

The First Steps In Doing Our Part – Eliminate the Wait

Speakers

Dr. Jennie M. Simpson is the State Forensic Director at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and a nationally recognized policy expert on cross-sector collaborations between behavioral health and criminal justice systems. In addition to oversight and coordination of forensic services, programs, and policies, Dr. Simpson leads innovative statewide policy and technical assistance initiatives. A specialist in diversion programs and policy, Dr. Simpson has provided training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies, consulted with law enforcement leadership on behavioral health, and conducted research on behavioral health and law enforcement collaborations. Dr. Simpson received a Ph.D. in medical anthropology from American University.

Dr. Jennie Simpson



Kristi Taylor



Kristi Taylor is the Executive Director of the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH). She has over 25 years of experience as an attorney and policymaker. After receiving a BBA with Honors in Finance from the McCombs School of Business and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Texas School of Law, Taylor represented children and parents in the child welfare system for seven years.

In 2006, Taylor was selected by the Supreme Court of Texas to create the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families. She later served as a Staff Attorney and Assistant Director of the Children's Commission. In 2017, Ms. Taylor spearheaded the planning for a new judicial commission on mental health and was named the Executive Director in 2018.

Kristi Taylor presented the Eliminate the Wait toolkit to a law enforcement audience at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals conference. She explained the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) and how it can be used to identify statewide problems. Taylor also explained the Eliminate the Wait initiative, a partnership between JCMH and HHSC, from a law enforcement perspective. Steps include: Plan for a Pre-Arrest Diversion and Crisis Response, Create a Culture of Diversion First, and Lead Through Partnerships.

