



Specialty Care Work Group Meeting Notes

February 25, 2025

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Paso del Norte Health Foundation

221 N. Kansas, 19th Floor

El Paso, Texas 79901

Meeting Room C

Attendees:

Merissa Amerete-Soliz
Tanya Berry
Cynthia Henry
Josue Lachica
Veronica Lowenberg
Bety Marin
Enrique Mata
Nicole Schiff
Kathie Valencia

Representing:

El Paso County Juvenile Probation Dept.
Texas DFPS Child Protective Services
Paso del Norte Center of Hope
Paso del Norte Center at Meadows Institute
OOG/CSTT
El Paso Center for Children
Paso del Norte Center at Meadows Institute
Paso del Norte Center of Hope
El Paso Center For Children

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Welcome and Introductions

Nicole Schiff welcomed the group and called for introductions.

Overview of Last Meeting

Enrique Mata provided an overview from past work group discussions and related the goals to identified priority needs from the 2021 System Assessment and the 2023 El Paso County Youth Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). He and Josue Lachica responded to questions from the group.

Respite and Residential Treatment

Josue Lachica shared his findings seeking our Respite and RTC models. The group engaged in a robust discussion on the need for both crisis respite and residential treatment approach for region 10. The community has been challenged with this topic for at least the past decade and the situation continues to worsen as evidenced by recent decisions to close vital service options at El Paso Center for Children.

The group discussed several approaches including:

- Exploring federal funding streams including connecting with Congresswoman Escobar and fostering partnerships with Ft. Bliss and Federally Qualified Health Centers.
- Exploring sustained funding from the state legislature including improved reimbursement options from Medicaid.
- Developing a hybrid approach to service delivery. For example, existing models in Houston, San Antonio, and Austin, as well as models that are developing in Uvalde and other communities.

Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet monthly on the last Tuesday of the month. The target date for the next meeting is Tuesday, March 25th from 9:00 am – 10:30 am.

To dos

- Group members will share additional recommended organization leads to be invited to the next meeting with Enrique Mata and Josue Lachica to reach out and invite.
- Josue Lachica and Enrique Mata will continue to gather data and operation details for each of the identified respite centers.
- Group members will share anecdotal numbers served by their respective organizations for purposes of planning, establishing current community service capacity and developing strategies to address gaps. The data points will not be shared outside of the workgroup without expressed permission from the organization providing the information.
- committed to bringing information on the operations of several respite and residential treatment models to the next meeting. In addition, some key data points will be provided for the group to consider. The group suggested meeting at least one more time before the year ends. Josue Lachica will explore the feasibility for a meeting on a date in November.

Adjourn

Nicole Schiff adjourned the meeting at 10:26 am. Presentation slides are included with these notes.



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Specialty Care Work Group
February 25th Meeting

Specialty Care February 25th Agenda:

-  **Welcome and Introductions**
-  **Overview of Last Meeting**
-  **Respite Care and Residential Treatment**
-  **Adjourn**



Overview of October 14th Meeting

Opportunity For Change:

Reframe the concept of mental health and substance use specialty care as secondary to Integrated Primary Care (e.g., 25% of care).

Opportunity For Change:

Strategy I -As with primary care, clearly **identify mental health and substance use care and support that is beyond the scope of practice and cannot be directly provided within the primary care setting.** For example, serious mental health conditions that require an intensive coordinated approach with psychiatry, psychology, counseling, or substance use specialty care.

Strategy II - **Expand and enhance availability of well-established evidence-based interventions** for youth with more severe behavioral problems related to willful misconduct and delinquency (e.g., increase availability of child psychiatrists and child psychologists, increase availability and effective use of collaborative care model options (psychiatry, counseling, and primary care services)).

Strategy III - Utilize the **Multisystemic Therapy Rider to promote timely wraparound support** for children with complex needs to prevent entry into the Foster Care or Justice **Strategy IV** - Improve residential support options to prevent children from inappropriately leaving for residential treatment out of town, including increasing compensation for foster parents and reimbursement options for nontraditional programs and expanding intensive Medicaid services to support foster families.

