



**2024** REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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Coming together is a **BEGINNING**.  
Keeping together is **PROGRESS**.



PBHA is what is known as a backbone organization. This requires a dedicated, neutral staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly. Backbone organizations serve as a catalyst for lasting change.



*PBHA operates under the fiscal sponsorship and support of United Way of Amarillo & Canyon.*

## Working Together

# PBHA STEPS INTO THE FUTURE WITH A BOLD FOCUS

### Letter from the Co-Chairs and Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders and Friends,

As we reflect on the past year and look to the future, we are filled with gratitude for you and a belief that **Working Together** we will continue to improve mental healthcare for the people of the Panhandle.

In 2023, PBHA made significant strides in our journey by completing a strategic plan that marks the beginning of our Phase 3 operations. This plan lays the groundwork for a period we envision will institutionalize and sustain PBHA's mission within our communities.

The plan focuses on three key areas:

- **Frontier Communities** – Engaging rural communities to enhance their capacity to address their own unique needs around community wellness and access.
- **Justice-Involved Populations** – Working with the justice system to improve care for those with mental health issues.
- **Provider Shortages** – Attracting and retaining mental health professionals throughout the region.

We are proud to say our efforts align seamlessly with the vision of supporting community well-being and mental health in the historically underserved frontier communities of the Texas Panhandle. This is underpinned by our value statement, developed with regional stakeholders and leadership, which emphasizes our role as a catalyst for change, facilitating relationships and collaborations to tackle the root causes of complex behavioral health challenges.

As we move forward, we are excited about the potential for increased resources and services to address local and regional mental health needs. We look forward to Working Together to deepen our relationships with you, our valued partners, as we embark on the next phase of our journey.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission.

Warm regards,



Judy Day  
Co-Chair



Laura Street  
Co-Chair



Shree Veeramachaneni  
Executive Director

## PBHA Mission

To convene, facilitate, and support communities for improved access to mental health care with a focus on Frontier Communities, Justice-Involved Population/Partners, and Provider Shortages.

# PBHA Summit

# DISCUSSING WHAT'S NEXT

On September 13, 2023, the Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance hosted the PBHA Summit, gathering input from stakeholders to assess impact and shape the future trajectory of the organization.

This meeting came at an inflection point for PBHA. Just five years earlier, the Alliance had only 50 stakeholders, reached only two counties and had no staff. By 2023, PBHA had grown its stakeholder base to include individual and organizational members serving seven counties with 2.1 full-time employees. The Alliance Leadership saw the need for PBHA to transform again to continue serving as a catalyst for change in the Panhandle's mental health system.

Stakeholders discussed PBHA's crucial role in fostering collaboration, discussions and connections within the mental health system in the Panhandle. PBHA's role as a neutral convener was highlighted, helping to get the right people in a room and discussing issues with one another for better results and less duplication of services. Attendees also focused on PBHA's ability to provide quality education and share knowledge of resources, especially in rural communities.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for PBHA to enhance connections with the faith community and address challenges to gathering data about mental health issues.

Attendees particularly emphasized the need for rural outreach, crucial for raising mental health awareness and resource availability.

PBHA has evolved into a learning organization, hosting and participating in learning opportunities that have enhanced agency and community capacity for change. This includes various conferences, symposiums and collaborative learning experiences.

The Alliance has also facilitated increased programming and collaborations to address community needs. As PBHA enters 2024, the Alliance Leadership plans to focus on frontier communities, the justice-involved population and addressing provider shortages, by identifying gaps, connecting stakeholders and supporting the implementation of pilot projects. This comprehensive approach underlines PBHA's commitment to improving mental health access and care across the Texas Panhandle.

**Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance simplifies coordination and collaboration among individuals, organizations and communities in the Texas Panhandle. PBHA provides technical assistance to frontier communities, organizes workshops to improve access to services and fosters relationships to overcome barriers and understand regional behavioral health systems. The aim is to address root causes of complex problems, such as provider shortages and mental health stigma.**



*Stakeholders gathered in February 2023 for PBHA's annual meeting. In addition to discussing the previous year's activities, attendees benefitted from a panel discussion featuring members of the Workplace Mental Health learning community. The discussion centered around practical changes leaders had made in their workplaces to improve employee mental wellness.*

*To see this learning community's Workplace Mental Health Toolkit, go to <https://panhandlebehavioralhealthalliance.org/wellness-and-access/>*

# STATE LEGISLATURE FUNDS MENTAL HEALTH AT RECORD LEVEL

PBHA convened stakeholders from across the region for a recap of the behavioral health developments in the 2023 Texas legislative session. Nelson Jarrin, Senior Vice President of State Policy with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, delivered a comprehensive overview of the mental health laws passed in this year's session, shedding light on its implications for the Panhandle's ongoing mental health initiatives.

