



Meeting minutes - San Patricio Health Equity Task Force Meeting #18

Date/Time: April 8, 2025, 10:30 am – 11:30 pm central time

Meeting Facilitators:

- Dee Grimm
- Kimberly Watson
- Christina Alfaro
- Allysa Rapadas

Executive Summary:

- The task force met to address mental health access issues and transportation challenges, with a focus on developing solutions for the latter, particularly regarding evacuation processes during emergencies.
- Key issues identified include limited mental health service eligibility, lack of awareness of available resources, and transportation accessibility problems for people with disabilities during both normal and emergency situations.
- The group conducted a "How Might We" brainstorming activity, prioritizing public education about evacuation processes as the primary focus for the next meeting, with Allysa Rapadas to send out a health check questionnaire to assess task force progress.

Meeting Notes:

Meeting Overview

- Purpose: To discuss mental health access issues and begin the process of developing solutions for transportation challenges
- Attendees: Various stakeholders including representatives from 211, Coastal Plains Community Center, and other community organizations
- Agenda:
 - Review previous discussions on priority focus areas
 - Discuss mental health access issues
 - Begin "How Might We" brainstorming activity for transportation challenges

Review of Previous Discussions

- The task force has been analyzing priority focus areas based on surveys and discussions from last year
- Previous topics covered:
 - Transportation issues:

- Decision-making and pre-planning
- Information gaps
- Lack of resources and acquisition processes
- Understanding needs of people with disabilities:
 - Gaps in understanding needs
 - Lack of interaction with people with disabilities
 - Lack of information about demographics
 - Lack of training and funding for trainings
- Accessible communication:
 - Providers not understanding communication needs
 - Need to improve public information processes

Mental Health Access Issues

Current Challenges

- Limited diagnoses eligible for services:
 - Janna Shoe noted that traditionally only certain diagnoses (e.g., bipolar, major depression with suicide ideation, paranoid schizophrenia) were eligible for services
 - Uncertainty about current diagnostic criteria for service eligibility
- Lack of awareness of available resources:
 - Janna Shoe mentioned that even doctors are often unaware of mental health resources and referral processes
 - Schools often refer students/families for mental health services without providing specific guidance
- Limited mental health providers:
 - Dee Grimm noted that the service provider ratio for mental health in San Patricio County is poor
- Stigma associated with mental health:
 - stigma prevents some individuals from seeking services at mental health facilities
 - Particular concern in Hispanic communities and among veterans

Potential Solutions

- Improve public education about available mental health resources
- Enhance communication about services offered by providers like Coastal Plains Integrated Health
- Address stigma through community outreach and education

Transportation and Evacuation Challenges

Issues for People with Disabilities

- Inability to access transportation during both normal and emergency situations
- Gaps in decision-making processes related to transportation
- Lack of resources in the acquisition process for transportation services

General Public Education Needs

- Need for better education about evacuation processes in San Patricio County during hurricanes
- Lack of awareness about available transportation options and resources
- Janna Shoe suggested using various communication channels such as messaging, flyers, and social media to educate the public about evacuation procedures
- Importance of providing clear information on evacuation locations, timing, and processes

"How Might We" Brainstorming Activity

- Allysa Rapadas introduced the "How Might We" activity to reframe problem statements into actionable questions
- Key "How Might We" statements generated:
 - How might we educate the general public about the evacuation process for San Patricio County for their safety during a hurricane?
 - How might we educate people living in San Patricio County about transportation options and resources for help?
 - How might federal and state emergency management agencies discuss the process to ensure residents in San Patricio County have access to evacuate during the threat of a hurricane?
 - How might we inform community members about available transportation services in the coastal bend area?
 - How can potential community members know who or where they can reach out to during an emergency?
 - How can providers better understand transportation needs and ensure community members know how to reach them?

Prioritization of Statements

- Dee Grimm noted similarities among statements, particularly around education and understanding needs
- The group discussed whether to focus on educating the general public or addressing provider-side issues
- Kimberly emphasized the importance of educating the public about the evacuation process
- Janna Shoe suggested two approaches:
 - An easier approach: Educating the public about evacuation processes through various communication channels

- A more challenging approach: Coordinating with local officials to plan for state asset requests during emergencies
- The group agreed to focus on the easier approach (public education) in the next meeting, with the possibility of addressing the more challenging approach later

Next Steps

- Continue refining and prioritizing "How Might We" statements
- Prepare to develop specific solutions for prioritized statements at the next meeting, focusing on public education about evacuation processes
- Gather more information on available transportation services in the coastal bend area
- Allysa Rapadas will send out a health check questionnaire to assess task force members' feelings about the progress so far

Action Items

- Task force members to review and consider additional "How Might We" statements before the next meeting
- Investigate the current diagnostic criteria for mental health service eligibility (follow up with Linda Perez or Leo from Coastal Plains)
- Begin compiling a list of transportation services available in the coastal bend area
- Task force members to complete the health check questionnaire when received
- Christina Alfaro to upload the Zoom recording and a PDF of the whiteboard to the Task Force website

End of Meeting Minutes