Adolescent Health FY23 Plan Draft

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) continues to monitor emerging adolescent health emerging issues, integrate best practices, and incorporate community feedback into programming. Based on our fiscal year (FY) 20 Needs Assessment, Texas intends to focus future needs on injury and obesity prevention in adolescents in FY23.

**NPM 7.2: Rate of hospitalization for non-fatal injury per 100,000 adolescents, ages 10 through 19.**

Unintentional injury continues to be the leading cause of death and non-fatal injury among youth and young adults in Texas. Preventing and reducing adolescent injuries can improve youth quality of life and reduce health care costs.

MCH addresses unintentional adolescent injuries by supporting Texas programs that incorporate positive youth development (PYD) strategies. The PYD framework focuses on:
- Integrating youth voice in decision-making;
- Developing relationships with caring adults;
- Flourishing supportive relationships with parents and supportive peer networks; and
- Promoting positive school and supportive community connections.

All Texas Public Health Regions (PHRs) conduct injury prevention activities. In FY23, PHRs plan to focus on domestic, minor-aged sex trafficking prevention, self-harm and suicide prevention, bike safety, and promoting water safety.

PHR plans for domestic, minor-aged sex trafficking prevention include:
- PHR 1 disseminating educational resources and promotional materials via the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) field offices, newspaper articles, social media platforms, and other communication channels. Staff plan to educate health care providers and community organizations who provide adolescent services on recognizing, referring, and reporting suspected trafficking. They will also support providers in establishing guidelines on recognizing and reporting potential human trafficking victims, and referring them to resources.
- PHR 4/5N conducting presentations, trainings, and outreach events to promote prevention of child and human sex trafficking. Reporting will include event locations, number of participants, and key partners. Staff plan to assess participants’ knowledge to identify 3 human
trafficker grooming techniques and 3 characteristics of at-risk populations.

- PHR 7 anticipates educating communities to recognize, report, and prevent human trafficking by using the Shared Hope International training materials. Shared Hope International’s sex trafficking training is designed to increase identification of people vulnerable to and exploited by trafficking and improve child-serving professionals’ response. Staff will educate county judges, community centers, tattoo parlors, churches, libraries, schools, and hospital staff in 7 Texas counties and evaluate participants’ understanding. Each participant will receive a folder with printed materials, cell phone pocket holders, and pens with the National Human Trafficking Hotline number for quick, accurate, and discrete referral information for anyone seeking human trafficking resources including victims looking to leave their captors. PHR 7 continues to attend the Central Texas roundtable meetings, conferences, and seminars to stay abreast of human trafficking trends.

PHR plans for self-harm and suicide prevention include:

- PHR 2/3 promoting evidence-based suicide prevention programs such as Signs of Suicide (SOS), ASK About Suicide to Save a Life, and PYD curriculum to non-local health departments and independent school districts (ISDs) through the local mental health authority. Staff will also promote suicide education to parents through community-based organizations and other stakeholders.

- PHR 4/5N providing education and guidance to the local Save A Life Texas (SALT) Coalition for suicide prevention outreach. Education and guidance may include sharing conference proceedings, research data, or prevention-related news and updates with the intent for core group members to disseminate the information in their own counties.

- PHR 6/5S collaborating with local Child Fatality Review Teams (CFRTs) to plan and implement prevention events and activities related to local adolescent injury and deaths. Each year, agency staff partner with ISDs and other organizations to provide suicide prevention training and policy and procedure technical assistance.

- PHR 9/10 working with ISDs, coalitions, CFRTs, and other local partners to provide prevention trends, data, and other suicide and bullying prevention related information. Staff want to implement evidence-based programs, including PYD in middle and high school and evaluate local school policy gaps related to bullying and self-harm. Agency staff will provide technical assistance to schools implementing suicide prevention policies and procedures.

- PHR 11 conducting 5 ASK About Suicide to Save a Life trainings. The trainings equip communities with gatekeeper skills to identify self-
harm and suicide risk factors and suicide prevention educational tools and resources.

PHR plans for bike safety promotion include:

- PHR 4/5N facilitating Bike Rodeo safety clinics (refer to NPM 7.1 for more information about Bike Rodeos).
- PHR 7 partnering with Texas Trails, Education, and Motorizes Management, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and local 4-H clubs to distribute Texas Department of Transportation-approved helmets and assist safety awareness programming. Staff plan to collaborate with Helmets of Love, a non-profit organization providing helmets to youth for bikes and all-terrain vehicles. Staff will engage schools in high ATV accident rate counties by providing safety awareness at school health fairs and other community events.

PHR plan to promote water safety by:

- PHR 4/5N facilitating American Red Cross Longfellow Water Habits Are Learned Easily (WHALE) Tales curriculum training (refer to NPM 7.1 for more information about the WHALE Tales curriculum). Staff also plan to continue life jacket loaner programs that provide apartments, community pools, children’s camps, and boating marinas with life jackets and life preserver education.

