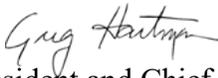


August 30, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

FROM: Greg Hartman 
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Working Group Chair

SUBJECT: Implementation Memo – Working Group #22

Recommendation to be Implemented: Integrate Student Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services into Texas A&M Health and establish a dedicated unit to focus on providing holistic student health.

Strategic Considerations: The strategic intent is to expand the impact of Student Health Services (SHS) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) by integrating current structures and operations within A&M Health. The MGT report identified that health services are in high demand in university settings across the nation, noting that TAMU is no exception. This expansion will address the growing demands for student health services, especially mental healthcare and support, which are critical to the success of this initiative. Integration within A&M Health will provide opportunities to engage the resources of clinical, academic, and research operations in a growing health science center.

A significant focus of the reorganization is on easy access to high-quality student health and counseling services. Integration into A&M Health will support the focus on ensuring that the appropriate resources are in place for each student to have support for individualized care that supports their academic success. The vision is to become a national model for student health and counseling services. The national model will be scalable for the A&M System schools and other universities across the nation.

Logistical Issues Addressed:

The workgroup learned about existing programs and services and strategized for growth in accessible holistic care. Areas of logistical focus included:

- Rebranding within A&M Health
- Establishing a new organizational structure
- Evaluating current and envisioning future facilities

- Improving access to mental health care and expanded health services
- Developing an evidence-based integrated model of behavioral health within primary care
- Integrating academic education of health professions students
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Planning for budgetary needs

Outcomes and Implementation Plans for Logistical Issues:

Rebranding within A&M Health: The workgroup agreed to rebrand SHS and CAPS as University Health Services (UHS) under A&M Health. New and existing services and operations will be featured on a new UHS website. Reorganization of existing marketing and communications personnel within SHS and CAPS under A&M Health Marketing and Communications, and within the new structure of TAMU Marketing and Communications is critical. This work will commence after the new TAMU structure is finalized and will be fully implemented by January 1, 2023. Rebranding of current materials and promotional items will commence after September 1, 2022.

Establishing a new Organizational Structure: An Associate Vice President for University Health Services was appointed on August 1, 2022 and this position reports directly to the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of A&M Health. The Directors of SHS and CAPS report to the AVP. The current structure of operations of SHS and CAPS is undergoing evaluation in order to identify the most effective and efficient integrated organizational structure for services and operations. This work will be finalized by December 1, 2022 and fully implemented in 2023.

Evaluating Current and Envisioning Future Facilities: Facilities available for both mental health, primary care, and EMS could ideally be integrated into one location. The current location of SHS has a sorely inadequate amount of square footage and parking space for both the primary care operations and EMS. A full-service site for UHS that has adequate parking will require a significant investment in capital assets. One possibility to fund a new structure is through partnership with an external health care organization. A request for information (RFI) about a new facility and partnership will be completed in early September 2022.

Improving Access to Mental Health Care and Expanded Health Services: The workgroup developed a plan for expanding access to mental health care that includes new points of access at strategic locations using embedded positions within high areas of need, such as the University Police Department and through both telehealth and the currently contracted vendor, mySSP, an app-based vendor service that includes confidential chats, calls and mental health conversations 24/7. Increased services will also be accomplished through expanded hours, growth in the number of direct care clinicians, competitive wages for clinicians, and through partnerships within A&M Health.

Developing an Evidence-based Integrated Model of Behavioral Health within Primary Care: Collaboration in the holistic care of students is vital in order to identify, support and monitor student mental health. Not all students present for mental health care at CAPS. In fact, since many more students utilize SHS for physical health needs, at-risk students can be effectively screened for mental health issues using evidence-based approaches in both settings. This requires improved communication via a shared electronic health record (EHR). Both SHS and CAPS use the most common vendor for college health services, Point and Click Solutions, but the two systems are

separate. Integration of the two systems is a top priority that will be fully implemented in the fall of 2022. Consideration of a different EHR vendor, including eClinicalWorks which is utilized by A&M Health, will continue based on how the integration of Point and Click Solutions is working and the cost-benefit of changing.

University Health Services will further develop the current model of integrated behavioral health within SHS. A collaborative model that is evidence-based will provide the framework for intervention that manages identified cases through improved structure and frequency of communication across diverse team members, enhanced monitoring and follow-up and improved direct care involvement that includes case managers and mental health experts in partnership with primary care providers. A national consultant will be contracted in the fall of 2022 to assure that the approach is evidence-based and outcomes driven. The new model will be implemented in the spring and summer of 2023.

Integrating Academic Education of Health Professions Students: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) includes student interns in the model of care delivery and invests in a nationally-accredited program for 6 to 8 graduate students annually. Student Health Services (SHS) includes numerous students as trainees in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and dietetics, and hires student employees to work in EMS, pharmacy, clinical laboratory, physical therapy, and other settings within the clinic.

The opportunities to add additional health professions students to the already cramped SHS facility are limited. Interprofessional health professions students can add value to the organization. An academic integration model will be developed in 2023 to assure that nursing, pharmacy, and medical students can participate in at least some service delivery learning in an interprofessional model of integrated behavior health in primary care. A new facility is needed to include sufficient space for the richness of this learning experience for health professions students.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS): Texas A&M University EMS is a SHS-based EMS service that responds to medical and traumatic emergencies on the TAMU campus and the surrounding community. Services are provided to TAMU students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Texas A&M EMS is located in a very limited amount of space on the second floor of the SHS building and operates 24/7/365. Texas A&M EMS answers about 900-1000 calls for emergency requests each year. A new facility is needed to improve the operations of this vital service. Along with responding to emergencies, Texas A&M EMS provides medical coverage for Texas A&M Athletics, including hundreds of medical standbys and other TAMU special events.

Planning for budgetary needs: Investment in expanding holistic and evidence-based health services to TAMU students is needed. The proposed budget includes significant increases in mental health resources over the next three fiscal years. The budget addresses the access to care issues through expanded numbers of clinicians in the right places at the right time who are dedicated to direct care, embedded positions in high need areas, increased psychiatric mental health expert personnel, and collaboration within A&M Health. Strengthening health services operations for tracking of student outcomes, decreasing delays in care access and improving continuity of care are proposed within the budget.

Key Logistical Issues to be Completed and Timeline:

- A budget has been proposed that increases by at least 50% in FY23 with incremental increases over the following two fiscal years (FY24 and FY25). This investment of new resources in student mental health is needed to support the immediate and planned expansion of services, personnel, and other resources such as the mySSP 24/7/365 app.
- Hiring of a consultant to guide an effective and efficient integrated model of care delivery that is truly collaborative and integrates within one EHR will begin immediately.
- Completing the evaluation of the existing organizations structure of SHS and CAPS early this fall is needed in order to create the most effective operating model for UHS operations and services that will be launched in 2023.
- Finalizing a partnership and financing for a new UHS building in partnership with an external health service partner in 2022 is key. This will initiate the process of addressing the significant space and operational limitations of current facilities as the building investment is critical to serve students in an accessible and fully integrated model of care and holistic services that offers ample opportunities for health professions student learning.

Approved:



M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

September 10, 2022

Date

*Approved with the following comments:

- Dr. Banks would like to see a plan to double mental health services over the next three years.
- Moving EMS into the new health services building when the new building is complete will be considered.