



TEXAS HHSC PREVENTION AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROMOTION'S

**Annual Prevention Providers' Meeting:
Prevention- The Greatest Investment
Forward (T.G.I.F.)
Virtual Program**

June 26-28, 2023

APPM 2023 Schedule At A Glance

	Mon, Jun 26	Tues, Jun 27	Wed, Jun 28
9:00 - 10:15 AM CDT		MORNING KEYNOTE	WORKSHOPS ROUND 5
10:15 - 10:45 AM CDT		BREAK (30 MIN)	BREAK (30 MIN)
10:45 - 12:00 PM CDT		WORKSHOPS ROUND 2	WORKSHOPS ROUND 6
12:00 - 1:30 PM CDT	REGISTRATION/ NETWORKING	LUNCH (OFF SITE)	LUNCH (OFF SITE)
1:30 - 2:45 PM CDT	OPENING PLENARY & KEYNOTE	WORKSHOPS ROUND 3	WORKSHOPS ROUND 7
2:45 - 3:15 PM CDT		BREAK (30 MIN)	BREAK (30 MIN)
3:15 - 3:45 PM CDT	BREAK (30 MIN)	WORKSHOPS ROUND 4	
3:45 - 5:00 PM CDT	WORKSHOPS ROUND 4		CLOSING KEYNOTE

Program Guide

DISCLAIMER: This year's event includes keynotes and workshops from subject matter experts from across the country. The personal views or opinions expressed in this conference do not represent the official views, policies, or positions of the Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Unit or the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

TRACKS: APPM 2023 sessions are guided by four topic tracks, indicated by these symbols throughout the program:



1) ATOD This track centers on preventing the misuse of alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, and prescription medications and how these substances affect the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and our state.



2) Behavioral Health Promotion This track focuses on supporting wellness, early intervention, and prevention of mental and substance use disorders through promotion.






3) Innovative Practices This track centers on improving prevention service delivery for a best-fit approach to meet the needs of youth and families in the local community.



4) Prevention Science This track focuses on the development of evidence-based strategies that reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.

These additional symbols may also help you decide which sessions will be best for you:

Keynotes	Introductory/ Awareness	Intermediate	Data-Related	Youth-Related	Bonus
					

Continuing Education Hours

Texas Prevention Training, via C.A.R.E. Consulting Group, provides Continuing Education Hours (CEHs) for training participants. Conference attendees are eligible to earn up to 13.25 hours throughout the Annual Prevention Providers' Meeting.

C.A.R.E. Consulting Group is an approved Texas Certification Board Continuing Education provider (Number 2032-18) eligible to award CEHs to professionals pursuing the following re/certifications: Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC), Associate Prevention Specialist (APS), Certified Prevention Specialist (CPS), Advanced Certified Prevention Specialist (ACPS), and Peer Mentor/Peer Recovery Designation (PM/PRC). Our CEHs meet the standards in Texas for Licensed Social Workers (LSW), Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT), and Continuing Professional Education Providers (CPE).

Participants who attend sessions in full and complete the session evaluation will be eligible to receive a certificate of completion with CEHs. Texas Prevention Training will email certificates to participants no later than 30 days after the conclusion of the FY23 Texas Annual Prevention Providers' Meeting.

Prevention Specialist Domains

Each session will address one or more of the following Prevention Specialist Domain(s) classified by the International Credentialing & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC). Each session's description lists its corresponding domain(s).

Domain 1: Planning and Evaluation

Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Domain 3: Communication

Domain 4: Community Organization

Domain 5: Public Policy and Environmental Change

Domain 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility

Virtual Lobby

The APPM Virtual Lobby is where participants can find link to join sessions and session materials.

To Access the Virtual Lobby

1. Click the "Access Online Event" button in your confirmation email.
 - a. Can't find your email - search 'You're Registered! APPM 2023 Confirmation Email' in your email inbox.

To Join a Session

1. Access to event sessions will appear in the virtual lobby the week of the event, June 26-29, 2023.
2. Find the box at the bottom right of the homepage of the virtual lobby, click the Media tab for the list of sessions.
3. Select the session you want to join, access is available up to 30 minutes before its start time. The session's details will appear in the box at the bottom left of the lobby homepage - click the blue Launch button underneath the session description.
4. Its Zoom window will open** - please ensure your Participant Name displays correctly.
5. The Texas Prevention Training (TPT) moderator will admit you to the session if it is not at capacity.

To Access Session Material

1. Access the APPM 2023 Virtual Lobby
2. Scroll down to the box on the bottom right of the lobby home page (where you click session titles to join)
3. Switch from the Media tab to the Downloads tab
4. Select which session material you want and download (Materials are listed in the chronological order of sessions)

APPM DAY

1

Monday, June 26, 2023

1:30-3:15 PM CDT Welcome & Opening Keynote from Dr. Adolph Brown, III

3:45-5:00 PM CDT Workshops Round 1

Monday, June 26

1:30 – 2:00 PM CDT

Welcome & State of Prevention Plenary

Leadership from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) will kick off APPM 2023 with welcoming remarks and updates on the state of prevention in Texas.



Presented by:

Chris Laguna, PhD, Director of Substance Use Programs Planning and Policy (SUPPP)
Kelly Schultz, MPH, Director of Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion (HHSC)
Kasey Strey, ACPS, Director of Texas Targeted Opioid Response (HHSC)

2:00 – 3:15 PM CDT

Opening Keynote

Reflective Prevention Specialists are Effective Prevention Specialists!

Self-reflection is a humbling process. It's essential to find out why we think, say, and do certain things...then better ourselves. Self-reflection and self-correction are the highest forms of self learning and healing, thus to change the world around us, we must first change the world within us.