MCH and PHRs collaborate with the Office of Injury Prevention (OIP) to enhance the Texas CFRT network. OIP’s long-term goal is to establish CFRT coverage in all 254 Texas counties. In FY23, OIP, in partnership with MCH and PHRs, anticipates creating or re-establishing 3 local or regional CFRTs. OIP also plans to provide technical assistance to increase Texas child death review quality (refer to NPM 7.1 for more information about CFRTs).

MCH remains an active participant in the national Child Safety Learning Collaborative (CSLC). For FY23, Texas selected suicide prevention and motor vehicle safety as focuses. MCH and PHRs partner with Texas Health and Human Services Commission Suicide Prevention program encouraging local mental health authorities to adopt zero-suicide policies or procedures. Additionally, PHRs anticipate promoting and facilitating suicide prevention gatekeeper trainings at schools and in the community. PHR staff also plan to establish Teens in the Driver’s Seat chapters, a peer-to-peer program focusing on traffic safety risk factors such as distracted driving, impaired driving, speeding, and seat belt misuse. Staff provide technical assistance to schools and communities on evidence-based motor vehicle crash prevention strategies. For each focus area, MCH plans to attend quarterly CSLC meetings.
Through networking, MCH maintains state-level partnerships and promotes inclusion of PYD in other public health programming. During FY22, the Adolescent Health Workgroup meeting frequency remained low due to staff vacancies. In FY23, MCH intends to restore the quarterly Adolescent Health Workgroup meetings. These meetings allow state-level programs to collaborate on adolescent initiatives and share information and resources.

In FY23, MCH plans to maintain the adolescent health webpages, create social media campaigns, and disseminate targeted messaging via Granicus, (government customer experience management software) platform. MCH oversees several adolescent health-related webpages on the DSHS website. These webpages focus on increasing knowledge about adolescent health topics, PYD efforts, youth participation, and related resources. MCH continues to promote programs and relevant health topics such as motor vehicle safety and teen dating violence awareness through social media. Using Granicus, MCH promotes evidence-based injury prevention and reduction strategies through targeted messaging at least 3 times throughout FY23. Future messaging will concentrate on suicide prevention, supportive development environments, and Youth Adult Partnerships (YAPs). To gauge reach, MCH analyzes social media post engagements and impressions, webpage views, distribution list subscribers, and document downloads.

MCH funds Texas Youth Action Network (TYAN) administered by Texas A&M University’s (TAMU) Public Policy Research Institute. TYAN utilizes the PYD framework to support organizations addressing youth and young adult wellbeing. In FY23, TYAN plans to recruit a minimum of 8 new community organizations through social networking, conference exhibiting, and PHR and community partner referrals. Upon recruitment, new community organizations:

- Complete an assessment and site visit;
- Create a work plan;
- Join a learning collaborative; and
- Participate in a cohort.

To promote PYD and support YAPs, TYAN wants to create, maintain, expand, and oversee tools and strategy implementation. In FY23, TYAN expects to increase the number of TYAN ‘pods’ which are regionally based coalitions led by TYAN community partners. Participants assist peer organizations with:

- Designing and conducting needs assessments;
- Leading PYD trainings; and
- Supporting new community partner recruitment efforts.

To evolve YAPs, TYAN plans to support community partners with online resources, training, and technical assistance on topics like PYD framework
basics and community engagement and grant funding for YAP mentorship pilot sites and community events.

Lastly, TAMU will evaluate the TYAN project in FY23 and provide program quality improvement recommendations to MCH. Youth and adult YAP members completing surveys before and after joining a YAP measure PYD outcomes such as:

- Youth safety and support;
- Youth voice and influence;
- Youth engagement in meaningful activities and increased knowledge; and
- Youth experience to prepare for adulthood.

In FY23, TAMU plans to expand electronic surveying of youth and stakeholders to gather perspectives on youth health topics such as mental health and community connectedness. TAMU also measures virtual program engagement by TYAN website visitor, social media follower, and email subscriber numbers.

As a result of TYAN, MCH and TAMU anticipate an increase in the following protective factors:

- Develop supportive relationships with family, peers, and caring adults;
- Maintain school and community engagement; and
- Regulate emotions and cope in healthy ways.

TAMU disseminates these evaluation results to Texas communities and stakeholders through conference presentations, newsletters, social media, and trainings.

Since FY19, MCH has funded the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) Stronger Than Yesterday program to create healthier environments for youth ages 12-18 years living in residential facilities. Adolescent mental health concerns remain a priority area for Texas to address. In FY23, TJJD plans to support youth in developing social and emotional skills necessary for life such as:

- Communication;
- Teamwork;
- Problem solving; and
- Stress management.

