



## **Organizational By-Laws**

### **I. Mission**

To collectively advocate for the health and well-being of all individuals living in Texas impacted by or at risk of mental health and substance use disorders.

### **II. Objectives**

- a. Advocate for policies that prioritize prevention, identification, treatment and support for mental health and substance use disorders;
- b. Share information and collaborate across member organizations to build consensus around priority issues; and
- c. Leverage coalition resources to support legislators, policy makers, and community stakeholders in their efforts to advance policy and law related to mental health and substance use.

### **III. Guiding Principles**

The TCHM is guided by the following principles:

- a. Equitable, affordable, and quality, integrated health care should be available for all individuals, including a full range of preventive services and treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders.
- b. Prevention, early intervention, person-centered treatment, and recovery are the essential cornerstones of an effective health care system. The system must be accountable, transparent and effectively serve individuals with mental health and substance use disorders.
- c. Systems that interact with individuals at risk of mental health or substance use disorders should integrate trauma-responsive and healing-centered practices into their treatment and support services.
- d. Systems of care must protect the rights of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders, and the supports and services provide to them should be timely, non-discriminatory, and culturally responsive in the least restrictive environment.
- e. Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities must have equitable access to supports and services because they experience higher rates of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, which can lead to increased mental health conditions.

- f. Systems of care should provide greater access to youth prevention, early intervention, treatment, and support to divert students from exclusionary school discipline practices and the juvenile justice system in order to eliminate the “school-to-prison” pipeline.
- g. Housing options should be affordable and integrated with access to supports that meet consumer and community needs.
- h. The healthcare workforce must be sustainable, accessible, culturally responsive, and operate effectively in an integrated care environment.
- i. Elimination of the stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use disorder must come through increased education about prevention, treatment, recovery and care.

#### **IV. General Membership Requirements**

- a. A member organization must be aligned with the mission, objectives, and guiding principles of the coalition and adhere to the by-laws of the coalition.
- b. Members of the coalition work to impact state level policy development and advocacy, regardless of whether their footprint is local, regional, or statewide.
- c. Organizations may self-nominate, or be recommended for membership by an existing member, and are reviewed and approved by the steering committee.
- d. A member organization may have a number of employees, or volunteers participating on standing committees, or in working groups, as well as other ad-hoc efforts, however,
- e. Each member organization shall designate a staff member, and an alternate with the authority to vote on coalition matters.
- f. Official voting privileges on any standing committee, including the steering committee (or an official vote by the full membership) shall be limited to one vote per member organization. See voting (XV) for further details.

#### **V. Termination of Membership**

- a. The steering committee, by formal vote, may suspend or revoke coalition membership.

- b. Grounds for suspension or revocation of membership include failure to adhere to general membership requirements (IV), lack of participation (VII), or conduct of membership (XIII).
- c. A member organization under consideration for suspension or revocation will be notified in writing by the co-chairs and has the right to address the steering committee in writing or in person prior to a determination.
- d. An organization, whose membership has been terminated, can re-apply in a year.

## **VI. Participation**

- a. In addition to the general membership requirements, all member organizations shall:
  - 1. Strive to be active members of coalition, participate in workgroups and on standing committees, and serve as representatives from their respective organizations.
  - 2. Reach consensus on the coalition's policy agenda, and serve as the conduit to respective member organizations to determine support or opposition.
  - 3. Keep the coalition updated on relevant issues and updates from their respective organizations.
  - 4. Participate in key coalition events including: briefings, legislative visits, lobby days, and related earned and social media campaigns.
- b. A subset of member organizations will serve on the steering committee, and shall
  - 1. Provide input on meeting agendas items, coalition activities, and mobilization efforts.
  - 2. Serve in leadership roles including but not limited to coordinating workgroups and chairing various standing committees.
  - 3. Help develop and distribute key communications or collateral materials.
  - 4. Attend and help plan meetings, events, and other coalition activities.
- c. A member organization that is governed by publicly elected or appointed officials, in their official capacity, or are considered units of government or a conglomerate



of units of government, or are otherwise prohibited from certain lobbying activities shall serve as resource members of the coalition, and shall:

1. Provide nonpartisan policy analysis, technical assistance, and public education consistent with applicable local, state, and federal laws.
2. Abstain from participation on behalf of the coalition in prohibited activities, including voting on matters related to coalition lobbying or taking positions on specific legislation.
3. Be identified at all times on coalition materials as resource members.

## **VIII. Convening Leadership**

The coalition is led by two co-chairs:

- a. The (permanent) co-chair is from a member organization that serves as the fiscal agent for grants funding the coalition, and
  1. Manage the coalition director.
  2. Approve steering and general session meeting agendas.
  3. Convene both steering and general session meetings.
  4. Establish, in consultation with the steering committee, additional committees as needed to conduct the work of the coalition.
  5. Appoint the chairs of standing committees and workgroups.
- b. The second co-chair is from a member organization that is elected by the steering committee, and assists the permanent co-chair in the ongoing management of the coalition.
- c. This term for the second co-chair is two years, and can be renewed for two additional terms (six years).

## **IX. Steering Committee**

The steering committee is responsible for the governance of the coalition and is comprised of a subset of members from the general membership. It shall:

- a. Approve or amend the recommendations of any standing committee, including the legislative agenda recommended by the legislative committee.
- b. Provide feedback to the co-chairs on performance of the coalition director.
- c. Identify matters that are subject to approval by the full membership.

- d. Serve as the final venue for conflict resolution on matters not resolved by another committee.
- e. Approve the addition or replacement of steering committee members, upon recommendation of the co-chairs.
- f. The composition of the steering committee shall include:
  - 1. The coalition co-chairs.
  - 2. Each standing committee chair, and workgroup leader.
  - 3. At least six, and no more than half the member organizations from the general membership.