Jarrin highlighted the Texas Legislature's investment of \$11.7 billion in behavioral health in the 2024-2025 budget, the single largest investment in mental health funding in any legislature in U.S. history. This funding marked an increase of \$1.25 billion from the previous budget, or roughly 15 percent, and a behavioral health funding increase of more than \$5 billion since 2015.

Among the bills that affect the region is SB 30, which will provide \$2.26 billion to build new state mental health hospitals, including one in Amarillo, increase inpatient capacity at other state hospitals and offer grants for county-based collaboratives for jail diversion programs.



The budget also provides a 240 percent increase in funding for the Texas Child Mental Health Consortium, which operates TCHAT, CPAN and PeriPAN. Additionally, the new budget creates grant programs for justice-involved populations, early intervention, crisis outreach and more. The Legislature also voted to address mental health workforce needs by providing salary increases at mental health hospitals, funding for local mental health authorities to stabilize their workforces and a loan repayment program for mental health professionals.

*Nelson Jarrin, Senior Vice President of State Policy at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, shares developments from the 2023 Texas Legislative Session with PBHA stakeholders.*

# PBHA Impact Snapshot: KEY STATISTICS FROM 2023

## Panhandle Mental Health Guide Usage Since Inception in 2021



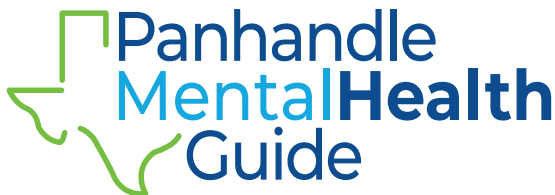
**35,693**  
Unique Visitors



**64,274**  
Page Views



**4 minutes  
24 seconds**  
Average Time on Site



## Outlook from PBHA 2023 Stakeholders Satisfaction Survey

**92%** of stakeholders\* agree or strongly agree that because of PBHA, partnerships have been formed, strengthened and/or barriers have been reduced regarding Behavioral Health Care.

**100%** of service providers\*\* agreed they were able to improve the quality of services because of their interactions with PBHA.

**88%** of service providers agreed that PBHA activities have helped them improve/expand their organizational capacity or individual ability to address Behavioral Health.

**76%** of stakeholders have benefited from PBHA's educational opportunities and/or (technical) assistance.

**96%** of stakeholders agree that PBHA's Panhandle Mental Health Guide is beneficial to organizations and communities.

**92%** of stakeholders agree that PBHA's openness and credibility helps members set aside doubts or skepticism for improved collaboration.

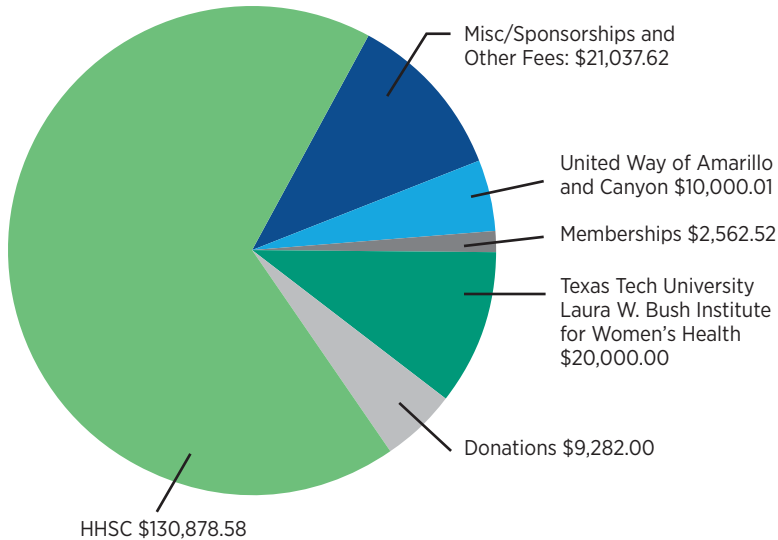
\* "Stakeholders" refer to all PBHA stakeholders