In FY22, TJJD purchased mental health regulation items for all 5 residential facilities in Texas. In FY23, TJJD wants to purchase additional mental health regulation items for residents and replace old items. Sensory and calming items may include:
- Weighted blankets;
- Stuffed animals;
- Calming toys such as textured stress balls;
- Fidget tools such as fidgeting fleece bags; and
- Activity kits for calming rooms, education spaces, and deregulation safety zones.

In FY23, TJJD plans to increase the number of staff trained in active learning strategies and completing related training modules. Active learning is a technique rooted in the idea that individuals gain new knowledge by making connections to prior information and experiences. Some strategies include:

- Journal writing;
- Peer-to-peer discussions;
- Case studies;
- Role playing; and
- Team-based learning.

MCH anticipates meeting with TJJD at least twice in FY23 to review program progress and potential residential community challenges. MCH and TJJD expect to see increased participation in PYD activities and a decrease in self-reported risky behaviors. TJJD measures:

- Youth participation in PYD activities;
- Number of activities that support PYD (e.g., team building and youth group meetings);
- Number of TJJD staff trained in active learning strategies and completing related training modules; and
- Self-reported youth PYD measure metrics of positive life choices and improved self-efficacy.

In FY23, MCH will fund Texas Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) questions to monitor and assess adolescent health trends on:

- Self-harm and suicide;
- Preventive health care;
- Health status;
- YAPs; and
- Community connectedness.

MCH anticipates providing subject matter expertise to the YRBSS workgroup as appropriate.

In FY23, MCH expects to continue to represent Texas as the Principal Investigator for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) grant. Year four of the five-year funding cycle began in February 2022. MCH partners with the Texas Office of the
Attorney General (OAG), Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA), TAMU’s Center for Community Health Development, and 18 local rape crisis centers on the CDC RPE grant. As the Principal Investigator, MCH serves as grant coordinator while providing a public health and PYD perspective to the program. MCH continues to contract with OAG to implement community-based activities focused on PYD, healthy relationships, and primary prevention of sexual violence via 18 local rape crisis centers. TAASA serves as the designated state sexual assault prevention coalition providing technical assistance to subcontractors, rape crisis centers, advocates, and survivors. TAMU is the external RPE program evaluator assessing each program’s effectiveness.

In FY23, MCH, OAG, TAASA, and TAMU plan to meet twice a month through the Primary Prevention Programming Committee (PPPC). The Committee:
  • Reviews and makes improvements to the state action plan;
  • Monitors primary prevention program implementation;
  • Identifies opportunities to enhance programming and engage community stakeholders; and
  • Makes data informed decisions.

MCH, OAG, TAASA, and TAMU also participate in monthly meetings with the CDC RPE project manager. The meeting is designed to provide Texas RPE updates and receive CDC grant guidance. Additionally, the meeting offers an opportunity for Texas to consult with the CDC on grant implementation challenges.

In FY23, OAG and TAASA plan to form new community partnerships and enhance existing partnerships with the rape crisis centers. OAG and TAASA aim to increase the development and sustainability of partnerships and programs addressing at-risk communities. Programming efforts concentrate on primary prevention approaches for individuals disproportionately impacted by sexual violence.

To educate Texans on injury prevention and reduction, MCH collaborates with Texas Health Steps (THSteps) Online Provider Education. THSteps provides injury prevention and reduction training for health care providers and other youth-serving professionals. In FY23, MCH plans to contribute subject matter expertise for module reviews. Injury prevention module topics include:
  • Preventing Unintentional Injury;
  • Interpersonal Youth Violence;
  • Promoting Adolescent Health; and
  • High-Risk Behaviors in Young People: Screening and Intervention.
MCH promotes and disseminates the injury prevention modules through the adolescent health webpages and electronic distribution lists. MCH monitors dissemination effort reach and participant completion numbers for THSteps modules.

MCH participates in the National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators (NNSAHC) bi-monthly meetings. NNSAHC provides a platform for collaboration and evidence-based practices and tips on any barriers or successes faced while implementing youth and young adult programs. In FY23, MCH will expand knowledge on adolescent health through network training opportunities and share resources with other adolescent health coordinators.

The *Friday Beat* is a weekly e-newsletter for school health professionals. In FY23, MCH plans to create injury prevention newsletter content, such as:

- Promote TYAN efforts;
- Share PYD framework components, and
- Disseminate new Texas data on injury prevention and reduction.

MCH also plans to promote newsletter subscription to increase readership (refer to NPM 7.1 for more information about the *Friday Beat*).

In FY23, MCH will continue providing adolescent health subject matter expertise to stakeholder groups. Staff participate in quarterly meetings of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Subcommittee (CYBHS), Medical Home Learning Collaborative (MHLC), and Transition to Adulthood Learning Collaborative (TALC). Refer to NPM 6, 11, and 12 for more information about CYBHS, MHLC, and TALC, respectively.