Specialty Care Work Group – Nicole Schiff Chair Vice Chair

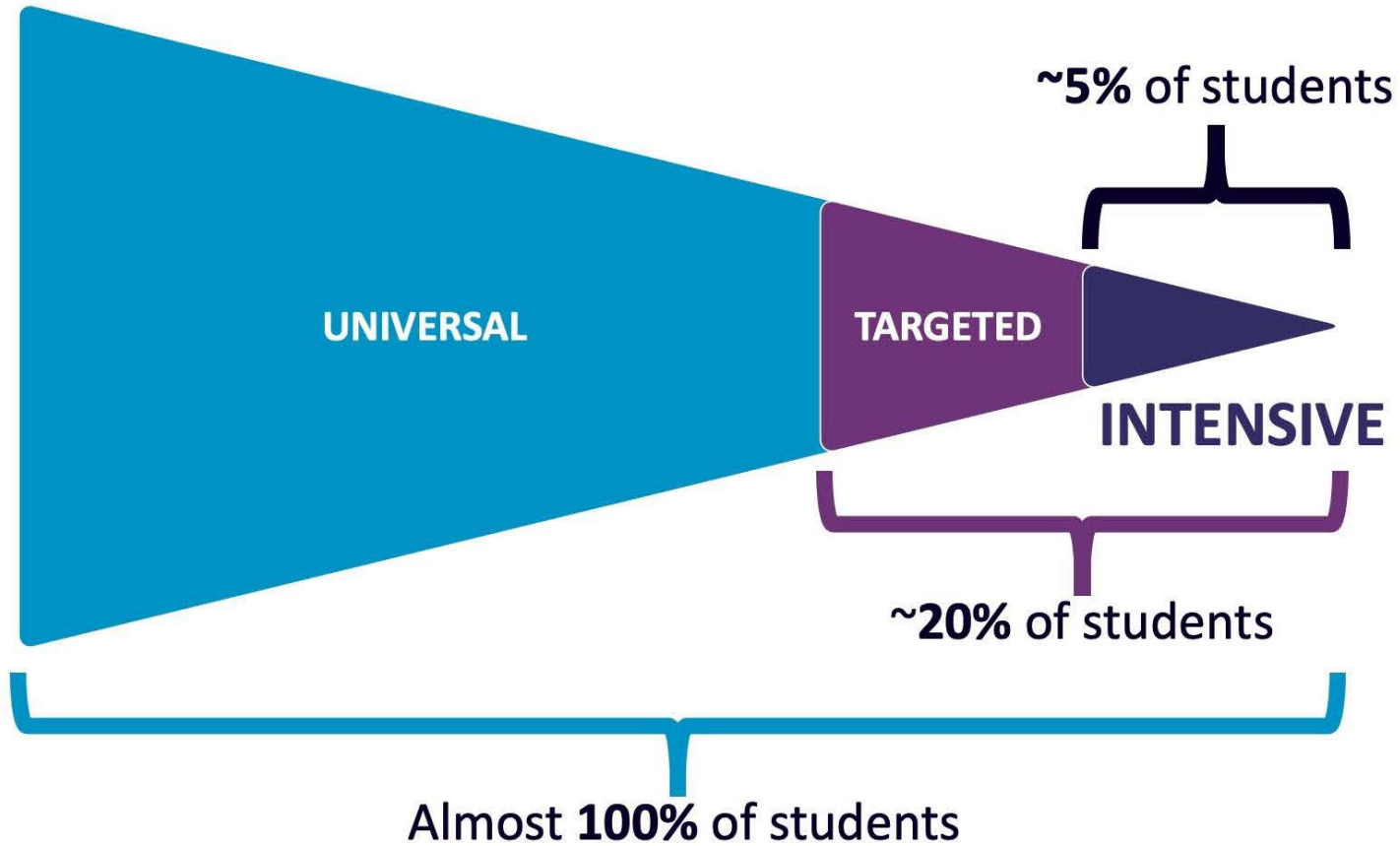
Exists to:

Ensure appropriate, acceptable service options are available for complex mental health conditions and co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions

What will it do:

Improve coordination and increase availability of specialty care services (e.g. wraparound care, PHP, IOP, addiction interventions, trauma and grief services).

Figure 2: The MTSS Tiers



El Paso Youth Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Report

Mapping School to Justice Pathways

Relevant Key Findings

- **After Hours Access:** Lack of availability of services after hours or on weekends to accommodate the needs of parents, as well as transportation issues that can hinder access to essential services.
- **Substance Use Services:** Students are using substances, including vapes, to self-medicate. Systems are not in place in schools or in the community to consistently identify the root cause of behavior and connect students to substance use or mental health treatment to more effectively address the underlying cause of the behavior. When those needs are identified, there is a lack of intervention services related to substance use disorders (SUD). Failing to address the root causes of substance use and mental health issues can have long-term consequences, potentially leading to chronic SUD, ongoing mental health challenges, and a higher risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Relevant Key Findings