\*\* "Service providers" refer to the subset of our stakeholders who provide direct services to individuals or families

# PBHA Funding Sources

# FINANCIALS

January 2023 - December 2023



## FUNDING SOURCES

- HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION-TX
- MISC/SPONSORSHIPS AND OTHER FEES
- TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY LAURA W. BUSH INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH
- UNITED WAY OF AMARILLO and CANYON
- DONATIONS
- MEMBERSHIPS

## REVENUE

includes restricted funding:  
\$193,760.73

RESERVES:  
\$127,848.65

EXPENSES:  
\$223,700.15

Above numbers are for most recent calendar year. PBHA's fiscal year is from April 1 to March 31. PBHA operates under the fiscal sponsorship and support of the United Way of Amarillo & Canyon. PBHA financials are reviewed by United Way Amarillo & Canyon and included as part of UW's fiscal audit, per GAAP accounting standards.

## IN-KIND SUPPORT:

Community/PBHA Stakeholders:  
562 Hours

City of Amarillo Community Development: \$9,300.00

Panhandle AHEC: \$367.50

United Way of Amarillo and Canyon: \$32,767.32

# Amarillo Starts Process STATE HOSPITAL AND DIVERSION CENTER TO COME

Amarillo is poised for a transformative upgrade in mental health services with the allocation of \$159 million by last year's legislature for a new state mental health hospital. This facility, championed by Judge Nancy Tanner's advocacy and supported by the concerted efforts of Representative Four Price, Representative John Smithee and Senator Kevin Sparks, will feature 50 forensic beds and 25 civil beds to address the acute needs in the Texas Panhandle.

The choice of Amarillo reflects our region's acute demand for mental health facilities, a need the Panhandle shares with the rest of the state. More than 2,000 individuals are on a waitlist for state hospital beds, currently housed in jails awaiting competency restoration – a setting poorly suited for mental health stabilization.

The new hospital will provide a place for people in the justice system experiencing mental health issues to receive treatment and become competent to stand trial. There will not be a maximum security unit, and patients needing that level of security will need to be placed in Lubbock or elsewhere.

Being chosen for this hospital was a feat of community collaboration. In only a week, community leaders and healthcare executives worked together to make a plan and get the hospital approved for Amarillo. This was a testament to the unity and dedication of local leaders, including Mellisa Talley and Libby Moore from Texas Panhandle Centers, who coordinated the providers to work in unison.

Furthermore, TPC's momentum in mental health advocacy has been bolstered by an additional \$1.75 million in funding for a



diversion center in Amarillo in 2024. The center will provide stays of up to 23-hours for individuals experiencing acute mental health crises who might otherwise be sent to jail. The goal of the diversion center is to provide a bridge to essential services and help those with mental illness receive treatment instead of being jailed.

The establishment of both the state mental health hospital and the diversion center marks a significant advance for individuals experiencing mental illness and justice involvement in the Texas Panhandle. With these steps, the community moves closer to a comprehensive and compassionate mental health care system that prioritizes the well-being and dignity of every individual.

In anticipation of the opening of these facilities, it's important to recognize the work that remains—ensuring that as these new resources become available, they effectively bridge the gaps in the current system. PBHA and its stakeholders will continue to work together to support those who are navigating mental health challenges.



## Local Colleges Partner for Improved Student Mental Health

Amarillo College, Clarendon College, Frank Philips College and West Texas A&M University are partnering to improve mental health support in the Texas Panhandle's higher education institutions. Initiated by a Trellis Foundation grant received by Amarillo College in 2022, this partnership aims to enhance mental well-being among students at these four schools.

This collaboration has led to the creation of a no-fee mental health clinic for students at the four schools and a practicum pipeline between Amarillo College and WTAMU. Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA) interns go to Clarendon and Borger weekly to offer evening and weekend hours throughout the 2023-24 academic year. In addition to providing better mental health services for students, LPC and LPA students who were previously challenged by limited practicum opportunities now gain valuable training and experience, supported by supervision and a stipend.

Additionally, all staff and faculty at Clarendon and Frank Philips have been trained in Mental Health First Aid. Frank Philips College has further developed

a Behavioral Intervention Team and a crisis protocol, enhancing their support structure for students. The grant has also provided a number of learning opportunities to members of these school communities.

Survey data from the Healthy Minds Study underscores the urgency of these initiatives. Results from Amarillo College, Frank Phillips College and Clarendon College revealed that 70% of all students were not flourishing, and 30% showed symptoms significant enough for a diagnosis.