Presented by:

Dr. Adolph Brown, III

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 3: Communication & Domain 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/83551307080> *click here*

3:45 – 5:00 PM CDT Workshops Round 1



The 411!? On the effects of the Alcohol-To-Go Law on Underage Youth Access to Alcohol



Texans for a Safe and Drug-Free Youth studied the effects of the Alcohol-to-Go law expansion during the pandemic. Participants in this session will learn about the new law and compliance findings related to identification checks and the delivery of beverages in tamper-proof containers. There will be a discussion about the study's findings as it relates to underage youth access to alcohol and a discussion about future research.

Presented by:

Kyle Barrington, PhD. - Zajonc Corporation & **Nicole Holt** - Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth (TxSDY)

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 ATOD Related

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 4: Community Organization & Domain 5: Public Policy and Environmental Change

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/81901219891> *click here*



Implementing Trauma Informed Care into Daily Practice



This workshop will train prevention specialists on trauma informed care (TIC). Then we will transition from knowing about TIC to having the skills to implement it into daily practice. Case examples from prevention activities will be used to help participants understand how to implement TIC concepts in difficult situations.

Presented by:

Sherry Bobo, LCSW-S – UTA School of Social Work, Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery & Domain 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/89945439652> *click here*

APPM DAY 2

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 9:00-10:15 AM CDT | Keynote from Sade Jones |
| 10:45-12:00 PM CDT | Workshops Round 2 |
| 12:00-1:30 PM CDT | Lunch |
| 1:30-2:45 PM CDT | Workshops Round 3 |
| 3:15-4:30 PM CDT | Workshops Round 4 |

Tuesday, June 27

9:00 – 10:15 AM CDT

Keynote

Oh Snap! How The 90s Saved My Life to Save Others

In this interactive keynote Sade Jones will utilize narrative and nostalgia to illustrate the agency of art and culture in prevention. As we reflect on the music, fashion, and pop culture of the 90s, we'll discuss the ways in which these cultural tools became protective factors that built resiliency, agency, and empowerment. Have fun, tune in, and move your body a little as you journey with Sade through Brooklyn, NY in the 90s.



Presented by:

Sade Jones

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/82340313834> *click here*

10:45 – 12:00 PM CDT Workshops Round 2



That's What it's Made For: Arts and Culture as Factors for Prevention + Wellness



In the society we live, self-cultivation is a crucial factor of moving from surviving to thriving. It is an anchor in a world of turmoil and uncertainty. It gives youth a base to explore who they are as people, the world and how they will move in it. Research has proven that the arts are beneficial to youth but it's always had this ambiguous explanation as to how. In this session, we will discuss, model and experience how arts + culture acts as a healing tool and preventative measure.

Presented by:

Sade Jones

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/82590442948> *click here*



Sensory Enhanced Seeking Safety: An Adapted Intervention for PTSD and Complex Concurrent Disorders



This session will cover the gaps in treatment for youth with childhood adversity, current PTSD, other mental health diagnosis and concurrent substance use disorders. An adapted cognitive behavioral therapy intervention (Seeking Safety) will be presented. This adaptation incorporates art activities into the curriculum to enhance engagement, self-regulation, meaning, and cultural specificity. Participants will have an opportunity to experience examples of the activity and results from a pilot study will be presented.

Presented by:

Laura Dosanjh, PhD, MSSW - University of Texas Steve Hicks School of Social Work

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/88091484258> *click here*

12:00 – 1:30 PM CDT Lunch

1:30 – 2:45 PM CDT Workshops Round 3



Spice Up Your Life: Hope, Empathy and Life Skills



The session will be focused on infusing hope and empathy from a person-centered standpoint into drug prevention programming. The session will aim to define what hope and empathy are and how they impact the community and development of youth. The session will also include an application components of life skill development that can contribute to infusing hope within participants.

Presented by:

Jonathan Edwards, MEd, LPC, CPS and **Cindy Garza, ACPS** - Hub City Outreach Center

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery; Domain 3: Communication; Domain 4: Community Organization

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/87630969026> *click here*



Stop! Collaborate: The Mission-The Importance of Collaboration in Prevention



Evolving from pre-pandemic practices in prevention to collaborative-centered implementation to work smarter not harder to serve more individuals and communities by utilizing a variety of community-based organizations.

Presented by:

Mindy Robertson, BA, ACPS, ICPS - East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ETCADA)

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/88090619259> *click here*

3:15 – 4:30 PM CDT Workshops Round 4



This Is How We Do It: A Panel Discussion on Tobacco Prevention and Control in Texas



This moderated panel discussion will highlight the state's tobacco prevention and enforcement landscape. Our state's top experts will be asked questions and deliver solution-based answers around tobacco prevention and control issues.

Moderated by:

Victoria Moreno, MPH, CHES, APS - Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Panelists:

Megan Moran, MPH - Department of State Health Services, **Danial Rodriguez, BSW, CPS** - Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas, **Mollie Vega** - Permian Basin Regional Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, **Jennifer Steele** - Texas State University Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement, **Joshua Thigpen** - Texas State Comptroller's Office and **José Minjarez** - Aliviane

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 ATOD Related

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 5: Public Policy and Environmental Change

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/83448562814> *click here*



What Doesn't Work in Prevention



Many trainings and resources focus on what research has shown to be effective at preventing substance misuse. However, we also know through research what is NOT effective in preventing substance misuse and in some cases is harmful. Yet communities across the nation continue to implement these ineffective and sometimes counterproductive strategies. The focus of this webinar will be on identifying these ineffective approaches. We will also spend time discussing strategies prevention professionals can use to address the resistance often expressed by individuals and organizations reluctant to change long-standing, well-liked prevention practices.

