



Hays County Youth Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping Workshop: Executive Summary

In 2023, Councilmember Bear Heiser and Hill Country Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (MHDD) Centers requested a Texas Youth SIM Mapping Workshop from Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The goal of the workshop was to help foster collaboration among behavioral health and juvenile justice stakeholders and improve early intervention and diversion for youth with mental illness (MI), substance use disorders (SUD), and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The workshop took place on May 22, 2024, in Kyle, Texas. This two-pager summarizes the key gaps, opportunities, and priorities identified by workshop participants. For a full event summary review the **Hays County Youth SIM Mapping Workshop Report**.

Invest in Strategic Priorities

- Develop and streamline referral pathways.
- Increase data collection and information sharing across schools, behavioral health providers, and juvenile justice stakeholders.
- Expand and enhance school-based mental health services.
- Enhance transition planning and continuity of care from hospitalizations and juvenile detention.

Support Local Planning, Partnership, and Education

- **Coordinate:** Strengthen behavioral health and juvenile justice partnerships through regular convening of SIM workgroups and coordination with the Behavioral Advisory Team Youth Subcommittee.
- **Partner:** Identify opportunities to strengthen relationships between youth-serving stakeholders, including Hill Country MHDD, Hays County school districts, law enforcement, and juvenile probation.
- **Learn:** Connect with other similar-sized counties implementing best practice models.
- **Train:** Train stakeholder groups on identifying, responding, and effectively treating people with MI, SUD, and IDD.

Build Upon Existing Efforts

- **Leverage** the Behavioral Advisory Team Youth Subcommittee to support ongoing implementation of identified SIM priorities.
- **Replicate** successful Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHAT) program across school districts and campuses in Hays County and continue to identify opportunities to improve referral processes.
- **Expand** specialized law enforcement responses across the county, learning from successful implementation of San Marcos Police Department's co-responder and Handle with Care programs.



Hays County Gaps, Opportunities, and Best Practices

As part of the mapping activity, facilitators helped workshop participants identify key services, stakeholders, gaps, and opportunities at each intercept. Tables below capture a few key gaps and opportunities identified by workshop participants. For a full list, review the **Hays County Youth SIM Mapping Workshop Report**.

Intercepts 0, 1: Communities, Schools, Initial Contact with Law Enforcement

Gaps	Opportunities	Best Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination between Hill Country MHDD and school points of contact (POCs) • Collection of mental health-related calls for service data across Hays County law enforcement agencies • Waitlists for services such as psychotherapy and inpatient substance use treatment • Travel times for the Mobile Crisis Outreach Team and specialized response units to rural parts of Hays County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a workgroup that includes Hill Country MHDD and school district POCs to identify opportunities to improve coordination, collaboration, and referrals. • Improve data collection across law enforcement agencies. • Identify opportunities to expand behavioral health services to keep pace with population growth. • Explore specialized responses, including 911 call diversion programs, mental health deputies, and co-responder units. • Establish Handle with Care programs in districts throughout the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification and prevention • School-based behavioral health supports • Law enforcement, mental health collaboration • Police-led diversion programs

Intercept 2: Referral to Juvenile Justice

Gaps	Opportunities	Best Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family education related to youth behavioral health and navigating the juvenile justice system • Behavioral health treatment and services within the juvenile detention facility • Staffing and capacity shortages in the juvenile probation department and the juvenile detention facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand post-booking diversion options for youth. • Explore training opportunities for families on youth behavioral health, available resources, and juvenile justice processes. • Expand community partnerships and in-reach programs to support youth with behavioral health needs in the juvenile detention facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validated risk and needs assessment tools • Specialized court interventions • Juvenile justice stakeholder collaboration • Detention-based behavioral health services

National and State Best Practices

See the [Texas Youth Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Best Practices Document](#) for checklists on best practices to consider by intercept.