The next phase of the grant focuses on establishing a peer support program at Clarendon College. This will involve recruiting and training students in mental health first aid and active listening with the goal of increasing use of mental health services on campus.

This partnership emphasizes the importance of collaboration in addressing mental health challenges, moving away from operating in silos toward a more united and effective approach. This initiative not only provides essential support to students but also serves as a model for integrating mental health services in educational institutions.

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## Training Equips Community Members with Wellness and Recovery Plans

In an effort to advance mental health and wellness in the Texas Panhandle, the Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance worked with Via Hope to host several sessions introducing the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®), which brought together community members and mental health professionals. The first two-day training, hosted as a partnership between Via Hope and the United Way of Hutchinson County, took place in Borger on February 20-21, 2023, and the second training was in Amarillo on October 2-3, 2023.

The seminar introduced WRAP®, an evidence-based, self-managed and personalized wellness and recovery system, which is designed to aid individuals in developing their own wellness tools. This approach helps people to mitigate or prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors, empower personal growth, improve quality of life and assist in achieving personal aspirations. Working with a WRAP® can help individuals monitor uncomfortable feelings and behaviors and, through planned responses, reduce, modify or eliminate those feelings.

Participants received a WRAP® workbook, gained valuable insights from experienced facilitators and engaged in an environment conducive to honest exploration and healing. This training also served as a prerequisite for those interested in pursuing a WRAP® Seminar II Facilitator Training, underscoring PBHA's dedication to nurturing a network of support for those affected by mental health challenges in the region. The initiative highlights PBHA's commitment to empowering individuals through education, support and actionable wellness strategies.



*The wellness and recovery trainings underscore PBHA's role as a capacity-builder in our region.*

## Dallam, Hartley and Moore Counties Use SIM Mapping to Improve Justice and Mental Health Interactions

Texas Panhandle Centers, Texas Health and Human Services Commission and Dallam, Hartley and Moore counties came together last year for a Sequential Intercept Model mapping workshop to identify how people with behavioral health issues encounter and move through the criminal justice system. The workshop has led to massive strides in caring for those with mental health concerns throughout these three counties.

The workshop lasted a day and a half and had the goal of looking at each intercept for an individual with mental health concerns, walking through each intercept and asking:

- What do we do now?
- How is this currently done?
- What can we do differently and better?
- What are the barriers to us improving?

Attendees included local mental health professionals, law enforcement, attorneys, representatives from the courts and interested community members.

Workshop participants decided to focus on three areas to improve mental health and justice interactions:

- Arrest diversion
- Community education and outreach
- Transportation to mental health services

In addition to the three focus areas, the biggest development to come from the workshop was the opportunity to collaborate on evidence-based best practices. Those who attended the workshop, along with other interested community members, created a leadership team and groups devoted to making improvements within each focus area.

Because of this collaboration, new protocols – ranging from how police manage those in mental distress to how patients can get admitted to Northwest Texas Healthcare System Behavioral Health – have been developed to better serve the people most in need of help.

Additionally, the Community Education and Outreach workgroup started a billboard campaign promoting 9-8-8, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, using funding from the Dumas Police Department, PBHA, the Moore County Hospital District and individual businesses.

## Symposium Brings Frontier Communities Together To Discuss Mental Health Approaches



Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance and West Texas Area Health Education Center hosted the Supporting Frontier Communities in Mental Health symposium in Dumas on July 21, 2023, addressing the unique mental health challenges in Dallam, Hartley and Moore counties of the Texas Panhandle. The event fostered collaboration and knowledge-sharing among professionals from diverse fields, including medical, law enforcement and education, to enhance mental health strategies in frontier communities. The symposium focused on enhancing early intervention approaches, discovering recovery-oriented strategies and managing crises to strengthen mental health in small communities.

Attendees evaluated the sessions highly, with a majority rating them as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. The symposium’s attendees emphasized the value of discussing early intervention, crisis management and interdisciplinary collaboration, with substantial positive feedback on their potential impact on professional practices and patient outcomes.

Participants expressed a desire for continued education and raised concerns about implementation barriers, such as resource limitations and service accessibility in rural areas. The feedback highlighted a need for tangible, actionable solutions and greater support for mental health initiatives in these communities. The event has set a collaborative tone for tackling mental health issues in rural settings, indicating a forward momentum in resource sharing and community engagement for future improvements.

