

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative – Stakeholder Engagement Plan

March 29, 2022

Centering the voice of children, youth, and families and collaborating with a range of cross-sector partners, stakeholders and experts at the state and community levels are integral to developing a coordinated children and youth behavioral health ecosystem with the potential to improve outcomes.

The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative aims to build a coordinated ecosystem promoting social and emotional well-being, preventing behavioral health challenges, and providing equitable, appropriate, timely and accessible services for existing and emerging behavioral health needs. Impactful work is happening across the state through many agencies, organizations, and partnerships, but changing the trajectories and significantly improving the social and emotional wellbeing of California's children and youth cannot be achieved by working within one entity or sector; collaboration and working with children, youth and families and partners is critical.

The CYBHI will engage stakeholders in order to:

- **Promote shared understanding and transparency of the initiative**, including the process through which the initiative will be developed and opportunities to engage
- **Drive broad inclusive participation** to ensure that ALL perspectives, particularly those from traditionally underserved populations, are taken into account
- **Gather inputs, feedback, and guidance** throughout the course of the initiative to ensure that opportunities and concerns are understood and addressed
- **Partner and empower to co-develop solutions and accelerate the initiative's impact**, focusing on needs and outcomes for children and youth behavioral health and wellness

To that end, this update provides an update on our plans to engage stakeholders with lived and professional experience in the work of reimagining the systems that support behavioral health for California's children, youth, and their families. It includes four sections:

- How stakeholders can get information about the CYBHI
- Overall approach to CYBHI stakeholder engagement
- How we are engaging children, youth, and families specifically
- Summary of stakeholder engagement planned activities

Information About the CYBHI

The CYBHI recently held a webinar to share updates on each workstream of the initiative. The webinar included an overview of the CYBHI, a presentation on the plans and scope of work for each workstream, and information on how we are engaging stakeholders. Here are links to a [recording](#) and [slide deck](#) from the webinar that we hope you will find useful to learn more about the CYBHI.

You can sign up for our stakeholder mailing list by emailing cybhi@chhs.ca.gov.

Overall Approach to CYBHI Stakeholder Engagement

The CYBHI engagement plan includes convening and engaging children, youth, and families, partners across agencies and sectors (e.g., healthcare, education) as well as community partners on the ground and in the field. Engagement will be ongoing throughout the initiative, from the design phase through implementation.

The CYBHI engagement plan focuses on three groups:

- **Children, youth, and families**, including children and youth 25 years of age and younger and their families as the key constituency of the initiative. Engagement with this group is vital to reimagining the ecosystem so that it truly supports and is centered on their strengths, needs, and priorities
- **Cross-sector and inter-agency partners**, including healthcare and education partners, subject matter experts, state, local, and federal agencies, community-based organizations, social services, legislature, philanthropy, academia, and other public and private sector partners. Engagement with these partners is crucial to redesigning how various systems across sectors work and interrelate so we can build a coordinated, integrated ecosystem for the social and emotional wellbeing of California's children and youth
- **Community partners on the ground and in the field**, including California community members interested in children and youth behavioral health (e.g., Californians with professional and/or lived experiences). Engagement through community-level forums is key to ensuring that CYBHI is grounded in and reflects the local efforts and experiences of the diverse communities in California

Stakeholders will have opportunities to engage throughout the planning, design, and implementation of the CYBHI, on both the initiative overall and specific workstream components. Stakeholders will be engaged over time in a variety of ways including through listening sessions, workshops, focus groups, think tanks, surveys, and public input via email accessible on the CYBHI website.

The CYBHI has developed the principles listed below to guide the engagement process and ensure that the approach to engaging stakeholders is:

- **Human-centered**, conducted in a way that centers on the needs of children, youth, and families
- **Broad, diverse, and equitable**, incorporating approaches, formats, and practices that allow for the participation of all groups, particularly traditionally under-represented groups

- **Purposeful and beyond what is already in place**, using existing engagement channels and filling gaps by creating new channels
- **Collaborative and coordinated** across the whole CYBHI effort
- **Embedded into the initiative** from planning and design through implementation phases
- **Innovative** in seeking insights and inputs from other work that can elevate the positive impact on children and youth mental health

Engaging Children, Youth and Families

The CYBHI recently held expert interviews with several youth and family engagement organizations across the state to seek their insights on how CalHHS could embed genuine engagement of children, youth and families in the work of the CYBHI. Building on the learnings from those conversations and related work, **the CYBHI children, youth, and family engagement approach** is to partner with existing organizations that engage children, youth, and families and to build out a broad and diverse state-wide partner network for the initiative. Through this approach, CYBHI is committed to facilitating engagement that will:

- **Bring in strengths of existing organizations** that have experience, expertise and established channels for engaging children, youth, and families
- **Empower youth and families** by providing appropriate compensation for involvement, capability building (e.g., orientation to the subject matter and forums), and avoiding complex, sector-specific language
- **Prepare facilitators (youth and adult)** by providing training to promote effective youth-adult partnerships focusing on strengths and contributions
- **Establish a variety of engagement options** to offer accessible participation (e.g., surveys, focus group) and ongoing engagement models (e.g., working groups, formalized roles)
- **Ensure broad and diverse participation from children, youth, and families** by ensuring accessibility in format and language and culturally sensitive engagement
- **Engage youth in both age/ identity-based groups** conducive to open conversations and **mixed groups** (e.g., youth and adults) conducive to sharing diverse perspectives on system-level topics

