



Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

July 27, 2022, 1:00 to 2:00 EST

Attendees:

Sheila Schuster	Advocacy Action Network	Elizabeth Anderson-Hoagland	Kentucky Chronic Disease Program - Kentucky Department for Public Health
Christopher Bolling	American Academy of Pediatrics – Kentucky Chapter	Gillian Torr	Kentucky Department for Public Health
Joe Bargione Beverly Winsch	Bounce Coalition	Gannon Tagher	Kentucky Nurses Association
Kate McDonald	Feeding Kentucky	Emily Beauregard Cara Stewart	Kentucky Voices for Health
Amalia Mendoza Chloe Atwater	Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky	Alicia Whatley	Kentucky Youth Advocates
Joseph Frazier	Kentucky Chamber of Commerce	Laura Beard	Prichard Committee
Vestena Robbins	Kentucky Dept. Behavioral Health, Dev.& Intellectual Disabilities	Tomarra Adams	Spalding University
Jim Tackett, Stephanie Bunge	Kentucky Department of Education	Elle Humphrey	St. Elizabeth Health Care
Shannon Parker	Kentucky Family Thrive – KY DPH	Divya Cantor	United Health Care
Erica Jones Davis	Kentucky Department for Medicaid Services	Vanessa Lamoretti	Guest Speaker – Spalding University

Meeting Objective:

- The Steering Committee will hear an overview on child and youth mental health and engage in a group discussion around which aspect(s) the Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children will address.

Pre-Meeting Materials Included in Packet to Review:

- US Surgeon General’s Factors Influencing Children’s Mental Health.
- Center for Disease Control (CDC) :US statistics on children’s mental health
- [US Surgeon General's Advisory Protecting Youth Mental Health](#) : Recommendations for systems, parents, youth, community organizations. Note particularly pp. 8-13 and 19-22.

Meeting Notes:

I. Member Updates

- Regional Advocacy for Thriving Communities Series:** Steering Committee members Kentucky Voices for Health, the Advocacy Action Network with other ThriveKY partners are providing updates on state and federal policies that impact the health and wellbeing of Kentuckians.



Speakers will discuss how to advocate for a stronger safety net through public assistance programs designed to support thriving communities.

Link and registration: [KVH](#)

- **11th Annual Pediatric Behavioral and Mental Health Symposium** – The Impact of Prejudice on Pediatric Mental Health. The symposium will be virtual and take place November 14, 2022.
- **New K.I.N.D. Program:** The Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Kentucky DPH Maternal and Child Health Division have launched the Kids' Interface and Network for Healthy Development (K.I.N.D.) program. The program will bring together pediatric primary care providers from around the Commonwealth and mental health specialists to enhance best practices and evidence-based care to address challenges in children mental health. Dr. Christopher Steering Committee member is leading the provider group. KCHC Coalition Coordinator Amalia Mendoza is on the Advisory Council.
- **Kentucky's "Vaccine Extravaganza" campaign.** The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, health departments and several health organizations (including Steering Committee member organizations Kentucky Voices for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky), are supporting this COVID-19 vaccine and booster campaign in over fifteen locations. While supplies last, most locations include a gift card incentive for anyone who is eligible and receives their vaccine or booster.

Link: [Kentucky's "Vaccine Extravaganza" campaign](#)

II. Understanding and Improving Children's Mental Health

Led by Dr. Sheila Schuster and Vanessa Lamoretti, the group dove into understanding and improving children's mental health. This first part of a two-part presentation focused on understanding terminology (behavioral health, mental illness, mental health problems, Serious Emotional Disturbance, Substance Use Disorder), the equity component and factors that impact child and youth mental health,

The conversation among steering committee members followed the questions posed by Dr. Schuster:

Q1: How would you describe children's mental health? What do you think influences the mental health of children?

- Social and emotional competency, self-awareness, the ability children have to regulate their emotions, what they need in everyday life.
- Influences: familial influences, related to this is that one caring adult, which literature in the field considers a protective factor.
- It is important to create those relationships, not just with family members but with caring adults.
- Having the right school environment is another influence, the classroom setting.
- A sense of belonging is very important. If a child doesn't feel like they have people, that affects their mental health.
- Having interactions with children and adults they feel comfortable with.
- The ability to respond to adversity and problem solve. If children have a good deal of resiliency skills, that is critical.



- Children are affected by the sense of safety, nutrition, also genetics.
- The framing around mental health and wellness is important. Children must thrive, not just survive. We need to be putting systems in place to make children thrive and flourish, both on the mental health as well as physical side.
- Thinking of what thriving means, it's not just academic excellence. Children need the safety to fail, not just to hit the benchmarks. We put more pressure than freedom on children.
- Children need a good sense of confidence, of self-worth; are they doing well in their work and their life, are they developing good relationships with others?

The presentation included a conversation about the factors that can shape the mental health of young people: society, environment, community, family, and the individual.

The presentation also included conversation around the twin pandemics children and youth have been experiencing: racial trauma/violence and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q2: What kids do you see as being most at risk for mental health concerns?

- There really is a third pandemic: the opioid epidemic which has had a tremendous impact on children and youth. (links mentioned:
 - <https://uhfnyc.org/publications/publication/ripple-effect-opioid-epidemic-children-and-families/>
 - <https://uhfnyc.org/publications/publication/ripple-effect-chartbook/>)
- Acute loss, the loss of a parent, has a strong impact on mental health.
- Military children are included in this at-risk group.
- The LGBTQ+ identifying youth, where do they fall as far as mental health concerns go? There are increase rates of mental health concerns for these children and youth.
- LGBTQ+ youth are losing support in school that they weren't getting at home.
- There are therapists who don't want to deal with LGBTQ+ youth.
- This is also true for children with some disability situations (therapists who don't want to treat them).
- The LGBTQ+ youth are already going to be affected by legislation passed this session, if legislation such as the Florida "don't say gay" law passed, we wouldn't even be able to talk about what these children are experiencing.
- There has been work around banning conversion therapy in Kentucky, but so far, we have been unsuccessful getting that passed.

The next meeting will focus on mental health systems and systems changes.

Next Meeting: August 31, 2022, 12:00 to 1:00