The ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ HFFCMH shall elect seven Family Members and seven Alternates, three (3) of whom shall be members of the ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ HFFCMH and four (4) of whom shall be members of families currently or previously served by SOH.
- C. The Youth Advisory Council shall elect 2 Youth Members and 2 Alternatives.

Section 3.3 Responsibilities of Members

Members are required to:

- A. Serve on at least one committee;
- B. Participate in training as required by the Governing Board;
- C. Uphold the vision and mission of SOH;
- D. Attend at least 75% of Governing Board meetings per year; three consecutive absences shall result in automatic removal, unless otherwise excused by the Governing Board; and
- E. Prepare for meetings by reviewing agendas, minutes and other distributed meeting materials in order to facilitate the business of the Governing Board.

Section 3.4 Terms of Service

There shall be no term limits for Governing Board Members.

Section 3.5 Removals

- A. Change in Position
If the status of a Member is changed so that he/she no longer represents the Governing Board Membership Category for which he/she was originally appointed under Section 3.1 C of this Article, that Member shall immediately resign in accordance with Section 3.5 B of this Article and his/her seat shall be filled by the individual assuming representation of that Category.

B. Resignation

A Member may resign at any time by written notice delivered in person, sent by mail or emailed to the Governing Board Chair. Resignations shall be effective upon receipt, unless otherwise specified.

C. Cause

1. A Member may be removed by majority vote of the Governing Board for good cause, including, but not limited to, failure to comply with Member Responsibilities under Section 3.3 B of this Article or violation of the Governing Board Code of Ethics under Article 8.
2. The Governing Board shall remove a Member only after the Member has been notified in writing and has been offered an opportunity to dispute the cause or request a waiver by a decision of the Governing Board.

ARTICLE 4

GOVERNING BOARD DECISIONS, VOTING POWERS

Section 4.1 Decisions

The Governing Board shall make decisions by consensus of the Board Members present and voting. However, if no consensus is reached, then by majority vote (51%) of all Members present and voting, in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Simplified and Applied, 2d Edition.

Section 4.2 Abstention

Abstention from voting on an item is required of any Member associated with an entity that may receive commercial benefit from that item. The Member may choose to have her/his position for the decision recorded though uncounted. All are encouraged to join in discussion on all decisions.

Section 4.3 Voting by Proxy

There shall be no voting by proxy.

ARTICLE 5

GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS

Section 5.1 Officers

- A. The officers of the Governing Board shall be a Chair and a Chair-Elect.
- B. Both Officers must be Governing Board Members.

Section 5.2 Governing Board Chair

- A. Each year at the conclusion of the current Chair's term, the Chair-Elect shall assume the position of Chair; however, in extraordinary circumstances, the Governing Board in its discretion may extend the term of the Chair.
- B. The Chair shall be responsible for the following:
 - 1. Preside at and facilitate Governing Board meetings;
 - 2. Assume the position of Chair of the Executive Committee; and
 - 3. Carry out any duties deemed appropriate by the Board.

Section 5.3 Governing Board Chair-Elect

- A. The Governing Board shall elect a Chair-Elect from its Members.
- B. The Chair-Elect shall act as the Chair in the Chair's absence or inability to conduct business.

Section 5.4 Standing Work Team Co-Leaders

The Co-Leaders of a Standing Work Team shall be elected by the Work Team members by consensus or majority vote.

Section 5.5 Term of Service

- A. The term of service for Officers is one year.
- B. No Officer may serve more than one consecutive term in the same position, except as provided in Section 5.2 A. of this Article.

- C. An Officer may reapply for nomination to the same position after a minimum of one year following completion of the prior term in that position.
- D. There are no term limits for Work Team Co-Leaders.

Section 5.6 Elections

- A. Nominations of Officers shall be made in August.
- B. Regular elections shall be held in September.

Section 5.7 Removal

The Governing Board may remove an Officer from his/her position:

- A. Upon a finding of good cause, including but not limited to failure to execute the responsibilities of office or violation of the Governing Board's Code of Ethics under Article 8;
- B. In accordance with due process as prescribed in Article 8;
- C. At a meeting in which a minimum of two-thirds of the Governing Board is in attendance; and
- D. By consensus, except that if consensus is not reached after two attempts, by 75% of members present in a secret ballot.