Presented by:

Erin Ficker, MPAFF, CSPS - Education Development Center

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/83497392604> *click here*

APPM DAY 3

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

- 9:00-10:15 AM CDT Workshops Round 5
- 10:45-12:00 PM CDT Workshops Round 6
- 12:00-1:30 PM CDT Lunch
- 1:30-2:45 PM CDT Workshops Round 7
- 3:15-5:00 PM CDT Keynote from Chloe Hakim-Moore & Closing Awards

Wednesday, June 28

9:00–10:15AM CDT Workshops Round 5

Supporting Grand families as Caregivers in the Opioid Crisis



It is estimated that 2.6 million children are raised by grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, other extended family, and close family friends who step forward to care for them when parents are unable. With the rise in heroin and other opioid use, more relatives are raising children because the parents have died, are incarcerated, are using drugs, are in treatment or are otherwise unable to take care of their children. We understand that these children experience physical and cognitive health challenges as their caregiver's face hurdles with housing, school enrollment, health, and legal issues as they struggle with their own grief. This workshop will present evidence-based interventions designed to strengthen the resilience of these children along with tested approaches for supporting grandparents in this role.

Presented by:

Chuck Klevgaard, BSW, CSPS – Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC)

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 ATOD Related

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/84196349139> *click here*

Smells Like Team Spirit: Successes in Prevention Panel



This workshop will bring together a panel of CCP, YP, and PRC providers to share details about their implementation of successful prevention initiatives. The panelists will discuss their experiences in planning, implementing, and evaluating their prevention efforts. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn from our panelists' experiences.

Moderated by:

Dr. Sachin Kamble - Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Panelists:

Tiger Burton - BVCASA, **Carie Fletcher** - BACODA, **Torrance Sephus** - SACADA

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery; Domain 3: Communication; Domain 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility.

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/86298357361> *click here*

10:45–12:00 PM CDT Workshops Round 6

Engaging Community Pharmacies to Promote Safe Controlled Substance Dispensing and Environmental Change



Educate Before You Medicate (EBYM) was developed when the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (THHSC) was awarded the Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF-Rx) grant in September 2016. In this presentation, we will discuss this Texas Health and Human Services Commission approved prevention activity and evidence-based approach to educating the pharmacy workforce on safe controlled substance dispensing. We will describe the availability of training and drug disposal resources from the University of Houston College of Pharmacy and help you learn more about preventing unsafe controlled substance dispensing in your community.

Presented by:

Audiel Perez Negron PharmD, and Tyler Varisco, PhD - Prescription Drug Misuse Education and Research Center, University of Houston College of Pharmacy

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 2: Prevention Education and Service Delivery

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/81912144262> *click here*

Everybody! Planning for the Life Cycle of Your Career in Prevention



From education to retirement, careers tend to follow a life cycle. These cycles will vary depending on the person, and life changes outside of work, such as having a family or making a long-distance move, can affect the path forward. Planning your career's life cycle and using your leadership to intentionally build a diverse workforce, are part of contributing to an equitable and sustainable field of prevention. In this webinar, we will discuss how you can plan your career life cycle from wherever you are now, so moving forward you can support the growth and continued institutional knowledge of the prevention workforce.

Presented by:

Chuck Klevgaard, BSW, CSPP - Education Development Center

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/88462595545> *click here*

12:00 – 1:30 PM CDT Lunch

1:30 – 2:45 PM CDT Workshops Round 7



How Texas is Addressing the Opioid Crisis



The opioid crisis is a significant public health concern with 1 in 4 Texans reporting they have experienced an overdose or know someone who has. Join this session to learn about how the Texas Targeted Opioid Response is tackling this issue through a comprehensive effort to expand access to prevention, integrated, treatment and recovery support services. Gain valuable insights and discover how you can get involved in combating the opioid crisis in your community.

Presented by:

CheVun Lane, Jose Flores, Kaleigh Becker, MPH, Kasey Strey, ACPS, and Christina Morse Edgar - Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 ATOD Related

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): Domain 5: Public Policy and Environmental Change

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/84048947608> *click here*



You Do You! Risking Self Compassion



Calling all professional compassion givers! You bravely serve others and yet might feel yourself wearing down, or amping up in response to ongoing stressors from various sources. Give yourself permission to exercise compassion towards yourself. Join us for a presentation that includes both research and practices as we explore simple ways to weave self-care into our day-to-day lives.

Presented by:

Fawn Colburn, LPC-S - HCA Healthcare

Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention

IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): 6: Professional Growth and Responsibility

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/86069410969> *click here*

3:15 – 5:00 PM CDT Closing Keynote & Awards

Awards Ceremony

Prevention providers across the state are accomplishing amazing things and we're excited to recognize those accomplishments during this year's Annual Prevention Providers' Meeting.

Closing Keynote

Real Love. We're Searching for Real Love (& a Healthy, Meaningful Life)

In this inspiring keynote, Chloe Hakim Moore will delve into the importance of focusing on wellness in order to achieve success in both personal and professional life. Drawing from her own experiences as a wellness coach and entrepreneur, she will share practical tips and techniques to manage stress and improve resilience, while emphasizing the link between wellness and productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction.



Presented by:

Chloe Hakim-Moore

*Continuing Education Hours: 1.25 Prevention
IC&RC Prevention Domain(s): TBA*

Link to join: <https://carecg.zoom.us/j/83949691219> *click here*

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



**Ricardo Aleman, MSW, ACPS,
LCDC-I - Program Manager**

What do you do? I am the Youth Prevention Program Manager for PBHP. As the YP Program Manager I support the Program Specialist in providing technical assistance and guidance for HHSC funded providers. I also

work with an awesome team on several different projects such as helping to develop statement of works, procurements, programs, and other necessary projects to help carry out the mission of PBHP. In addition to my leadership role, I also serve on the Tribal Liaison Work Group, working with Tribal Community Partners in Texas providing support and technical assistance.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I was hired with HHSC in March of 2020 as a program specialist, providing support and guidance to providers in regions 4, 5, 7, and 8. In September of 2021 I was promoted to my current leadership position.

What brought you to this line of work? My passion for helping people and communities. I have had the pleasure of providing direct services for over 15 years, personally seeing how programs such as ours help to change lives. Having the opportunity to work on this level allows me to help develop programs that aim to improve the lives of the people we serve.

