

Joe Lombardo
Governor



Richard Whitley,
MS
Director

**DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

 **NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



Cody Phinney,
MPH
Administrator

Ihsan Azzam,
Ph.D., M.D.
Chief Medical
Officer

**COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
with the DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (DPBH)
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 16, 2023
9:00 AM to Adjournment**

Meeting Locations:

This meeting was held online and by phone.

Online Meeting Link:

[Click here to join the meeting.](#)

Phone Conference Number

(775)321-6111 Phone Conference ID: 455 976 977#

1. Call to Order/ Roll Call – Braden Schrag, Chair

Commissioners Present:

- Braden Schrag, Chair
- Lisa Ruiz-Lee, Vice Chair
- Natasha Mosby, LCSW
- Gregory Giron Psy.D.
- Jasmine Cooper, CPC
- Dan Ficalora, CPC

Commissioners Excused:

- Lisa Durette, M.D.
- Arvin Operario, RN

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Staff in Attendance:

Kelli Knutzon, Executive Assistant, DPBH; Sherry Stevens, Administrative Assistant III, DPBH; Brianna Anderson, Administrative Assistant III, DPBH; Kayla Villegas, Administrative Assistant III, DPBH; Pierron Tackes, Deputy Attorney General, DPBH; Bill Gorman, Administrative Assistant III, DPBH; Janice Hadlock-Burnett, Bureau Chief, DPBH; Dawn Cribb, Public Information Officer, DPBH; Teresa Hayes, Health Program Manager III, DPBH; Erin Dixon, Deputy District Health Officer, NNPH; Daniel Griffith, Administrator, Spring Mountain Medical Center; Linda Anderson, Public Health Policy Analyst, NPHF; Lauara Lisk, Wendover Ambulance; Brooke Maylath, Health Facility Inspector, DPBH; Joseph Filippi, Management Analyst II, DHHS; Kevin Dick, Washoe County; Jon Pennell, Chair of Board of Health, DPBH; Peter Taillac; Lea Case, VP of Belz Case Government Affairs; Alex Tanchek, Silver State Government Relations; Tedd McDonald, Medical Director; Andria Cordovez Mulet, SNHD.

2. Public Comment:

There was no public comment at this time.

3. For Possible Action: Discussion and possible approval of meeting minutes from October 19, 2023 – Commission

Chair Schrag asked for a motion of approval for the minutes from the Commission on Behavioral Health meeting, held on October 19, 2023.

MOTION: Natasha Mosby

SECOND: Jasmine Cooper

PASSED: Unanimously

4. For Possible Action: Review and possible approval of the 2023 Commission Bylaws final draft or corrections if commission deems necessary – Commission and Support Staff

Chair Braden Schrag asked Sherry Stevens for any summary or activity with the 2023 Commission Bylaws final draft.

Sherry Stevens highlighted what the commissioners discussed last meeting in October of 2023, which was, including the NRS link into the powers and duties section so that when/ if an individual clicks on the link, they will be able to review the duties and powers. Sherry also mentioned that the commissioners also discussed article two, three and four which would allow the commission to make recommendations for new appointment recommendations at the end of the current chair and vice chairs four-year term, regardless of date or year. Sherry explained that the attached final draft would continue as the final draft, if there were no more requested changes or corrections.

Chair Schrag asked the commissioners if they had any comments or concerns regarding the bylaws.

The commissioners present at the meeting did not have any comments or concerns regarding the 2023 Bylaws. Chair Schrag asked for a motion to approve the 2023 Commission Bylaws Updates.

MOTION: Jasmine Cooper

SECOND: Gregory Giron

PASSED: Unanimously

5. For Possible Action: Discussion and possible approval of the following consent agenda items – Commission

a. Approval of agency director reports

1. Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS)

Julie Lindesmith, Agency Manager of Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, highlighted the agency's forensic diversion program. Julie explains that her agency has been working closely with Washoe County to look over the waitlist of individuals waiting on forensic services. She says that this was started in March of 2023, so the concept is still relatively new. Julie asked if anyone had any questions regarding the Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services update.

No questions were asked.

2. Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (SNAMHS)

Susan Lynch, Hospital Administrator for Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, pointed out that there has been an increase in the vacancy rate for staff at this agency because there has been recent approval to add thirty-seven new forensic positions to their roster. Susan explains that they are actively recruiting for these vacant positions. Susan asked if anyone has questions regarding the Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services report.

Cody Phinney, Administrator of the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, added that herself and many of the other attendees on the meeting will be attending an Interim Finance Committee meeting to ask for additional resources for a variety of services to address forensic mental health services. She says that there is a wait to get into competency restoration services. Cody explains that addressing this is her top priority.

3. Lakes Crossing Center

Drew Cross, Agency Director at Lakes Crossing, touches on what was previously brought up by Susan Lynch and Cody Phinney. He explains that there is a lot of movement behind forensics, but more specifically behind Lake's Crossing Diversion Program. Drew explains that his agency has a clinician who goes into the Washoe Jail, and visits clients on the Lake's Crossing waitlist. Then, based on the clinician's judgement, he determines if the patients could be treated outside of the forensic pathway, and if so, they work with the agency's civil side to find services that are fitting for their needs. This proudly states that this program has been very successful, and it is helping to reduce the Washoe County wait list. It has been decided that Lake's Crossing will be extending this program into the rural counties, the agency is

currently getting a clinician cleared to be able to visit the various county jails and perform the same assessments, so the rural county waitlist can be reduced.

Drew Cross also mentions that Lake's Crossing has also had a slight staffing improvement, with a previous vacancy rate of 23%, to now a 21% vacancy rate.