**SPM 2: Reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Texas children ages 2-21.**

Obesity continues to be a serious health risk for adolescents. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Trust for America’s Health report, Texas has the 8th highest obesity rate for youth ages 10-17 with 17.3% of Texas youth considered obese. Adolescents who are overweight or obese are at increased risk for adverse health outcomes including diabetes, heart disease, asthma, high blood pressure, depression, sleep difficulties, and higher risk of being obese as an adult. As seen in Texas 2019 YRBSS data, lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, and screen time are all possible contributors to this rise. The obesity epidemic is a complex problem that needs to be addressed from a holistic approach requiring changes to social, economic, and human-made environments.
According to the World Health Organization, the two most important means of preventing or reversing childhood obesity are healthy eating and physical activity. According to the 2019-2020 School Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey, over 1.8 million (33%) of Texas children reported on a given day they did not eat a vegetable, but over 90% ate at least one sweet or salty snack (candy, frozen dessert, cakes, french fries, or chips). In FY23, MCH plans to focus on leading, funding, and supporting activities that encourage healthy eating and active living in a variety of settings.

The MCH Nutrition Toolkit is designed to increase PHRs’ workforce capacity to address obesity in children, adolescents, and children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). The first iteration of the toolkit, produced in FY21, has yet to be pilot tested as PHRs were assigned COVID-19 response duties. In FY23, MCH anticipates completing the pilot as PHRs return to normal MCH duties. MCH plans to create and administer a survey to assess the toolkit’s effectiveness in increasing workforce knowledge and capacity. Once piloted, MCH can revise and finalize toolkit materials. MCH plans to develop supplemental toolkit materials specific to adolescent nutrition. To create appropriate materials, MCH will conduct a mini assessment with PHRs.

During FY23, MCH expects to promote obesity prevention and reduction strategies through adolescent health promotional activities. At least one Adolescent Health Workgroup quarterly meeting will focus on obesity prevention. MCH plans to invite subject matter experts to present at the meeting. MCH plans to promote evidence-based nutrition recommendations, strategies, and programs through the adolescent health Granicus listserv and webpages (refer to NPM 7.2 for more information about the Adolescent Health Workgroup and digital dissemination efforts).

MCH wants to advance the partnership with Children with Special Health Care Needs Systems Development Group (CSHCN SDG) to address SPM 2. CYSHCN require focused obesity prevention attention. In FY23, MCH plans to collaborate with CSHCN SDG to identify strategies to bridge CYSHCN’s gap in knowledge and resources.

In FY23, University of Texas School of Public Health (UTHealth) will continue data collection, complete data analysis, and disseminate Year 3 results of the Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (TXSPAN) project. TXSPAN experienced data collection delays at the individual and school levels after school entry challenges during the pandemic. In FY23, UTHealth plans to utilize virtual and hybrid data collection to increase participation. UTHealth anticipates performing survey cleaning and data entry once representative data is collected at the state and regional level.
In addition to data collection and analysis, UTHealth plans several dissemination activities for FY23. Activities include:

- Updating infographics and one-pagers on topics like child and youth obesity, nutrition, physical activity, screen time, sleep quality, and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption data;
- Expanding datasets on the TXSPAN Data Explorer, a data dashboard allowing stakeholders to track and analyze obesity trends; and
- Developing and disseminating publications and presentations using TXSPAN data for a variety of audiences (e.g., public health professionals, parents, and other community stakeholders).

In FY23, MCH will fund TJJD to facilitate the physical activity and recreation component of the Stronger Than Yesterday project. The project’s goal is to operate a well-rounded exercise program including a variety of physical activities, support groups, regulation games, team building activities, and therapeutic recreation. TJJD wants each resident to have at least 7 hours of weekly physical activity. TJJD plans to purchase new and replacement recreational equipment for Texas’ 5 residential facilities. To supplement these purchases, TJJD created manuals for each equipment bag to promote active learning. In FY23, TJJD plans to train coaching staff in the integration of physical movement within delivery of life skill content. TJJD expects to also fund a 2-day outdoor summer camp pilot for residents to:

- Increase physical activity;
- Enhance team building skills; and
- Improve problem-solving skills.

(Refer to NPM 7.2 for more information about Stronger Than Yesterday).

To educate Texans on obesity prevention and reduction, MCH partners with THSteps to review and promote training modules. MCH expects to serve as a subject matter expert for FY23 module reviews as needed. Modules related to SPM 2 include:

- Management of Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adolescents;
- Diabetes Screening, Diagnosis and Management; and
- Nutrition.

(Refer to NPM 7.2 for more information about THSteps).

In FY23, MCH will support obesity prevention content creation for the Friday Beat and promote newsletter subscription (refer to NPM 7.1 for more information about the Friday Beat).