Section 5.8 Vacancies

- A. A vacancy in the office of Chair of the Governing Board shall be filled by the Chair-Elect.
- B. A vacancy in the office of the Chair-Elect of the Governing Board shall be filled upon nomination and election of a successor by the Governing Board.
- C. A vacancy in either Co-Leader of a Work Team shall be filled by election by the Work Team.

ARTICLE 6

GOVERNING BOARD COUNCILS AND WORK TEAMS

Section 6.1 Executive Council

- A. The Executive Council shall be composed of:
1. The Principal Investigator,
 2. The Governing Board Chair;
 3. One of the Youth Representatives serving on the Governing Board and elected by the Youth Advisory Council , and
 4. Two At-Large Members elected by the ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ HFFCMH, one of whom shall be a family member of a family served by SOH.
- B. If one individual holds two of the positions designated under Section 6.1 A, then that individual shall have only one vote and another At-Large position shall be added.
- C. A quorum shall consist of 51% of the Executive Council members.
- D. The Governing Board Chair shall be the Chair of the Executive Council.
- E. The responsibilities of the Executive Council include but are not limited to the following:
1. Handling crises, emergencies, and urgent business; and
 2. Monitoring Standing Work Team activities.
- F. Nominations and elections of the At-Large Executive Council members should follow the same election cycle as described in Section 5.6 of this Article.

Section 6.2 Standing Councils and Work Teams

- A. The Standing Councils shall be:
1. Advisory Council
 2. Executive Council
 3. Youth Advisory Council

- B. The Standing Work Teams shall be:
1. Cultural and Linguistically Competent Team
 2. Evaluation Advisory Team
 3. Fiscal and Sustainability Team
 4. ~~Parent Empowerment Group~~ [HFFCMH](#)
 5. Social Marketing Team
 6. Systems Change Team

Section 6.3 Ad Hoc Work Teams

Ad Hoc Work Teams shall be appointed as needed by the Governing Board Chair with approval of the Governing Board.

Section 6.4 Work Team Responsibilities

Work Teams shall bring recommendations to the Governing Board on issues assigned by the Governing Board in a timely manner.

Section 6.5 Representation

Each Work Team shall strive to maintain 51% Family Membership.

ARTICLE 7

GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS

Section 7.1 Open to the Public

- A. Governing Board Meetings shall be open to the public.
- B. All documents prepared for the Governing Board shall be made available to the public for inspection, copying and email prior to the meeting in accordance with all applicable Harris County requirements for public dissemination of information.

Section 7.2 Notice

- A. Written notice of a Governing Board Meeting shall be given to all Governing Board members at least a week in advance of the meeting.
- B. Written notice of a Governing Board Meeting shall be given to the public at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

Section 7.3 Minimum Meetings

The Governing Board shall determine the frequency of regular Governing Board Meetings, except that there shall be a minimum of four meetings a year.

Section 7.4 Special Meetings

A. A Special Meeting of the Governing Board may be called by:

1. The Chair of the Governing Board; or
2. Five Governing Board Members upon written notice to the Chair of the Governing Board.

B. Notice of a Special Meeting shall be given in accordance with Section 7.2 of this Article.

Section 7.5 Emergency Meetings

A. An emergency meeting of the Governing Board may be called in accordance with Section 7.4 (A).

B. Notice of an emergency meeting shall be given in accordance with county guidelines for such meetings.

ARTICLE 8

CODE OF ETHICS, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, GRIEVANCES

Section 8.1 Federal, State and County Codes of Ethics

All members of the Governing Board and Standing Councils and Work Teams shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county and SOH Codes of Ethics governing financial interest, ownership or other business disclosure and conflict of interest rules. The SOH Code of Ethics is contained in Appendix A of these Bylaws.

Section 8.2 Grievance Procedures

The Governing Board shall adopt grievance procedures.

ARTICLE 9

DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

Section 9.1 Documents

The official Document of the Governing Board consists of these Bylaws.

Section 9.2 Records

The official Records of the Governing Board shall consist of the minutes of the Governing Board and the minutes of the Executive Council.

