

Courageous Conversations

SHERMAN, March 26, 2014 – Susan B. Thomas, PhD, Executive Director of Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) commended 211 Texoma for facilitating Courageous Conversations, a training workshop held yesterday at TCOG, which focused on the impacts of institutional racism.

Presented by Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Center for the Elimination of Disproportionalities and Disparities (CEDD), the 3-hour training session offered insight into how racism adversely affects poor communities and communities of color.

"The primary goal of CEDD is achieving equity for Texas' most vulnerable citizens," says Thomas. "I am pleased that our 2-1-1 program teamed up with CEDD to provide this important training to social service professionals in the region." Thomas also noted that several TCOG staff members attended the training and stated, "This type of training helps us understand our client base and the various issues they may face in their day-to-day lives. With improved understanding, we enhance and strengthen our customer service."

The workshop was conducted by Maxine Jones-Robinson and Rebecca Kerst, specialists for the Center for the Elimination of Disproportionalities and Disparities. Their mission is to partner with Health and Human Service Commission agencies and external stakeholders; other systems and communities to identify and eliminate disproportionality and disparities impacting children, families and vulnerable citizens. Disproportionality is the over representation of a particular group, in this particular case, in the social services system.

Participants examined systems data by race and ethnicity to show that when data is controlled for poverty and single family homes, the common factor in the data is race. Continuing education for multiple disciplines was offered for this event by Texas Health and Human Services.

The Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities serves as a leader in addressing the systemic factors and identifying practice improvements that address the disproportionate representation and disparate outcomes for children, their families, and other vulnerable citizens within the Texas Health and Human Services System.

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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