# HUTCHINSON COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH WORK CONTINUES TO GROW

Since the inception in January 2020 of the Mental Health Taskforce in Hutchinson County, the county's residents and the Hutchinson County United Way have worked hard to support the mental health system. In the last four years, the Mental Health Taskforce has begun offering Mental Health First Aid, additional licensed professionals and associates have begun their practices in Hutchinson County, and the community has offered Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®) trainings.

Participation in Via Hope's Recovery Oriented Community learning collaborative alongside PBHA

led to the start of a Peer Support Program with one full-time and two part-time Peer Specialists, certified (or in training) as a Peer Support Specialist and a Re-Entry Peer Support Specialist for Hutchinson County in 2023. Rico Goff, serves clients individually and runs a weekly support group, Different Path to Recovery. Amber Wells, Hutchinson County's part-time Peer Support Specialist, serves clients with concerns around domestic abuse, parental issues, depression, employment and more. Between the two of them, they have served nearly 100 clients.

In addition to the Peer Support Program, they've also begun fundraising to support additional outpatient behavioral health services.

"PBHA being at the table, giving us guidance, but letting us forge ahead with our own ideas, is a huge help," said Hutchinson County United Way Executive Director Julie Winters. "I am truly grateful for this partnership."

# MOORE COUNTY OFFERS HELP TO THE GRIEVING

Moore County has made significant strides in supporting those dealing with grief in the Dumas, Cactus and Sunray areas, especially focusing on those affected by suicide. Recognizing the silent struggle of many students coping with loss, Tonie Crawford, a Dumas ISD counselor, initiated Camp Rainbow. This summer camp, dedicated to helping children navigate their grief, has touched the lives of nearly 100 participants over four years.

In a further effort to provide solace and help adults in the community navigate grief, Tonie hosted a Bereaved Mother's Day Tea in May 2023. The event featured speaker Candice Kirkpatrick and brought together 14 attendees to share and process their grief and participate in a therapeutic activity. This poignant gathering highlighted the community's need for a structured support system, leading to the formation of the Local Outreach for Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) Team in fall 2023, under Tonie's leadership.

In collaboration with Family Support Services, the LOSS team embarked on their mission with an initial two-hour training session for local law enforcement. The team of eight includes three mental health professionals and five community advocates. The Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance has actively supported Moore County's LOSS team in its initial year with supplies to deliver services and programming such as the International Survivor of Suicide Loss Day.

The LOSS team's efforts include monthly support group meetings for Survivors of Suicide Loss, with PBHA assisting in securing a venue. Additionally, the team has been receiving training from the Hope and Healing Place in Amarillo to offer grief programs in Dumas, reinforcing the network of support for those in mourning within the community. Through these concerted efforts, Moore County is nurturing a compassionate environment where grief is met with understanding and collective healing.

The Texas Legislature created TCHAT and CPAN in 2019 and PeriPAN in 2021 as part of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium, a larger group of programs focused on improving psychiatric care for young people. In PBHA's 27-county footprint, since the inception of TCHAT, CPAN and PeriPAN:



**TCHAT – Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine**

- 37 enrolled districts
- 287 referrals
- 619 sessions
- 137 unique students served

**Top 3 reasons for referral**

1. Anxiety/Excessive Worry – 52%
2. Depression – 38%
3. Anger/Violence/Aggression – 33%



**CPAN – Child Psychiatry Access Network**

- 165 archived consult calls
- 257 primary care providers enrolled
- 72% percent of calls are for medication management

**PeriPAN – Perinatal Psychiatry Access Network**

- 16 archived consult calls
- 27 providers enrolled
- 75% percent of calls are for medication management

# MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN RURAL WEST TEXAS

**By Dr. Trevor Rohm, MD, MS, FAAFP**

*Chief of Staff at Hereford Regional Medical Center*

Mental health is a universal challenge, but its impact is amplified in rural areas like West Texas, where resources are scarce. As a family practice physician with over a decade of experience in this setting, I deal with the daily struggle of providing mental healthcare with limited support.

Approximately 25% of Americans reside in areas with a shortage of mental health professionals. Physicians must make referrals, but we know they're often insufficient due to limited resources and travel constraints.

In this context, rural healthcare providers become frontline mental health caretakers. Nearly 30% of our clinic visits are mental health-related, and I've had the privilege of working with my local team to educate nurse practitioners about basic mental health care.