- **Child Psychiatry:** In 2020, El Paso County had 67 licensed psychiatrists. Of these, only 18 reported a specialization in child and adolescent psychiatry, pediatric psychiatry, or developmental-behavioral pediatrics.
- **Intensive Services:** In El Paso County, there is a shortage of providers who offer intensive community-based services. A lack of sufficient intensive community-based services that allow children and youth to thrive at home and in their communities could lead to an overreliance on more restrictive placements, such as psychiatric hospitals and juvenile detention.
- **Youth Voice:** Explore the establishment of a **state-funded Youth Crisis Respite (YCR) Center** and explore opportunities to further partner with law enforcement and El Paso County Juvenile Probation to serve youth that may be appropriate for diversion to the YCR.

Cross Cutting Key Findings – Intercept 0

- **Information Sharing:** Lack of access to information about a child's history among behavioral health, school, and justice stakeholders can impede decision-making processes and access to appropriate care (i.e., PHIX)
- **Family Engagement:** Lack of family involvement and engagement in educational and support systems is exacerbated by family stress, lack of parental education, the need to teach parents how to navigate systems, bilingual needs, family mental health needs, and the scarcity of family partners with lived experience. Additionally, there is often stigmatization of mental health among caregivers.
- **Disciplinary Alternative Education Program and Vaping:** There is limited disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) capacity to support youth expelled due to the new vaping laws passed (HB114). Texas law grants school districts discretion in applying "mandatory" disciplinary consequences, allowing consideration of mitigating factors, including disciplinary history. However, use of mitigating factors varies across districts and campuses, and many fail to fully explore alternatives to expulsion and exclusionary discipline practices.

Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities for Change

Of the 700-800 students arrested in school and referred to the juvenile justice system's first offender program in Fiscal Year 2023, 95% were assessed as low risk offenders and only 3% reoffended. (See Appendix 3, Data Presentation.) Significant school and justice human resource hours are expended to process low risk offenders who will receive a criminal record. **Sending low-risk youth into the juvenile justice system consumes significant resources from both schools and the justice system. These resources could be better allocated to addressing more serious offenses and providing support to high-risk youth.**



Respite Care and Residential Treatment

2021 System Assessment



El Paso needs an array of crisis placements:

- In-home respite
- Crisis foster care
- Crisis respite
- Crisis stabilization

2021 System Assessment



Explore creating crisis respite to address the lack of a short-term crisis response, particularly for children and youth, using Medicaid managed care financing provisions as the funding mechanism

Crisis care:

- ideally includes mobile teams that respond to urgent needs outside the routine delivery of care
- offers a continuum of time-limited out-of-home placement options ranging from crisis respite to acute inpatient to residential care.

2021 System Assessment - Crisis Respite



Finding: There are no available out-of-home, short-term crisis stabilization environments that could serve as an alternative to hospitalization for children and youth in crisis.

Crisis respite, whether facility-based or home-based, provides:

- temporary relief for caregivers
- a safe environment to resolve crises
- an opportunity to engage children, youth, and their families in services.

crisis respite can serve as a safe alternative to inpatient care.

2021 System Assessment - Crisis Respite



Crisis respite, whether facility-based or home-based, provides temporary relief for caregivers; a safe environment to resolve crises; and an opportunity to engage children, youth, and their families in services. Further, depending on the severity of the crisis and the needs of the child or youth, crisis respite can serve as a safe alternative to inpatient hospitalization. Services that may be provided in a crisis respite setting include crisis planning for the family and child/youth, therapy, and skills training. The goal is to strengthen the ability of children, youth, and their families to prevent future crises and to better manage them if they do occur.

2021 System Assessment Crisis Respite



Finding: There are no available out-of-home, short-term crisis stabilization environments that could serve as an alternative to hospitalization for children and youth in crisis.

Recommendation: Medicaid managed care providers should explore the provisions of Senate Bill (SB) 1177 to add crisis respite to the community's array of crisis services.