What is your favorite thing about your job? My favorite thing about my job is getting to work with such an awesome team of smart, fun, and eager individuals. Each member of the PBHP team is passionate about the work that we do and strive each day to better the lives of people across Texas.

What are your interests outside of work? In my spare time I like to travel with my family. We have a family vacation once a year where we take a road trip across several states.

One fun fact about you? I used to have long hair in my late teens into my early 20s.



**Willie Armstead Jr., MA
Program Specialist**

What do you do? I am Program specialist and provide programmatic oversight and technical assistance to Youth Prevention Programs (YPs) in regions 1, 2, and 3.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I have 11 years working in Travis County working with at risk youth and working alongside CPS and providing wraparound services for families in need. I have been working with the state for almost a year (July 25, 2023 will be a year).

What brought you to this line of work? Wanting a more administrative role in helping the Texas Families that we serve.

What is your favorite thing about your job? The overall culture and collaboration with the people I work with.

What are your interests outside of work? Attending sporting events and spending time with Family.

One fun fact about you? I can juggle.

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



**Jonelle Battise, MSW, LBSW
Program Specialist**

What do you do? I am the Program Specialist for the Community Coalition Partnerships/ Covid Projects (CCP/COV) and Innovative Healing Centered Projects.

What is your background with the State of Texas? This is my first time working for

the State of Texas, when I worked for my tribe, I did participate in the Tribal TA calls with the State.

What brought you to this line of work? I come from working in the prevention field and working hands on with the community and I enjoyed it. I decided it was time to work behind the scenes and help providers in another way by providing assistance when needed.

What is your favorite thing about your job? I'm still fairly new to my job, but one of my favorite things so far is the Fun Fridays we have as team to connect with one another.

What are your interests outside of work? My interests include spending time with my daughter, cooking, baking, and thrifting.

One fun fact about you? One fun fact about me is, I can speak my tribal language.



**Haley Canada, LMSW, APS
Program Specialist**

What do you do? I am a YP program specialist, I oversee Regions 6, 7 and 9.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I have been with the

State since August 2022.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I have been with the State since August 2022.

What brought you to this line of work? The desire to make a greater impact on young lives and **improve** my community.

What is your favorite thing about your job? Getting to see all the amazing prevention work our providers are doing throughout the State of Texas and working from home.

What are your interests outside of work? I like to spend time with my husband and 3-year-old daughter, spending time in nature, Reading, and watching TV.

One fun fact about you? I love the Olympics and all the random sports we only see every 4 years.

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



Lorena Martinez Figueroa
Executive Assistant

What do you do? I am the Executive Assistant to the SUPPP and PBHP programs.

What is your background with the State

of Texas? I haven't worked with the State for long, and although I am new to the state; I do have over nine years of extensive administrative experience in the Mental Health Field.

What brought you to this line of work? I wanted to be part of a bigger system that contributes to making a change within our community. The SUPPP and PBHP programs are doing this by providing effective initiatives to systematically reduce community substance use problems.

What is your favorite thing about your job? My favorite thing about my job is being able to provide support to a wide range of staff, being able to work towards the same goals, and ultimately achieve them more quickly. It is always a plus when I get to learn about what each program is working on.

What are your interests outside of work? I like to practice spiritual wellness; this could range from joining my congregation every Saturday for a time of worship; or simply dedicating some personal-alone time to engage in meditation.

One fun fact about you? I Love SPICY food-I am the person that is always asking for hot sauce at every single restaurant.



Taja Hereford, MPH
CCP Specialist

What do you do? I am the Community Coalition Partnership Specialist (CCP Specialist) with Texas HHSC. I oversee 43 coalitions that complete work around around substance use prevention in all 11

prevention regions in Texas.

What is your background with the State of Texas? This is my first role with the State of Texas. I have been serving in this position for almost 2 years.

What brought you to this line of work? I wanted to do public health prevention work at the state-level to have a wider reach and a greater impact within communities.

What is your favorite thing about your job? I enjoy my coworkers and all those who I get to connect with in the field. So many awesome people I've come in contact with since being in this role.

What are your interests outside of work? I'm interested in serving my community, enjoying time with friends and family, and living a purpose-filled life.

One fun fact about you? I am a fantastic karaoke participant.

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



**Chris Herndon, MPH,
Program Specialist**

What do you do? I'm the Data Specialist for PBHP! I work with the Data Coordinators at the PRCs to coordinate the Regional Needs Assessments and I'm also the go-to person for data and

evaluation needs from providers and from other members of the PBHP team.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I've been with the State for a few years. I was a Graduate Assistant at the UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston while pursuing my MPH and I've since been with HHSC and PBHP for exactly two years as of June 1st!

What brought you to this line of work? Mental health and substance use have always been health issues near and dear to my heart as a result of personal lived experience and the lived experiences of others I know. I was originally on a career track for counseling, but eventually found myself wanting to have a wider, big picture impact. Public health and prevention were a natural fit for my changing goals and desires!

What is your favorite thing about your job? My fellow PBHP team members! I'm both thrilled and honored to work with a group of people who are passionate, innovative, creative, and, most importantly, deeply caring about mental health and prevention for all Texans.

What are your interests outside of work? I live near Hermann Park in Houston, so I take lots of walks around the park and the close-by trail around Rice. I also enjoy watching video essays on YouTube, reading, playing the ukulele, and recently, making polymer clay jewelry and charms.

One fun fact about you? A YouTube video that I helped create over a decade ago has over 1,000,000 views!



**Claire Jamison, MPH - Manager,
Promotions and Public
Awareness Team**

What do you do? I am the manager of the Public Awareness and Promotions Team within the Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Unit.

What is your background with the State of Texas? My whole career has been with the State of Texas. I first started in 2015 at the Texas Legislature, where I worked at the Texas Senate Research Center for the 83rd and 84th Legislative Sessions. In 2019, after grad school at The University of Texas, I began working for the Department of State Health Services in the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch. I've been with HHSC since September 2021.