Mental health costs and resource utilization in rural health clinics are substantial. One elderly patient with severe, untreated anxiety had 22 ER visits and 11 clinic visits in 2022.

If treating mental health is expensive, the cost of neglecting mental health is even more immense. In Deaf Smith County, with

a population of 18,500, we spend approximately \$900,000 annually on mental health for inmates alone.

We are at a decision point in addressing the mental health crisis. The current path requires a new direction, and we don't have a clear roadmap. In rural areas, 21% of adults experience mental illness, with only 55% receiving treatment, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. We must find a way to help the remaining 45%.

Fortunately, Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance provides valuable support to our county by offering us a chance to find a local solution to our decision point with partnership opportunities and connecting us to resources and other best practices.

It's time to reshape our broken system and make it work for us, regardless of where we live. Local solutions and shared resources provide a path forward. We must decide whether to continue down the same path or make new decisions that positively affect our communities and the lives of our fellow Texans.

## Public Defender/Managed Assigned Council Office Expands to More Panhandle Counties

The Public Defender/Managed Assigned Council (PDMAC) Office has expanded its Public Defender services to seven counties and three offices to help provide for the defense needs of more indigent Texas Panhandle residents.

The expansion means the PDMAC can now serve those involved with the legal system in:

- **Armstrong, Carson, Deaf Smith, Donley and Oldham counties** – Can be assigned to all criminal cases that don't have a conflict.
- **Moore** – Can be assigned to misdemeanor, juvenile, appeals and some felonies.
- **Potter** – Can be assigned to up to 65% of all felonies, as well as misdemeanors when attached to a felony case.

To better serve clients, the PDMAC office opened public defender satellite offices in Dumas and Hereford, with each office housing a mental health liaison, support staff and three to six attorneys.

The PDMAC office is looking to change what justice means in the Texas Panhandle by considering what's best for society as a whole. Because of this, the office includes mental health staff that work to prevent defendants from reoffending. These mental health professionals work to serve clients as well as expand their treatment options. They've also added telemedicine support to bring Amarillo resources into the rural communities.

By offering mental health services, the PDMAC office is helping lower county jail budgets by limiting reoffending due to untreated behavioral health concerns. By helping those who want treatment, the PDMAC staff believes they can save taxpayers money while helping community members who should be getting help instead of jail time.

Changes like this don't just happen from one person's effort. Many people were instrumental in this expansion: Jason Howell, the head of the PDMAC Office; Judge Rowdy Rhoades in Moore County; Joe Morris, who helped with county budgets and explaining costs to county officials; Amy Conner who took lead on the county budgets; and each of the County Commissioners Courts who chose to adopt the PDMAC model.

## PBHA Justice Forum Addresses Mental Health and Justice Priorities

Twice each year, the Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance gathers stakeholders from its four Justice Priority Groups to share wins and discuss developments in criminal justice and behavioral health interactions.

The Justice Priority Groups are focused on issues that came from the 2022 Sequential Intercept Model mapping workshop in Amarillo. By the end of 2023, each group has made significant progress on the issues. Highlights of the successes of each group include:

1. **Call Center for Resource Coordination** – Downtown Women's Center and 2-1-1 have collaborated to pilot case management for 2-1-1 callers who have justice involvement.
2. **Diversion Center** – Texas Panhandle Centers has been awarded funding to bring a pre-jail diversion center to Amarillo, purchasing the former Bivins Pointe to offer outpatient services and house the forthcoming diversion center.
3. **Data** – The data team is exploring criminal justice data software that can be used to aid diversion strategies and other strategies to improve data collection and information sharing across the SIM intercepts.
4. **Reentry** – Amarillo was chosen as one of five pilot sites in the United States for a learning community by the Bureau of Justice to test the Reentry Practices Capacity Assessment Tool that evaluates a community's readiness to implement reentry evidence-based practices and guide planning and further implementation. The reentry team has also focused on building bridges with specialty courts, jails and case managers, including the City of Amarillo Coming Home program's new case manager for reentry.

*In the November 2023 Justice Forum, priority leads shared insight and developments from each groups' work.*



## Pathways to Healing Compassion In Texas Court

The Accountability Court in Randall County and Panhandle Regional Problem Solving Court in Potter County serve as shining examples of compassionate justice, redefining mental health treatment within the legal system. These courts are a product of the collaboration between many legal and mental health entities – the district attorneys’ offices, local courts, probation officers, Texas Panhandle Centers, Family Support Services, the Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance and so many more. Instead of traditional legal processes, these courts offer hope and transformative care to those facing mental health challenges within the judicial system.