Section 9.3 Preparation and Maintenance

It shall be the responsibility of the Program Director to ensure that the Documents and Records are generated and maintained.

ARTICLE 10

REPORTING

Section 10.1 Reporting

The Chair of the Governing Board shall ensure that reports are submitted to regulatory agencies as required, including the Harris County Commissioners' Court.

ARTICLE 11

ADOPTION, AMENDMENTS, REVISIONS AND REPEAL

Section 11.1 Vote

These Bylaws may be adopted, amended, revised or repealed either by consensus or by a two-thirds vote of Members present at a Governing Board Meeting.

Section 11.2 Notice

Notice of all proposed amendments, revisions or repeal shall be emailed, mailed or hand-delivered to each Governing Board Member and be made available to the public at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which such amendments, revisions or repeal are to be considered.

Section 11.3 Effective

These Bylaws and subsequent amendments, revisions or repeals shall be effective immediately upon approval by the Governing Board.

ARTICLE 12 DEFINITIONS

Section 12.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply for purposes of these bylaws.

- A. **Ad Hoc Work Team** means a group of individuals formed in accordance with Section 6.3 of Article 6 used to address specific issues and automatically dissolved once the issue has been resolved.
- B. **Advocacy** means the act or process of supporting or promoting a cause or proposal.
- C. **Alternate** means a person who is appointed or elected in accordance with Section 3.2 of Article 3 to represent a Member when that Member is absent and who has the authority to make decisions committing the Member, including financial and resource commitments.
- D. **Cultural Competence** means the integration and application of knowledge and information about the social environment of individuals and groups of people into every aspect and level of SOH.
- E. **Family-Driven** means that families have a primary decision making role in the care of their own children as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community, state, tribe, territory and nation. This includes:
 - 1. Choosing supports, services, and providers;
 - 2. Setting goals;
 - 3. Designing and implementing programs;
 - 4. Monitoring outcomes;
 - 5. Partnering in funding decisions; and
 - 6. Determining the effectiveness of all efforts to promote the mental health and well being of children and youth.
- F. **Family Member** means an individual who is or has been a primary caregiver for a child, youth, or adolescent with a serious emotional disturbance (SED). The primary caregiver may be provided with a significant level of support by extended family members. Families who have children, youth, and adolescents with a SED are organized in a wide variety of configurations, regardless of social or economic status.

Families can include biological parents and their partners, adoptive parents and their partners, foster parents and their partners, grandparents and their partners, siblings and their partners, kinship caregivers, friends, and others as defined by the family.

- G. **Member** means a person who is appointed or elected in accordance with Section 3.2 of Article 3 to represent a Membership Category.
- H. **Principle Investigator** means the individual designated by the Grant to have the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to ensure fidelity to the Grant.
- I. **Project Director** means the individual hired by the Governing Board to manage SOH.
- J. **Proxy** means an individual or organization, other than the Governing Board Member or Alternate who is authorized to vote or take other action on the Governing Board Member's or Alternate's behalf.
- K. **Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED)** is generally defined as diagnosable mental disorders that cause extreme functional impairment and which interfere with the individual's ability to function in school, their family, and/or within their community (Stroul, 2002).
- L. **Served Family Member** means a Family Member, as defined in Section 12.1 of this Article, whose family is currently being served by SOH.
- M. **System of Care** means a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that are organized to meet the challenges of children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.
- N. **Work Team** means a Work Team and all that report to that Work Team.
- O. **Written Notice** means provided in writing on paper or email as the need requires.
- P. **Youth** means an individual age 14 to 21 with SED and a history with public/private mental health agency involvement.
- Q. **Youth Advisory Council** means the group of youths formed as a council to discuss and address their areas of concern, and, through the elected Youth Representatives, has a voice on the Governing Board and Executive Council.
- R. **Youth-Guided** means that youths are active partners (at all levels of planning) from their individualized plan of care through the planning for the SOH.
- S. **Youth Representative** means either of the two Youths elected by the Youth Advisory Counsel to serve on the Governing Board, one of whom also serves on the Executive Committee.

