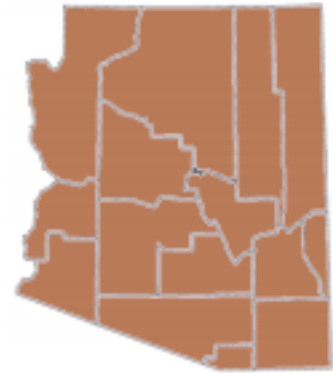


AHCCCS CENTRAL
INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System



2020/2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE MENTALLY ILL

As provided in A.R.S. §41-3804(h), the Central Arizona Independent Oversight Committee for the Mentally Ill (the "Committee") is pleased to present its 2020/2021 Annual Report for your review and consideration. The Report summarizes the Committee's work during fiscal year 2020/2021 as well as anticipated work for the next fiscal year. A more detailed accounting of our activities and the issues that we addressed, is available at the Arizona Department of Administration's web-site: <https://ioc.az.gov/committees/ahcccs> where there are copies of our meeting agendas and a recording of each of our meetings. These recordings serve as our meeting minutes and the record of the committee's activities as required under Arizona's Open Meeting Law, ARS §§ 38-431.01 (B), (C), (D) and -431.03(B)).

To review the mandates outlined in A.R.S. § 41-3804:

Each Committee shall provide independent oversight to:

1. Ensure the rights of clients are protected.
2. Review incidents of possible abuse, neglect or denial of a client's rights.
3. Make recommendations to the appropriate department director and the legislature regarding laws, rules, policies, procedures and practices to ensure the protection of the rights of clients receiving behavioral health and developmental disability services.

The CoVID-19 global pandemic significantly disrupted the Committee's activities. We were still able to hold nine (of a required minimum of 4) meetings in fiscal 2020/2021 all of which were via telephone and video conferencing. A priority of performing site visits to housing where individuals living with serious mental illness reside was put on hold. However, we resumed limited site visits on July 1, 2021.

Training and Education

Because of the ongoing Public Health Emergency (PHE) a number of anticipated projects and goals were necessarily supplanted. The all-volunteer committee decided to focus on gaining a deeper understanding of various components of the SMI delivery system. To this end we held and participated in various training and educational sessions.

1. Presentation by AHCCCS and contractor ABC Housing, Inc. on the AHCCCS provided a continuum of housing available to SMI clients.
2. Workshops on access to the Quality Management portal for reviewing IAD reports.
3. Brief presentation by "Care1st" regarding anticipated withdrawal from serving Central Arizona and their new emphasis on Southern Arizona.
4. Strategic Planning Session facilitated by Ms. Laurie Goldstein, Chair of ASH IOC.

Community Liaison and Coordination Efforts

The Central Arizona IOC for the Mentally Ill increased their coordination/liaison not only with other IOCs but also with other agencies dealing with similar issues.

1. Added the chairs (or their representative) as non-voting advisory members to the Central AZ IOC in order to facilitate resource sharing and collaboration.
2. Participated in the Governor's Task Force on Abuse and Neglect in developing specific responses and roles when dealing with notices and incidents of abuse and neglect.
3. Met quarterly with the other Chairs of Arizona IOCs dealing with the mentally ill in order to better coordinate efforts and simplify bureaucratic issues.
4. Participated in quarterly Cross-Agency IOC Meetings.

Projects and Investigations

The PHE did not interfere with the routine and ongoing evaluation of hundreds of IAD reports as well as associated Seclusion and Restraint, and Quality of Care Resolution reports. Furthermore, other investigations were initiated and tasks completed.

1. Adoption of the Central Arizona IOC Operating Guidelines with approval by the Director of Administration ([CAIOC Operating Guidelines](#)).
2. Initiated a formal review of overcrowding and length of stay issues at CBI Javelina site (put on hold secondary to CoVID PHE).
3. Continued investigation of lack of appropriate involvement of statutory Guardians in the treatment of their SMI wards.

