

Agenda item: Authorize the Administrator to prepare a Personal Services Agreement relating to the development of a public education, communication, and information campaign for the purposes of engaging Nueces County's citizens and key community stakeholders in the County and Hospital District's efforts to combat the opioid epidemic, and address current mental and public health issues in Nueces County.

Presentation and discussion of a ***public education, communication, and information campaign to engage key stakeholders in understanding and supporting the hospital district's efforts to combat opioid, mental health and public health issues.*** The goal is to support the evaluation of all gaps within the mental health services provided by Nueces County. The Communications component will explore communications gaps, means, and methods of communicating with the public, recommending improvements, and formulating a process for ensuring public feedback and engagement as part of the larger evaluation effort.

- Study to gather data from stakeholders for the purposes of making recommendations to Nueces County for the creation of an Action Plan intended to improve our mental health services. The reviewed information will help identify appropriate funding resources in support of a path forward to:
 - Guide decision-making on needed infrastructure;
 - Consider the development of a medical center of excellence in mental health care and treatments; and,
 - Advance strategies to attract the required mental health care professionals to the area.
- Engage the community and build support toward the goal of taking actionable steps to address Nueces County mental health issues.
 - Dedicated website resource, digital and social communications initiatives, public community forums
 - Community updates, news briefings, public education communications channels
 - Implement in 2020

Background:

Addiction and mental health are embedded in local, state and national conversations. Nueces County and the Coastal Bend Region see this issue as one of the most pressing facing our community.

At a December 19 White House Summit on Transforming Mental Health Treatment to Combat Homelessness, Violence & Substance Abuse, President Trump emphasized that his administration is focused on early detection, evidence-based programs and stopping the opioid epidemic, pointing to a recent funding bill providing \$3.9 billion for mental health programs.

Other program participants emphasized the need for community partnerships that can explore unique community needs and come up with policies tailored to those needs. This also helps us connect resources, sharing best practices and tools, and identify and recognize spikes and clusters earlier so that we can take action to prevent further tragic incidents.

The public deserves to understand how to receive access to help, as well as what policy makers are trying to do to address care gaps. Working with Nueces County we as a region can make data-based decisions, and then communicate that data for the public benefit.

Those in need of help shouldn't have to be a danger to themselves or others before receiving treatment.