## **X. Standing Committees**

Upon recommendation of the co-chairs, standing committees will be formed from time to time in order to accomplish the work of the coalition.

- a. Each standing committee is led by a member of the steering committee, appointed by the co-chairs.
- b. The membership of the standing committees is open to all general member organizations.
- c. There are no term requirements for committee membership.
- d. Standing committees currently include:
  - 1. **Legislative and Policy** – responsible for development of the overall legislative and policy agenda, makes final recommendation to steering committee, establishes rapid response team during session.
  - 2. **Mobilization** – coordinates coalition lobby days, joint activities, briefings, conferences, action alerts.
  - 3. **Communication** – Prepares editorial calendar, develops social and earned media strategies, plans editorial board visits, and pitches stories.

## **XI. Workgroups**

Upon recommendation of the chair of a standing committee, workgroups will be formed from time to time in order to accomplish the work of the committee.

- a. Each workgroup must be coordinated by someone serving on the standing committee.

- b. Workgroup membership is open to all general member organizations, and may include both individuals and organizations that are not members of the coalition.
- a. There are no term requirements.

## **XII. Director**

The coalition director reports to the co-chairs, and is responsible for:

- a. Coordinating agenda development for the steering committee, standing committees, workgroups, and general meetings.
- b. Driving organizational change within the coalition, working with funders, coalition leadership, and member organizations.
- c. Serving as ex-officio member of steering and standing committees, and workgroups.
- d. Facilitating steering committee and general membership meetings, and others, as appropriate.
- e. Providing counsel on advocacy strategy and tactics, including coalition mobilization and communication efforts.
- f. Identifying potential policy conflicts, serve as honest broker in resolution of them.
- g. Developing editorial content including: newsletters, testimony, legislative updates, op-eds, and press releases.
- h. Serving as spokesperson for coalition, when authorized by co-chairs.
- i. Providing administrative support for coalition activities, working with the co-chairs.

## **XIII. Conduct of Membership**

The coalition is a voluntary advocacy enterprise, comprised of member organizations with disparate goals but a common commitment to the mission, objectives, and guiding principles outlined in this document. Each member organization agrees to adhere to a decision consensus model (XIV) that hinges on:

- a. Honesty and Transparency:

1. Willingness to disclose conflicts of interest between member organizations.
  2. Holding one another mutual accountability to the adherence to these by-laws.
- b. Respect:
1. Being thoughtful and continuously striving to work in a positive, respectful and trusting fashion.
  2. Listening actively.
  3. Asking questions regarding shared information when needed.
  4. Explaining positions as issues or potential conflicts arise.
  5. Initiating sidebars when necessary, and following the decision consensus model (XIV).
- c. Participation:
1. Being prepared.
  2. Participating in discussions, not pushing back from the table.
  3. Providing timely responses regarding coalition business.
  4. Supporting the coalition through frequent and ongoing contributions.
- d. Trust:
1. Exhibiting discretion when dealing with sensitive and or confidential information shared by other members while promoting the coalition's goals.
  2. Treating legislative strategy and organizational tactics with care, particularly when working to resolve conflicts.
- e. Collaboration:
1. Striving to focus on the greater good of the group, rather than solely on the organization a member represents.
  2. Sharing information and cooperating in order to ensure that we continue to build a strong, credible coalition.
  3. Not representing the coalition on specific issues unless they have been vetted by the appropriate committee or workgroup.
  4. Agreeing to work out differences with any members in a collaborative fashion through the committee process and using the decision consensus model (XIV).

- f. Support:
  - 1. Working actively to inform decision makers and other stakeholders about the coalition's shared priorities, goals and mission.
  - 2. Being a unified, authentic voice in the mental health and substance use disorder communities and in communicating the coalition's priorities and mission.

#### **XIV. Decision-Making Process**

By establishing a specific decision-making process before problems occur, discussions and votes will not become a barrier to the coalition's effectiveness.

- a. Decision Consensus Model: the coalition has adopted the following thresholds for developing consensus.
  - 1. Workgroup decisions require a simple majority (50+1%) of members present to move a recommendation to a standing committee.
  - 2. Standing committees require a 4/5<sup>th</sup> supermajority (80%) to move a recommendation to the steering committee. A quorum of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> is required.
  - 3. The steering committee requires agreement from a 4/5<sup>th</sup> supermajority (80%) to take action. A quorum of 100% is required.
- b. When possible, and in order to achieve maximum input and participation from member organizations, the coalition will endeavor develop its work product utilizing the three levels of review: workgroup, standing, and steering committee review process, however
- c. This three-level review process does not prohibit a standing committee from taking action on matters not developed at the workgroup level, nor does it prevent the steering committee from considering a matter not recommended by a standing committee.

#### **XV. Voting**

- a. Voting privileges are extended to member organizations in good standing with the coalition. Member organizations that have been suspended or whose membership has been previously revoked are prohibited from voting.
- b. As defined in (VI)(c) of these by-laws, resource members shall not vote on matters pertaining to the legislative advocacy of the coalition.
- c. Unless stipulated by the co-chairs or elsewhere in these by-laws, voting may take place:



1. In person (telephonically or via a virtual meeting platform).
  2. By written proxy, with advance notification by authorization of the chair, or
  3. By email, with advance notification by the chair.
- d. Voting taking place in any standing committee, including the steering committee (or an official vote by the full membership) shall be limited to one vote per member organization.

## **XVI. Quorum**

- a. A quorum is not required for a workgroup to take action, but a simple majority of those assembled is necessary to move a recommendation.
- b. A quorum of 2/3rds is necessary for a standing committee to take action.
- c. A quorum of the steering committee is comprised of 100%, and can be achieved through combination of in person, written proxy, and email as provided for in (XV).

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