APPENDIX

HARRIS COUNTY SYSTEMS OF HOPE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

The Harris County Systems of Hope Governing Board (Governing Board), staff and volunteers are committed to its mission of providing effective support and care that is youth-guided and family-driven to children who are experiencing serious emotional and behavioral problems. In furtherance of this mission, the Governing Board, staff and volunteers shall subscribe to a level of conduct that demonstrates unfailing honesty, deference for the dignity and individuality of human beings and a commitment to professional and compassionate services.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Governing Board, staff and volunteers shall commit to the following principles:

Principle A: Respect

Respect and consider the right of the public to have access to appropriate mental health care and supports. Systems of Hope members shall protect each child and family's civil and legal rights.

Principle B: Best Interest of the Child

Each decision made concerning a child's case must be made with concern for the individual child's and family's needs, abilities, and personal strengths.

Principle C: Conflict of Interest

Be aware of the potential conflicts that may impair the exercise of fair and impartial judgment that directly affects a child, family member or the integrity of the Systems of Hope.

Principle D: Professional Standards

Exercise the best professional judgment and subscribe to the highest standards applicable to members' respective professions.

Principle E: Cooperation

Respect the fundamental responsibilities and elements of the juvenile, educational, and human services systems and cultivate a strong working relations with each segment.

Principle F: Fidelity and Responsibility

Protect and maintain the integrity of confidential and privileged information. Members shall abide by all local, state and federal laws and uphold constitutional principles.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The Governing Board, staff and volunteers shall not commit any of the following transgressions:

Standard A: Discrimination

Discriminate against any employee, prospective employee, child, childcare provider or parent on the basis of age, race, sex, creed, disability or national origin.

Standard B: Inappropriate Relationships

Establish or maintain any inappropriate relationship with any youth or family member involved in the Systems of Hope. An inappropriate relationship with a youth or family member may be established by a Governing Board Member through the acceptance of any of the following: a bribe or gift, offer of employment or professional gain, a personal service performed by any youth or family member without remuneration, or any relationship that could be considered as exploitive, neglectful, sexual or abusive. If a member feels that an offer of employment is of benefit to the child or family, that situation must be brought to the attention of the Work Team responsible for Membership for approval.

Standard C: Political Partisanship

Promoting any activity related to the election or promotion of a particular candidate while serving in their official Systems of Hope capacity beyond educating or informing elected officials and their staffs. This includes activities with any partisan political purpose including making appointments, attending candidate promotions or supporting dismissals in furtherance of any partisan political interest.

Standard D: Colleague Relations

Make declarations critical of colleagues or their organizations unless these critiques serve a constructive purpose and contribute to the improvement of Systems of Hope. Members must promote mutual respect among colleagues regardless of rank, position or volunteer status in order to improve Systems of Hope service quality mechanisms.

Standard E: Conflict of Interest

Allow personal interest or bias to impair objective professional decision-making or use any privileged or confidential information for any purpose beyond that needed to operate within Systems of Hope.

RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES

The Governing Board, staff and volunteers shall report without reservation any illegal or unethical behavior that could affect a child, family member, the integrity of Systems of Hope or its mission.

Step 1: Notice and Informal Resolution

Any member of Systems of Hope who witnesses or is aware of such behaviors shall immediately notify his or her immediate supervisor, the Clinical Director, or Chair of the Work Team responsible for Membership. The person who receives the report shall submit an informal result within seventy-two (72) hours to the reporter, the Program Director and the Principal Investigator. If the reporter is not satisfied with the informal result, the reporter shall notify the Systems of Hope Governing Board Chair in writing within ten (10) business days from the date of receipt of the informal result.

Step 2: Additional Notice Requirements

The notice and informal resolution mentioned in Step 1 does not absolve any duty to report exploitation, abuse or neglect to law enforcement or any other entity that must be notified of such conduct under the law. In addition, it does not absolve the reporter from any steps that he or she must take to correct or report conduct committed by members which is unethical within their respective professions.

Step 3: Formal Resolution

Any reports of unethical conduct not addressed informally shall be referred to the Work Team responsible for Membership and if not resolved there, then shall be heard before a quorum of the Systems of Hope Governing Board in executive session for a formal resolution, when appropriate.. The findings and conclusions of the Governing Board shall formally resolve any allegation of unethical conduct.