Purposeful Re-Focused Efforts During CoVID.

Pending resumption of site visits, the Committee focused on reviewing hundreds of IAD (Incident, Accident, and Death) reports and being brought up to date on various operational components of the SMI system.

- Revising methods for assignment of reviews of Incident, Accident and Death (“IAD”) reports;
- Training in use of the AHCCCS portal for online access to IADs and techniques to efficiently sort and analyze IAD reports;
- Enhancing communication with other organizations, including reports at each meeting from:
 - Community organizations (e.g., Mental Health America, NAMI, and ACMI) when available.
 - Provider agencies, including the RBHA (Mercy) and RBHA-contracted health plans.
 - Other Arizona IOCs.
- Participation in and Reviewing of the 2020 AHCCCS Incident Review Flowchart, which provides a consistent approach for analysis of incident reports across agencies and sets out the IOCs roles in the incident review process.

Targeted Areas of Focus and Concerns for 2021/2022

The Committee identified targeted areas of focus for its work in the next few months and until full resumption of site visits, which remain the Committee's priority. These areas of focus for 2021/2022 include:

- Understanding members' access to telephone at all housing placements and residential treatment facilities;
- Reviewing members' experiences at psychiatric screening agencies;
- Continuing review of IAD reports with a focus on clarifying what can and should not be redacted as well as attempting to coordinate limited review criteria with other IOCs ;
- Reviewing options to identify unlicensed residential facilities (e.g., boarding homes) where the SMI resides and may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

There are a number of concerns and issues that will be explored as time/manpower permits. Priorities, as noted above, include looking at the placement of SMI individuals in unlicensed group homes where the quality of life cannot be reviewed and where economic and other exploitation may occur. Furthermore, there are issues of current licensed Behavioral Health Residential Treatment facilities purporting to offer levels of service and therapeutic activities that may not even exist or are well below those that were previously offered

through the clinics. This issue needs to be evaluated further. Another issue referenced above is the tracking of IADs; educating the health care organizations about what should and should not be redacted and developing a framework that is beneficial not only to the Committees and the SMI but also to AHCCCS.

The Committee hopes that there will be an annual meeting of all IOCs in the next year, even if virtually. An annual meeting of Arizona's IOCs (As happened yearly for several years) would facilitate all IOC committee members' sharing experiences and developing more informed and efficient methods to discharge their statutory duties in A.R.S. §§ 41-3803 and -3804 and the Arizona Administrative Code in R9-21-105.

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

We are all navigating this new normal together. As we lock arms virtually and try to help one another in the ways we can, our vast world suddenly feels a little smaller and a lot more connected. And for that, we are grateful. Michael Dell, CEO, Dell Technologies

The Committee expresses its appreciation and respect for the diligent, extremely competent work by Larry Allen and the Arizona Department of Administration. From technical support for virtual communications to meeting logistics to compliance advice to facilitating outreach with other IOCs, Mr. Allen has supported the Committee in many ways. The Committee has continued to experience a vast improvement in the relationship between AHCCCS and this Independent Oversight Committee; in large part because of the efforts of the AHCCCS IOC liaison Ms. Fredreka Graham and Quality Management Manager, DHCM C. J. Loiselle. We are grateful.

Respectfully submitted this 31st of August 2021.

Jack L. Potts, M.D.
Chair, (for the Committee)

Current Members

Jack Potts, MD (Medicine, Psychology)- Chair
Marie Raymond (Family Member – Parent, Education) – Vice Chair
Jim Ward (Mental Health) - Secretary
Matthew Moody (Mental Health, Social Work)
Holly Gieszl, Esq. (Law, Health Care Law and Standards)
Joy Green, (Family Member-Parent)
Josh Mozell, Esq. (Law, Mental Health, previous case-manager)
Kathie Roe (Family Member – Parent, Special Education)