What brought you to this line of work? I've always wanted a job where the main goal is to serve and help people who are vulnerable.

What is your favorite thing about your job? My team and coworkers! I love working with a group of caring, supportive, talented, and passionate individuals.

What are your interests outside of work? I spend most weekends hanging with my dog George and reading. I love cooking and finding new and challenging recipes.

One fun fact about you? I was an extra in Friday Night Lights.

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



Samuel E. Johns, MA
Special Projects Coordinator

What do you do? I develop/maintain/improve processes, policies & procedures, tools, etc. and lead/serve on many collaborative work groups with diverse stakeholders on behalf of PBHP and SUPPP in addition to providing project management

to the PBHP team and collaborating on our unit's general work.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I have been with the state for over seven years, I started as a Prevention Program Specialist with DSHS before the transition to HHSC, and now serve as the Special Projects Coordinator with PBHP.

What brought you to this line of work? I studied counseling in grad school, and I've seen the damage SUDs and violence can cause. When I graduated I wanted to get into a field where I could work to prevent these issues before they happen. It's a lot easier to prevent a disaster than to try to rebuild once it has hit.

What is your favorite thing about your job? My coworkers and folks in the field. After them, I like that I get to analyze how things work behind the scenes and come up with creative solutions to problems.

What are your interests outside of work? I enjoy spending time with my family (including four kids), music (playing and listening), writing, outdoor activities, and gaming (particularly board games).

One fun fact about you? I have two office plants that have survived for over six years. That doesn't sound like a big deal, but before coming to this job the longest I'd kept a plant alive was under a year.



Sachin Kamble, MD
Community Development and Training Specialist

What do you do? I am the Community Development and Training Specialist in the Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion (PBHP) unit. I provide technical assistance and

programmatic oversight to the Prevention Resource Centers (PRCs) in all HHSC Regions. I also provide oversight to our training vendor (Texas Prevention Training- CARE Consulting).

What is your background with the State of Texas? I've been with HHSC for over 3 1/2 years. Prior to this position, I worked for a non-profit organization where I was able to engage in Prevention work, primarily focusing on environmental prevention campaigns.

What brought you to this line of work? Prior to coming to the State, I had the opportunity to serve as a Hogg Foundation Fellow, at the University of Texas at Austin. I was able to work in the arena of Public Policy. During my fellowship, my mentor helped me understand the importance of Prevention. I love prevention because by utilizing an upstream approach by addressing root causes rather than symptoms we can prevent substance use in youth. This results in long-term positive outcomes for the community.

What is your favorite thing about your job? Working with both our internal and external stakeholders. I am amazed by my team and their constant passion in our line of work. Working with Providers also makes my day due to the fact that they are doing great work in their respective communities.

What are your interests outside of work? Art, theatre, dancing, and listening to music. I also love tennis, both playing and watching it.

One fun fact about you? I love animation. My favorite TV show is the Simpsons.

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



Adam Kindred, MPH - CBHP Strategic Growth Specialist

What do you do? Support the PBHP unit's strategic growth and implementation of various complex strategies related to COVID-19.

What is your background with the State of Texas? I have lived in Texas and worked with HHSC for about 3 years. My family was looking to move somewhere warmer than Wisconsin and we thought Texas looks hot. :)

What brought you to this line of work? I had been working in the non-profit sector for about 6 years and wanted the opportunity to have a larger scale impact on public health.

What is your favorite thing about your job? The opportunity to help communities throughout Texas reconnect and heal.

One fun fact about you? I should tell you about my amazing family... but I am a beach volleyball athlete and coach indoor junior's club volleyball.



Victoria Moreno, MPH, CHES, APS Program Specialist

What do you do? I am a Program Specialist in the Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion (PBHP) unit and I provide technical assistance and programmatic oversight to youth prevention

programs (YPs) in HHSC regions: 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11. I also oversee the Annual Synar Survey and Report, the Tobacco Enforcement Program, The Community Prevention Program and work closely with the Tobacco Prevention Coordinators housed in the Prevention Resource Centers (PRCs).

What is your background with the State of Texas? I've been with HHSC for about a year and a half. Prior to this position, I worked as a Tobacco Prevention Coordinator at the PRC in Region 3.

What brought you to this line of work? The work of my colleagues and other preventionists alike, never ceases to amaze me. I admire prevention because of our ability to create life-long change among those we serve and build resilient communities for generations to come.

What is your favorite thing about your job? My favorite thing about my job is meeting with providers and listening in on all of the marvelous, innovative activities they are facilitating in their communities.

What are your interests outside of work? Outside of work, my interests include: reading, journaling, and playing with my puppy.

One fun fact about you? I've skydived a few times and absolutely loved it!

The Texas HHSC Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Team



Kelly Schultz, MPH
Director

What do you do? I'm the Director for the Prevention and Behavioral Health Promotion Unit.

What is your background with the State of Texas? My first position out of graduate school was as the Prevention Specialist for the I Tobacco Prevention and Control in San Antonio. This program was funded by DSHS, and this was the start of the 12 year of my career working on both the local and state level in non-profits and state government, as a recipient of state and federal grants. I've worked a state funded provider implementing direct service programs, as a vendor providing training and technical assistance to state funded grantees, and as a state employee. I'm an almost five-year government employee, with three and half of those years serving as the Prevention Coordinator for the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch at DSHS. I joined HHSC in August 2022 and I've very excited and honored to be leading a team of passionate staff and providers to improve our prevention system throughout Texas.

What brought you to this line of work? I've always had a passion for prevention. My father is a person in long-term recovery (33 years), and I have a personal mission to focus on this side of public health. In 2011, I completed my practicum in Brazil working with under-resourced communities in Espirito Santo, educating the community members on drug and alcohol. That summer shaped my entire career to focus on substance use prevention and I haven't looked back since.