### Accountability Court

Led by Judge Matt Martindale, the Accountability Court was established to provide ongoing support during probation for those with mental health issues. This court has offered personalized assistance and sustained care aimed at reducing reoffending.

The success of the court is evident in its participants’ transformations. One notable story is of an individual who moved from repeated weekly incarceration to a journey toward a fuller life. As of November 2023, every participant in the program has successfully stayed out of jail for a year.

### Panhandle Regional Problem Solving Court

Under the guidance of Judge Matt Hand, the Panhandle Regional Problem Solving Court operates as pre-trial diversion, integrating probation and treatment service providers. The court aims to lower reoffending risks and provide a safety net as participants work toward stability.

The court’s role in crisis intervention is highlighted by stories of remarkable change. A woman, once unstable, became a positive societal contributor through accurate diagnosis and medication. Another participant’s life was saved thanks to timely intervention during a severe crisis.

As part of his excellent work advancing justice for those with mental health struggles, Judge Hand has been appointed to the Judicial Commission on Mental Health.

### Embracing Empathy and Collaboration for Change

These courts exemplify an empathetic and collaborative approach to mental health in the justice system. The programs stand as models of kindness and effective intervention, bringing about profound change in lives and paving the way for a legal system that connects individuals to treatment.

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## Trauma-Informed Care in the Justice System

As part of ongoing efforts to address mental health in the justice system, Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance joined Via Hope and the City of Amarillo to host a free workshop in October 2023 titled “How Being Trauma Informed Improves Justice System Responses.” Justice system workers from various sectors, including police, community corrections, court personnel, first responders and healthcare professionals, gathered to enhance their understanding of trauma-informed care, using training developed by SAMHSA’s GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation.

The training also included videos of personal stories and practical tips for interacting with people in a variety of environments who are in distress or susceptible to encounters that may trigger past traumatic experiences.

The program focused on how trauma-informed practices can significantly decrease recidivism and increase community safety and recovery. Acknowledging the high percentages of justice-involved individuals with trauma histories, the training provided practical tips for interacting with people in distress, aiming to prevent re-traumatization and improve system responses.



*PBHA’s community outreach brought mental health messages to several art events in 2023. In this photo, kids attending the Hoodoo Mural Festival are painting Rosie the Resilient, the mascot for the Panhandle Mental Health Guide.*