In CYBHI youth engagement already underway, youth have expressed their eagerness to be involved and the importance of being part of the initiative:

“I’d help no matter what. This is an important issue for me”

– Age 21, Pomona CA

“I would actively be engaging or participating with them [someone who is working to reimagine the behavioral health system]. I would make sure that they are actively trying to help the people that need it”

– Age 16, Soledad CA

Engagement Focus Areas and Activities

In addition to the engagement of children, youth and families, the stakeholder engagement described above, CYBHI stakeholder engagement also includes the following groups and activities to help advance systems change and reimagine behavioral health for California’s children and youth.

CYBHI cross-sector and inter-agency engagement taps into existing groups and forums to host discussions, convenes additional groups for engagement on specific topics (e.g., equity, prevention, ecosystem models, sustainability), and creates forums (e.g., think tanks, discussion series) for partners to engage on initiative-wide and workstream-specific topics.

The approach to engage community partners on the ground and in the field focuses on creating opportunities to engage that are open to a broader audience, including providing input on the initiative and its workstreams through regional listening sessions, CYBHI webpages, email correspondence, and other opportunities to comment.

Children, youth, and families as well as cross-sector, inter-agency, and community partners will have opportunities to engage throughout the planning, design, and implementation of the CYBHI, on both the initiative overall and its workstreams. The initiative comprises multiple workstreams led by five departments and offices of CalHHS – Department of Health Care Services, Department of Health Care Access and Information, Department of Managed Health Care, California Department of Public Health, and Office of the Surgeon General.

Initiative-wide engagement efforts will focus on shaping the overall CYBHI direction (including defining initiative outcomes) and addressing topics that have implications across the initiative (including equity, prevention and wellness, sustainability, system-level barriers and gaps in BH supports and services). In addition, engagement efforts will inform planning, design, and implementation at a workstream level.

The table below summarizes planned engagement efforts in the near term and going forward.

Group	Near term activities (Through May '22)	Future activities (June '22 and beyond) <i>To be refined</i>
Children, youth, and families	Focus groups on CYBHI outcomes Initial focus groups and interviews on workstreams	Surveys, interviews, focus groups, design sessions, and ongoing engagement opportunities on initiative-level topics and workstreams
Cross-sector and interagency partners	Discussions with existing groups on outcomes Targeted engagement on initiative-level topics Engagement forums (e.g., think tank, listening tours) on workstreams	Targeted engagement on initiative-level topics Engagement forums on workstreams
Community partners on the ground and in the field	Regular updates and opportunity to submit e-mail input	Listening sessions on outcomes (through end of summer 2022) and initiative-level topics Website updates and opportunities to comment

Upcoming Engagement Activities

ACTIVITY	WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Focus groups on CYBHI outcomes	Children, youth, and families	Focus groups to help define CYBHI outcomes	April-May 2022
Discussions with existing groups and forums on CYBHI outcomes	Cross-sector and interagency partners, including Behavioral Health Task Force	Facilitated discussions to help define CYBHI outcomes	March-May 2022
Interviews, surveys, focus groups, and working groups on behavioral health workforce <i>(workstreams: Broad behavioral health workforce capacity; School behavioral health coach workforce)</i>	Cross-sector and interagency partners, children, youth, and families	Interviews, surveys, focus groups, and working groups with regional representation to understand behavioral health workforce current landscape, needs, and gaps	March-May 2022

ACTIVITY	WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Think Tanks to inform workstream design <i>(workstreams: Behavioral health virtual services and e-consult platform; Evidence-based interventions and community-defined promising practices)</i>	Experts from academia, government, and industry; youth and community members	Approximately 5-8 half day workshops	April-July 2022 – Applications were due on March 23, 2022
Listening tours to inform workstream design <i>(workstreams focused on school-linked behavioral health services and fee schedule)</i>	Cross-sector and inter-agency partners with an initial focus on education organizations	Discussion sessions to collect insights on current state needs, gaps, and priorities	April-May 2022
Community listening sessions on CYBHI outcomes and systems changes	Community members and partners interested in children and youth behavioral health	Sessions hosted throughout the state to help define CYBHI outcomes and identify key systems changes to be addressed	June–August 2022

This update is part of our regular series to share information on an ongoing basis with our partners and with anyone who has an interest in the behavioral health of California’s children and youth. As progress is being made across the initiative, each update will highlight a particular topic to give an overview on.

We welcome input on the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative. If you would like to provide thoughts or comments or sign up to receive our regular updates, please email CYBHI@chhs.ca.gov.

In Partnership,

Melissa Stafford Jones

Director, Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative

We need your help: Sign up to become a DHCS Coverage Ambassador to help raise awareness about how people can keep their Medi-Cal health coverage once the #COVID19 public health emergency ends: <http://apps.dhcs.ca.gov/lists/subscribe/default.aspx?list=ambassadors>