Residential Treatment Centers In Texas

Active/Open Residential Child Care Contracted Providers as of the End of January 2025¹

Facility Type	Resource Name	Address	City	State	Start	Capacity	License Demographics		
GRO-RTC	Methodist Childrens Home Boys	1111 Herring Ave	Waco	TX	2/1/2024	21	12 - 17	Males	B M S
GRO-RTC	New Horizons Ranch Residential	294 Medical Dr	Ablene	TX	2/1/2024	68	6 - 17	Both	S I
GRO-RTC	Helping Hand Home For Children	3804 Avenue B	Austin	TX	2/1/2024	41	3 - 17	Both	M S I
GRO-RTC	Roy Maas Youth Alternatives Me	3103 West Ave	San Antonio	TX	2/1/2024	48	6 - 17	Both	M S I
GRO-RTC	Hill Country Youth Ranch Resid	Po Box 67	Ingram	TX	2/1/2024	50	5 - 17	Both	M S I
GRO-RTC	Independence Farm	2715 Liberty Dr	Corsicana	TX	2/1/2024	13	5 - 18	Both	M S
GRO-RTC	Autistic Treatment Center	15911 Nacogdoches Rd Bldg	San Antonio	TX	2/1/2024	14	3 - 17	Both	S I
GRO-RTC	New Life Childrens Treatment C	Po Box 140767	Austin	TX	2/1/2024	60	11 - 17	Females	S I
GRO-RTC	Unity Childrens Home-Boys	Po Box 672032	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	16	6 - 17	Males	M S I
GRO-RTC	L'Amor Village Rtc	16544 Kuykendahl Rd	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	42	12 - 17	Both	M S
GRO-RTC	New Hope Youth Center	Po Box 775	Richmond	TX	2/1/2024	16	11 - 17	Males	M S
GRO-RTC	Autistic Treatment Center, Inc	10503 Metric Dr	Dallas	TX	2/1/2024	31	2 - 17	Both	S I
GRO-RTC	Everyday Life Inc	6955 Broach Rd	Bryan	TX	2/1/2024	44	8 - 17	Males	M S I
GRO-RTC	Shamar Hope Haven Residential	2719 Truxillo St	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	13	10 - 17	Males	M S I
GRO-RTC	Center For Success And Indepen	3722 Pinemont Dr	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	44	12 - 17	Both	M S
GRO-RTC	Pegasus Schools, Inc.	Po Box 577	Lockhart	TX	2/1/2024	200	10 - 17	Males	M S
GRO-RTC	Depelchin Children'S Center-Ri	710 S 7th St	Richmond	TX	2/1/2024	20	5 - 17	Both	M S I
GRO-RTC	Embracing Destiny Foundation R	Po Box 2449	Spring	TX	2/1/2024	13	7 - 17	Males	M S I
GRO-RTC	Pathways Youth & Family Servic	222 Sidney Baker St S Ste	Kerrville	TX	2/1/2024	32	4 - 17	Both	M S I
GRO-RTC	Guardian Angels I Residential	9530 W Montgomery Rd	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	48	9 - 17	Females	M S I
GRO-RTC	The Burke Foundation-Pathfinde	Po Box 40	Driftwood	TX	2/1/2024	34	10 - 17	Males	B M S
GRO-RTC	A New Day Foundation	17202 Garden Creek Dr	Spring	TX	2/1/2024	13	7 - 17	Males	S I
GRO-RTC	Pathways 3h Youth Ranch	Po Box 230	Mountain Home	TX	2/1/2024				B M S I
GRO-RTC	Miracal'S Place	11960 Braes Park Dr	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	14	5 - 17	Females	M S
GRO-RTC	Unity Children'S Home - Girls	Po Box 672032	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	32	6 - 17	Females	M S I
GRO-RTC	Renewed Strength Rtc	110 Hambrick Rd	Houston	TX	2/1/2024				M S I
GRO-RTC	Kirby'S Place	5600 S Willow Dr Ste 115	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	8	7 - 15	Males	M S
GRO-RTC	Promise Rose Residential Care	9035 Comal St	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	16	8 - 17	Males	B M S I
GRO-RTC	Bluebonnet Haven, Llc	Po Box 1688	Brenham	TX	2/1/2024	64	12 - 17	Females	S I
GRO-RTC	Have Haven Inc.	5509 Wipprecht St	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	16	7 - 17	Males	M S I
GRO-RTC	Caring Heart Residential Care	9343 Mineral Rock Ln	Richmond	TX	2/1/2024	15	5 - 17	Males	B M S
GRO-RTC	Safe Haven Youth Ranch	28158 State Highway 6	Hempstead	TX	2/1/2024	32	10 - 17	Males	S I
GRO-RTC	Legacy Youth	20011 Juniper Chase Trl	Richmond	TX	2/1/2024	16	7 - 17	Females	B M S I
GRO-RTC	New Pathways Rtc, Llc	1380 Jimmy Phillips Blvd	Angleton	TX	2/1/2024	24	7 - 17	Males	S I
GRO-RTC	Open Arms Open Hearts	252 County Road 4111	Dayton	TX	2/1/2024	14	8 - 16	Males	M S
GRO-RTC	The Hemple Shelter	1318 Hemple Dr	Rosenberg	TX	2/1/2024	13	7 - 17	Males	S
GRO-RTC	La Maison, Llc	141 Shalom Ln	Anna	TX	2/1/2024	14	6 - 13	Males	S I
GRO-RTC	Abundance Of Joy Home Shelter	16335 Bunker Ridge Rd	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	11	5 - 13	Females	S
GRO-RTC	Unique Avenue	10510 Rockaway Dr	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	10	6 - 17	Females	M S
GRO-RTC	Pinecrest Emergency Care Servi	7400 N Wayside Dr	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	16	8 - 17	Males	E3
GRO-RTC	Seeds Of Royalty	1910 Teakwood St	Richmond	TX	2/1/2024	9	12 - 17	Females	S I
GRO-RTC	Creighton Oaks Residential Tre	11313 Long Drive	Conroe	TX	2/1/2024	71	8 - 17	Both	S I
GRO-RTC	Kinship Connection, Llc	Po Box 680003	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	14	9 - 17	Males	B M S