# ALLIANCE STAKEHOLDERS

Bri Albracht	Kelly Galloway	Samantha Martinez*	Amy Stark
Chris Aliff	Leslie Garcia	Julie McCarty*	Chelsea Stevens*
Nicole Amos	Lee Gibbons Garmany	Maude McCullough	Kraig Stockstill
Courtney Austin	Sandra Garza	Andrew McKinstry	Casie Stoughton
Sarah Barnes	Diann Gilmore*	Jessica McMahan	Laura Street*
Chad Beavers	Rico Goff	Karri McPherson	Katie Strohmeier
Judge John Board	Sharon Gongora*	Janell Menahem	Michelle Sulik*
Sherri Bohr	Adrian Gonzalez*	Meagan Miller*	Mellisa Talley*
Steven Bond	Bonnie Gunden	Rudy Montano	Nancy Tanner
Dr. Trey Bowen	Julianne Guy*	Libby Moore*	Brian Thomas
Kay Brotherton	Corin Hacker*	Zenaida Morales*	Dan Thompson
Steve Brush	Jennifer Hale*	Elia Moreno*	Ann Tidwell
Melissa Burns	Laura Hamilton	Alyson Morgan*	Reva Tilley*
David Bustos	Mindy Hampton	Tracey Mormon*	Kathy Tortoreo
Gus Cabarcus	Matt Hand	Crystal Morton	Nancy Trevino*
Richard Campbell	Ken Haney*	Kiley Murray	Isabel Trujillo*
Morgan Canales	Rene Havel*	Michael Nash	Seth Trujillo*
Adrian Castillo	Jessica Hegwood	Ian Neighly*	Jessica Tudyk*
Judge Jennifer Cates	Michael Hemphill	Margie Netherton*	Christopher Veal
Dave Clark*	Alanna Hepler*	Candy Norris	Isabell Villareal
Richard Cox	Jeremy Hill	Jennifer Oliver*	Kai Vrede*
Mary Coyne*	Jerrold Hinders*	Patrick Osei-Hwere*	Jennifer Wall
Robyn Cranmer	Tiffany Hirani	Kim Pitney*	Lesley Webb
Tonie Crawford	Dustin Ho-Gland	Carolyn Prill-Bennett	Karen Welch
Joshua Crawford	Lynette Hollis	Liz Rascon-Alaniz	Megan West
Belinda Crelia-Palacios	Jason Howell*	Audra Rea	Natalie White
Heather Crider*	Victoria Hughes	Tim Reid*	Steven White*
Allison Crockett	Mia Hunter	Gaye Reynolds	Jim Whitton
Joseph Dad	Shanna James	Judge Rowdy Rhoades	Katharyn Wiegand*
Lidia Dailey*	Holly Jeffreys	Jason Riddlespurger	Logan Williams*
Gainor Davis	Alyssa Jenkins*	Diadria Robinson	Virginia Williams-Trice
Judy Day*	Michael Johnson	Raul Rodarte-Suto	Julie Winters
Meg DeJong-Shier*	Antonina Jordt	Trevor Rohm	Carolyn Witherspoon*
Sharyn Delgado	Debra King	Sundee Rossi	Ross Womble
Linda Dudley	Angela Knapp Eggers*	Michelle Rupe	Kassie Wood*
Katherine Duke	Donna Knight	Christy Schroeder	Gina Woodward
Alyssa Duncan*	Tim Lacey	Rachel Scott*	Cindi Wynia
Yvonne Dykstra	Adam Leathers	Virginia Sicola*	Erin Wyrick
MacKenzie Ellis	Mary Nell Lemert*	Steve Smart	Magi York
Lara Escobar	Robert Love	Miquela Smith*	Megan Young*
Phillip Flores	Stephanie Loya*	Tracy Sommers	Sardar Zahid*
Esmeralda Florz	Cullen Lutz	Valerie Spanel	
Christopher Forbis	Cammie Mallard	Chellsea Sparks	
Molly Forman*	Judge Matt Martindale	Yvonne Spriggs*	

*\*PBHA Member*

To see a list of PBHA organizational members, visit  
<https://www.PanhandleBehavioralHealthAlliance.org/stakeholders>



*The Panhandle Behavioral Health Alliance is improving how our region promotes mental well-being in everyday life.*

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#### **2023 ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP**

**Judy Day**, Co-Chair, Community Volunteer  
**Laura Street**, Co-Chair and Founder, Laura Street Consulting  
**Dave Clark**, Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals  
**Mary Coyne**, AscentHealth Consulting and MCMC  
**Meg DeJong-Shier**, WTAMU Social Work  
**Libby Moore**, Texas Panhandle Centers  
**Kiley Murray**, United Way of Amarillo & Canyon  
**Patrick Osei-Hwere**, WTAMU Media Communication  
**Carolyn Witherspoon**, Coalition of Health Services

#### **2023 PBHA WORKGROUP CHAIRS**

**Jennifer Hale**, Community Education Chair, Amarillo ISD  
**Joseph Dad**, Integrated Care Co-Chair, RHN Medical & Dental Group  
**Valerie Spanel**, Integrated Care Co-Chair, Purposefully Driven  
**Judy Day**, Measurement Co-Chair, Community Volunteer  
**Patrick Osei-Hwere**, Measurement Co-Chair, WTAMU  
**Rene Havel**, Provider Shortage Chair, Nwth Behavioral Health

#### **2023 Potter-Randall SIM Project Leads**

##### **Coordinating Call Center**

- **Candice Elliott** - Northwest Texas Hospital Behavioral Health
- **Diann Gilmore** - Downtown Women's Center
- **Debra King** - Cenikor Foundation

##### **Diversion Center**

- **Libby Moore** - Texas Panhandle Centers
- **Kraig Stockstill** - RHN Medical and Dental Group

##### **Data**

- **Mellisa Talley** - Texas Panhandle Centers
- **Casie Stoughton** - Amarillo Public Health
- **Jeremy Hill** - City of Amarillo

##### **Reentry Coordination**

- **Shanna James**, Amarillo Public Health
- **John Board**, Senior District Judge

##### **Training and Education**

- **Kathy Tortoreo** - Family Support Services
- **Bri Albracht** - Texas Panhandle Centers/Intercept Team

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United Way of Amarillo & Canyon is the fiscal sponsor and an active supporter of PBHA.