What is your favorite thing about your job? I've always looked at my work as one big puzzle. And every day we are trying to put the pieces together to identify the root causes and the strategies we can take as a state to solve this problem. I enjoy that every day it's a little bit of strategy, creativity, tenacity, collaboration, and patience.

What are your interests outside of work? You can often find me, my husband, and fur-baby, Loki, hiking trails throughout Texas. But I won't turn away a brunch date or pizza and reality TV/movie night. My spare time is often spent with family and friends and spoiling my four nieces. But recently my current interests have been lots of home improvement activities. But whenever possible, I love finding time to travel, cook new recipes, reading, and getting back into boxing and cycling.

One fun fact about you? I have of goal of traveling to all 50 states, and I currently have 38 under my belt!

APPM Presenters



Kyle Barrington, PhD – Zajonc Corporation

Dr. Barrington has over 30 years' experience in the field of substance abuse prevention and treatment. His experiences include being a substance abuse counselor, director of a dual-diagnosis hospital unit for adults and youth, director of an emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth, and evaluator for local and statewide organizations. Dr. Barrington has extensive experience evaluating the impact of alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs and practices. He has five published, peer-reviewed, articles, has been quoted in several scholarly articles, and has conducted over 200 program evaluations.



Kaleigh Becker, MPH - Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Kaleigh is the Prevention Lead for the Texas Targeted Opioid Response program at Health and Human Services Commission. With a passion for public health, she oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of large-scale and high-impact programs aimed at preventing opioid misuse and overdose. Kaleigh holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Florida State University and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Colorado at Denver.



Sherry Bobo, LCSW-S – UT Arlington-Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies

Sherry Bobo, LCSW-S started her career with the VA System counseling veterans with PTSD and SUD. She focused her career on trauma and addiction. She oversees the Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies (CARS), a research center and intern training site for University of Texas at Arlington's School of Social Work. She has been an adjunct professor at UT Arlington for 11 years. where she teaches prevention, intervention and treatment with SUD. She also provides CEU presentations throughout the area.



Dr. Adolph Brown, III –

Dr. Adolph Brown, III is an American urban and rural school educator, author, research-scientist, businessman, and keynote speaker. He is also the co-host of the ABC show "The Parent Test." He is a servant-leader at heart and is admired around the world for his simple and direct "Real Talk," and powerful, universal and timeless teachings. Dr. Brown is best known for inspiring all who hear him to learn, laugh and lead. He credits much of his success to the luxury of humble beginnings of being reared by a single parent mother in abject poverty of the inner city housing projects. Young Adolph often received a respite when he was sent to spend summers with his grandfather in rural farming country, and when he was sent to the library for time-outs in elementary school. Adolph became the first in his family of five to participate in Head Start, graduate high school, and attend college. Nowadays as a Master Teacher, Dr. Adolph Brown shines in the classroom and in research. He is in the top 1% of world-class scholar teachers based on peer-reviews, nominations, teaching performance, teaching awards, published evaluations and ratings from American's best schools, colleges and universities. Dr. Brown is also the author of acclaimed books, including the international mental wellness best seller, *Two Backpacks, Championship Habits*; and the education classic - *Real Talk*.



Alton Tiger Burton – Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse (BVCASA)

Alton Tiger Burton is the Prevention Services Director for The Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse in Bryan, Texas. Tiger has worked with youth for over 15 years through education, mentoring and one on one counseling. His expertise is in community mobilization; specifically building community based action oriented coalitions; positive youth development and engagement; and tobacco prevention and cessation. Programs that Tiger oversee include two community coalitions, VKOT and CASAP Blinn as well as the PRC 7. He is a facilitator who travels the state providing trainings and workshops on youth engagement and positive youth development! He is a Robert Wood Johnson fellow. In 2019 VKOT (Vikings Kicking Out Tobacco), the youth organization that he helped build and oversee, was recognized by The Campaign for Tobacco - Free Kids as the National Group Youth Advocates of the Year!



Fawn Colburn, LPC-S – HCA Healthcare

Fawn Colburn is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Board approved Supervisor, Credentialed Mediator and Certified Sandtray Therapist with the Institute of Play Therapy. She founded and continues to facilitate Corpus Christi Medical Center Bayview's Women's IOP in Corpus Christi, Tx. She has been with HCA over a decade and has pioneered formal research projects in collaboration with Texas A&M Corpus Christi, involving counselors and nurses in training and Trauma Informed Care based Sandtray protocols. She hopes to empower everyone to be a bit kinder to themselves.



Laura Dosanjh, PhD, MSSW – University of Texas Steve Hicks School of Social Work

Laura Dosanjh is a first-year doctoral student at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin. Laura spent the last eight years in clinical practice working with individuals with concurrent disorders (mental health diagnosis, PTSD, substance use disorders). Her research focuses on the impact of childhood adversity and trauma in youth and adults including stress responsivity, emotion regulation, and mental health outcomes. Additional areas of interest include resilience and intergenerational dynamics.



Christina Morse Edgar – Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Christina Morse Edgar is an Opioid Generalist with the Health and Human Services Texas Targeted Opioid Response Program. Christina began her service in public health by working in the HIV/STD field over twenty years ago. After working in the non-profit sector she transitioned to the Department of State Health services in HIV/STD programming and eventually joining the TTOR team.



Jonathan Edwards, MEd, LPC, CPS

Jonathan Edwards is the program director for Hub City Outreach Center, a Counselor Intern at Garza County Juvenile Center and provides Direct Care at the Texas Boys Ranch. Jonathan provides prevention education for at-risk youth and their families, AOD and Crisis counseling, and direct care for youths in the foster system. After receiving his master's degree in Mental Health Counseling at Texas Tech University, Jonathan began working on his doctorate at Texas Tech University in Counselor Education. In addition to this career and academic pursuits, Jonathan enjoys writing books, reading, playing video games, and mentoring youth.



