

### **Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses Advisory Committee**

This is an informational agenda item. The Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses, or TPAPN, Advisory Committee meeting was held virtually on Friday, September 2, 2022. Board staff personnel in attendance were Tony Diggs, Director of Enforcement, Dusty Johnston, General Counsel, and Denise Benbow, Nursing Consultant for Enforcement.

#### *TPAPN Program*

The Advisory Committee was given an update on the TPAPN Program by Roland Rodriguez, TPAPN Team Lead (the program manager had resigned and is no longer with the program). In the last quarter, there were no major changes to the program and no major projects. Outreach activities include the lunch and learn presentations with continuing nursing education offered, and one of the case managers presented information about TPAPN to a medical center in San Angelo. The last in person Peer Support Partner Workshop was in 2019. The next Peer Support Partner Workshop will be in person on October 28, 2022, at the Arboretum Embassy Suites in Austin.

A case manager recently retired and had been processing the new cases. Roland Rodriguez informed the committee a case manager coordinates the incoming or new cases, and another is trained. TPAPN plans to hire a case manager dedicated to processing the new cases. TPAPN is still seeking a program director and has support during this interim time. It is challenging to find a program director candidate with mental health/psychiatric background and a leadership background.

#### *Peer Support Partners*

TPAPN participants may choose to have a peer support partner as an option in the program. As of August 31, 2022, there were 133 peer support partners. The number of peer support partners without a participant has increased and is currently 41. There are 155 participants with a peer support partner. The participant to peer support partner ratio is just over 1 (1.16 participants per peer support partner).

#### *Advisory Committee*

The committee discussed participation rates, and the impact of the pandemic on nursing and substance use disorders. Some thoughts shared within the committee related to the pandemic disruptions and staff shortages, with increased reports to the Board of Nursing rather than to TPAPN. When the issues go unaddressed to the point of impairment on the job, the reports are then required to come to the Board of Nursing instead of to TPAPN. There is the option for the Board to then refer the nurse to TPAPN. The committee also discussed stigma, and the impacts of the pandemic on faculty and nursing students.

The next TPAPN Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled to occur on Friday December 2, 2022. This is a non-action item for informational purposes only.