Residential Treatment Centers In Texas (cont.)

GRO-RTC	North Star Residential Treatme	634 County Road 698	Farmersville	TX	2/1/2024	24	6 - 17	Both	B M S
GRO-RTC	Wholeness Haven Inc.	13207 Fm 2432 Rd	Willis	TX	2/1/2024	20	7 - 17	Females	M S
GRO-RTC	The Ambience Residential Treat	15222 Marlowe Grove Dr	Sugar Land	TX	2/1/2024	12	6 - 16	Males	S
GRO-RTC	Westlake House Llc	Po Box 1137	West Columbia	TX	2/1/2024	7	8 - 17	Males	S
GRO-RTC	Clear Vision Youth Center, Llc	10322 Low Bridge Ln	Sugar Land	TX	2/1/2024	10	5 - 17	Females	S
GRO-RTC	Angelic House Of Hope	5004 Laura Koppe Rd	Houston	TX	2/1/2024	11	5 - 17	Females	M S
GRO-RTC	Trels Home For Children	33210 Magnolia Cir	Magnolia	TX	2/1/2024	10	10 - 17	Females	B M S I
GRO-RTC	Hendrix Country Home	518 Anton Stade Rd	Rosenberg	TX	3/1/2024	10	13 - 17	Females	S
GRO-RTC	Kid Net Foundation _ Ms	4212 E Grand Ave	Dallas	TX	2/1/2024				B M S
GRO-RTC	Right At Home Care Inc.	5422 James Michael Drive	Rosharon	TX	3/15/2024	11	6 - 17	Females	S
GRO-RTC	Perimeter (K Shields Only)	2520 Northwinds Pkwy Ste	Alpharetta	GA	#####				B M S I
GRO-RTC/IPTP	Hill Country Youth (Iptp Only)	Po Box 67	Ingram	TX	2/1/2024				P
GRO-RTC/IPTP	New Life (Iptp Only)	Po Box 140767	Austin	TX	2/1/2024				P

¹Does not include child specific or SSCC contracts.

Data Source: DFPS Data Warehouse

Data As Of: 2/7/2025

Report Number: pcs_06slx

Report Run Date: 2/11/2025

Residential Treatment Center Examples

- **Gulf Coast Treatment Center | Fort Walton Beach, Florida**
<https://gulfcoasttc.com/>
- **Refuge - New Life Refuge Ministries | Corpus Christi, Texas -**
<https://newliferefugeministries.org/refuge/>
- **The Reagan - Unbound Now | Waco, Texas -** <https://unboundnow.org/the-reagan/>
- **Lava Heights Academy | Toquerville, Utah-** <https://lavaheightsacademy.com/>
- **Falcon Ridge | Virgin, Utah -** <https://falconridgeranch.com/>
- **Victoria County Residential Center | Victoria, Texas -**
<https://www.vctx.org/page/juvenile.detention.center>

Youth Crisis Respite Centers

- There were only two before the 88th Texas Legislative Session and then during the 88th they added four more.
- There are currently 6 Youth Crisis Respite Centers in Texas
- All 6 are in partnership with the Local Mental Health Authority

Youth Crisis Respite Centers

1. Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network ([Waco](#))
2. Hill Country MHDD Centers ([San Marcos](#))
3. Integral Care ([Austin](#))
4. Bluebonnet Trails ([Roundrock](#))
5. DePelchin Children's Center ([Houston](#))
6. BCFS Health and Human Services



Open Discussion



Next Meeting