Erin Ficker , MPAFF, CSPS – Education Development Center

Erin Ficker is an expert in substance misuse prevention, an accomplished training and technical assistance (T/TA) provider, an experienced project leader, and a certified senior prevention specialist. She brings extensive expertise in supporting continuous quality improvement (CQI), designing and delivering engaging professional learning, and providing comprehensive TA. For over 17 years, she has built the capacity of clients to perform prevention work effectively using evidence-based programs, practices, and policies. Ms. Ficker holds an MPA in Domestic and Social Policy from the University of Texas-Austin and a BA in Sociology from The Evergreen State College. She received a PMD Pro Certification from APMG International and holds a Certified Senior Prevention Specialist (CSPS) through the Illinois Certification Board, Inc.



Carie Fletcher – Bay Area Council on Drugs & Alcohol (BACODA)

Carie D. Fletcher is currently the Director of Programs at The Bay Area Council on Drugs & Alcohol (BACODA). She has 30 years of experience in substance use prevention, intervention, and treatment in both community-based and residential programming. Mrs. Fletcher has worked for BACODA for 19 years. During her career there, she has served as a director under four different BACODA departments (Coalitions, Youthworks, CORE Services, and Life Recovery Services.) She is passionate about providing quality services and focused on raising public awareness in the areas of prevention, intervention, and treatment of substance use disorders and addiction.



Jose Flores – Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Jose Flores is the Recovery Support Services Lead for the Texas Targeted Opioid Response program at Health and Human Services Commission. He is a strong advocate for individuals living with substance use and mental health conditions and conveys his own lived experience to any environment, to break the stigma of persons in recovery and the formerly incarcerated. He oversees projects aimed at providing long-term recovery support services to increase engagement and retention in treatment. Jose is a graduate of the San Antonio College where he earned an Associates of Applied Sciences in Human Services w/ a Specialization in Addictions Counseling, as well as The University of Texas A&M-San Antonio, where he earned a B.A.A.S in Social Sciences.



Cindy Garza, ACPS - Hub City Outreach Center

Cindy Garza is an Advanced Certified Prevention Specialist. Mrs. Garza is currently the Program Director for Hub City Outreach Center. She has a master's degree from Texas Tech University in Human Development and Family Studies. Cindy conducted research on foster care and wrote her Master's Thesis on "Foster Youth Aging Out of Foster Care and Their Relationships with Caregivers". Cindy has worked in prevention for three years and provides prevention education for at-risk youth and their families. She has a passion for working with foster youth that began when aged out of foster care and found that she wanted to make a difference for other foster youth. Cindy is working on adding life skill classes for foster youth and at-risk youth to provide additional programming and services. Cindy enjoys working with her church's children's ministry and spending time with her husband, family, and two fur babies.



Chloe Hakim-Moore

Chloe Hakim-Moore is an internationally acclaimed social impact designer, author, influencer, sociologist, and entrepreneur. To date, she has led over \$2 Billion in social impact systems transformations- all designed to deepen personal wellness; interpersonal resilience; community safety & abundance; and human + civil rights. In 2020, Forbes called Chloe "a revolutionary changing the face of business" and named her to their renowned Forbes 30 under 30 list. Gracing stages around the world, Chloe has delivered a viral TEDx Talk; spoken alongside Nobel Peace Prize Nominees, trained multi-national corporations on well-being, social impact, & more. She also serves on faculty for Salzburg Global's New Public Policy Fellowship- Europe. As a practitioner, Chloe seeks to fuse social responsibility and the skills to do no harm into the daily life of normal people. She's on a mission to activate a wave of social impact leaders who have the bandwidth, resources, and support to lead and not burn out. She launched The Hakim-Moore Agency to catalyze big conversations and guide organizations through the



Nicole Holt - Texans for Safe and Drug Free Youth (TxSDY)

Nicole Holt serves as CEO of Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth (TxSDY), a statewide non-profit dedicated to creating healthier and safer communities where alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs have no place in the lives of youth. During Nicole's nearly 15 years in this role, TxSDY has expanded its ability to train and support Texas coalitions and advocate for state and local policy change. She serves as a founding member of the U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance. She received a B.A. in Political Science with an emphasis on poverty and environmental policy from Luther College in Iowa.



Sade Jones - SADEIZM Movement Alchemy

Sade M Jones is an award winning performing artist, choreographer and director, certified Trauma Informed Yoga Facilitator, Social Psychologist, griot and healer. She specializes in mind-body connectivity, cultural discourse, artistic advocacy and identity engineering. Her work lives in the interdisciplinary artistic praxis. Her expertise includes psychology, dance|theatre, cultural advocacy and the healing arts. She has her own practice, SADEIZM Movement Alchemy for creative, corporate, and healing programming. She fuses dance with yoga and psychology to curate artistic, mindful and culturally relevant ways for individuals and groups to embody innate wholeness and address otherwise 'charged' topics in a heartfelt yet honest way. Her work is heralded as "cathartic, genuine, provocative and beautiful."



Chuck Klevgaard, BSW, CSPS - Education Development Center

Chuck Klevgaard is a nationally recognized expert in substance misuse prevention, public health, and school-based health. Drawing on his experience in collective impact and prevention-focused partnerships, he builds the capacity of states, tribes, schools, communities, and cities to use evidence-based substance misuse prevention and intervention strategies. He specializes in behavioral health support, training and technical assistance; and evidence-based alcohol, opioid, and substance misuse programs and policies. Klevgaard, a Certified Senior Prevention Specialist through the Illinois Certification Board, Inc., holds a BSW from Minnesota State University Moorhead.



Che'Vun Lane – Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Che'Vun Lane is the Treatment Lead for the Texas Targeted Opioid Response program at Health and Human Services Commission. She is enthusiastic about behavioral health and public health issues and is passionate about individuals accessing treatment services. She oversees MOUD treatment services in the clinic and office-based settings, as well as the implementation of other service delivery models that enable the full spectrum of treatment that facilitates long-term recovery. Che'Vun holds a Bachelor of Science degree and Master of Science degree in Psychology as well as a Master of Public Health degree.



José Minjarez - Aliviane

José Minjarez is the Tobacco Coordinator for Region 10's Prevention Resource Center at Aliviane. He attended La Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez Chihuahua México where he studied Derecho Mexicano and Turismo. He holds a Bachelor's in Marketing at the University of Phoenix. Mr. Minjarez is retired from the City of El Paso, Tx after 21 years of service. He was first employed with the El Paso Health Department's Women Infant and Children Program, or WIC, for 18 years. moving up in the corporate ladder, he was promoted to be supervisor of two clinics for Canutillo, Texas and Fort Bliss, Texas. He received three major recognitions for most participants served in the Fort Bliss Clinic, over 3000 on a monthly basis. He also worked for El Paso Animal Services promoting Title VII (Spay, Neuter and Vaccinate) to avoid overpopulation and zoonosis diseases. Lastly, Mr. Minjarez worked for the El Paso Environmental Services promoting recycling and Code Compliance Ordinances.



Megan Moran - Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

Megan Moran serves as the Tobacco, Asthma, Cancer, and Alzheimer's Branch Manager for the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). In this role, she oversees the efforts of the state's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, Asthma Control Program, Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, and Alzheimer's Disease Program. Prior to joining DSHS in June 2022, she served in various roles with the Florida Department of Health, including Deputy Director of Communications and as a Senior Analyst for the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Health.



Audiel Perez Negron, PharmD – Prescription Drug Misuse Education and Research Center, University of Houston College of Pharmacy

Audiel Perez Negron is a project manager in the Prescription Drug Misuse Education and Research (PREMIER) Center at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy. Mr. Perez-Negron plays a key role in operations management for funded research within the center and is responsible for coordinating data management and project reporting efforts. He has a bachelor's degree in management information systems from the University of Houston and has been a member of the PREMIER Center Team for approximately two years.



Mindy Robertson, BA, ACPS, ICPS - East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ETCADA)

Mindy Robertson hails from West Texas, the land of Taco Villa and the original “Friday Night Lights”. Mindy attended Texas A&M University and the University of Texas at Tyler completing her Bachelor of Arts in English and Theatre. Mindy has called East Texas home for 26 years with seventeen of those years spent teaching middle school Language Arts, Theatre, and UIL. For the past 6 years, she has been with the East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse earning her Advanced Certified Prevention Specialist.



Danial Rodriguez - Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas

Danial Rodriguez works for Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas, as their Tobacco Prevention Coordinator for Prevention Resource Center 11 Program, he has been with agency for 15 years, (since 2008) and has had different roles/titles - Community Liaison, Program Director, PRC 11 Coordinator. He worked for Mujeres Unidas/Women Together from 1996 to 2008, for the Boys and Girls Club of Brownsville as the Assistant Executive Director from 1993 to 1996, and for the Boys and Girls Club of Laguna Madre (Port Isabel) as the Executive Director from 1989 to 1992.



Torrance Sephus - San Antonio Council on Alcohol & Drug Awareness (SACADA)

Torrance Sephus has served as a Youth Prevention Specialist with the San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Awareness since Oct 2015. Currently assigned to providing prevention education to local middle school students.



Jennifer Steele – Texas State University Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement

Jennifer Steele is the Associate Director for the Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement Division at Texas State University’s Texas School Safety Center where she oversees multiple statewide tobacco enforcement and prevention initiatives. Jennifer has been an active professional in the field of substance abuse treatment, prevention, and youth leadership for 30 years, with a focus specific to tobacco prevention and enforcement for the past two decades. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies with a minor in Substance Abuse Studies from Texas Tech University.



Kasey Strey, ACPS, Director of Texas Targeted Opioid Response (HHSC)

Kasey Strey is the Director of the Texas Targeted Opioid Response – a program that aims to reduce overdose death and improve access to care in Texas. She joined the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in 2015 after working six years in the substance misuse prevention field. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin from the School of Social Work. With over 14 years' experience in addressing substance misuse, Kasey is passionate about improving the health and wellness of all Texans.



Joshua Thigpen - Texas State Comptroller's Office

Joshua Thigpen is the Supervisor of the Tobacco Tax, Amusement & Ag/Timber Exemption Section in the Account Maintenance Division of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Josh has over 10 years of service with the State of Texas and is an Austin native.



Tyler Varisco, PhD - Prescription Drug Misuse Education and Research Center, University of Houston College of Pharmacy

Dr. Tyler Varisco is an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes of Policy and Assistant Director for Research Development in the Prescription Drug Misuse Education and Research Center at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy. Dr. Varisco is a registered pharmacist and a trained health services researcher. He holds a Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Texas at Austin and a PhD in Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy from the University of Houston College of Pharmacy. His research focuses primarily on evaluating and improving the quality of care for persons with opioid use disorder. In his prior work, Dr. Varisco has leveraged a variety of primary and secondary data techniques to identify and ameliorate systemic barriers to harm reduction and treatment in provider offices and pharmacies. His work on treatment persistence was used to support elements of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's updated opioid prescribing guideline.



Mollie Vega – Permian Basin Regional Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Mollie Vega has worked for Permian Basin Regional Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Odessa, Texas for 2.5 years as a Tobacco Compliance Coordinator. Mollie graduated from the Odessa Police Academy in 2010 and became an Associated Prevention Specialist in 2022. Mollie is a full-time student at SNHU pursuing a bachelor's degree in public health focusing on Epidemiology. With her law enforcement background and education, she enjoys reaching out to the 30 counties and retailers in Region 9 on tobacco laws and dangers. She enjoys coming up with different methods on how she can help her community. Mollie was born and raised in Odessa: she enjoys spending time with her husband, Edward, and children Joslynn, Jace, and Kai.

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