Commissioner Dan Ficalora followed up this update with a question about tracking of the compliance rates with engaging in treatment if the patients are triaged out of the criminal justice system. He asks if there is any sort of tracking these patients to see if they end up going back into the criminal justice system after being diverted.

Drew Cross responds to Dan Ficalora and reminds all commissioners that the serious mental issues that these patients suffer from are typically chronic and lifelong challenges. With that being said, Drew continues to state that there is a small percentage who have found their way back into the system. He says, of the forty individuals that have been identified in Washoe County, twenty-nine percent have been successfully diverted. He explains that this number of people, if not being helped by this program, would have been waiting in jail, so these wrap-around services have been very helpful.

Drew also highlights that there is an unpredictable element, which is adherence to any sort of treatment, as it is optional.

4. Sierra Regional Center

Julian Montoya, Seirra Regional Center Agency Manager, introduced himself and explained that his agency is seeing an improvement in terms of the agency's staffing. For example, they had roughly forty applicants for administrative support positions.

5. Desert Regional Center

Gujuan Caver, Agency Manager of the Desert Regional Center of Community Services. Gujuan explains that there have been no significant changes since the last report given in September for the committee. Although, he says that the job fairs that their agency has been attending have brought positive outcomes in terms of staffing at the center.

Marina Valerio, Agency Manager for Desert Regional Center, gave an update on their staffing, explaining she just processed new hire applications to the agency's Human Resources department. Marina also gave statistics for the agency's new record keeping, which has become all electronic, they are at ninety-nine percent for their entry in hopes of reaching one hundred percent.

Chair Braden Schrag asked Marina why she thinks it is that their numbers for employment have spiked up.

Marina Valerio expressed that she believes it is because when the administrative team did the budget build, they were able to bring one of the positions for Desert Regional Center to a higher grade than it was previously.

6. Rural Regional Center

Roswell Allen, Program Manager for Rural Regional Center, introduced himself and explained that the agency he works for has had success with their staffing, as they are bringing more people in.

Roswell explained that they have an agency in Utah that will be closing and did not give much notice. He said that it is important for their agency to help support the individuals who have been working there for many years, by giving them a place to go once it comes time for them to shut down.

Chair Braden Schrag asked for a motion to approve the agency reports.

MOTION: Jasmine Cooper

SECOND: Gregory Giron

PASSED: Unanimously

6. For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding the creation of and possible appointment of chair for the annual Governor's letter sub-committee per Commission on Behavioral Health Bylaws, section VI #2.a – *Commission and Support Staff*

Chair Braden Schrag introduced item number six and explained that every year the Commission on Behavioral Health creates a subcommittee, that is chaired by one of the commissioners to make sure

everything goes as planned with the submittal of the annual governor's letter. Chair Schrag asked the commissioners if there is anyone who would like to volunteer to be the chair of the subcommittee. Commissioner Gregory Giron suggested that instead of asking only the commissioners present at the meeting, it would be possible to send out this request to all the members. Braden Schrag tabled the action on this item until the next meeting, so that an email could be sent to all the commissioners.

7. For Possible Action: Discussion and review of materials regarding the drafting of the Governor's letter for 2024 – Commission

Chair Braden Schrag introduced the agenda item and expressed that he would like to focus on the same areas in the twenty- twenty-four letter, as the commission did in the twenty- twenty-three letter. He then opened the floor for discussion on this matter.

Commissioner Gregory Giron agreed with Braden Schrag.

Braden Schrag suggested for the commissioners to look over the twenty-twenty-three letter to the governor and see where the letter can be improved and what should stay as it, this will ensure the letter does not need to be started from scratch.

8. For Possible Action: Review and possible approval of Department of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) Clinical Policies – *Dr. Leon Ravin, Statewide Psychiatric Medical Director, DPBH*
a. Therapeutic Plasma- Serum Level Guide for Antipsychotics and Mood Stabilizers
b. Harm Reduction Naloxone Policy

Dr. Leon Ravin gave an update on Department of Public and Behavioral Health policies to the Commissioners. Please see this presentation at the following link: [DRAFT Therapeutic Plasma-Serum Level Guide for Antipsychotics and Mood Stabilizers \(nv.gov\)](#) and [DRAFT Harm Reduction Naloxone Policy \(nv.gov\)](#)

Chair Braden Schrag asked for a motion to approve the clinical policies as presented by Dr. Leon Ravin.

MOTION: Jasmine Cooper

SECOND: Gregory Giron

PASSED: Unanimously

9. For Possible Action: Review and possible approval of fiscal year 2024 rates for DPBH services at Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, and Rural clinics with response to questions from fiscal year 2019 – *Margaret Moe, Rates and cost containment manager, DPBH*

Margaret Moe introduced herself to the committee and explained the memorandum she created for the Fiscal Year twenty-twenty-four services. Please see the letter presented at the following link: [Board of Comm SFY24 New Rates.pdf \(nv.gov\)](#)

Chair Braden Schrag asked for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year twenty-twenty-four rates for DPBH services.

MOTION: Natasha Mosby

SECOND: Dan Ficalora

PASSED: Unanimously

10. Informational Item: Update on Behavioral Health Programs from Aging and Disability Services Division – *Jessica Adams, Deputy Administrator, ADSD*

Roswell Allen gave the update in place of Jessica Adams. Roswell explained that Disability Services is working closely with another agency to introduce intense behavioral services into their program. Roswell also said that something that they are doing is conducting surveys and discussions with other states to see where they can model after them in terms of adding technical systems and specialty providers to help with dual diagnosis.

11. Informational Item: Update on seclusion and restraint/ denial of rights, ADSD – *Marina Valerio, Agency Manager, Desert Regional Center, ADSD*

Marina Valerio introduced this item and explained that there have been increases with the restraints, and the agency believes that to be because of the stress that comes with the change of seasons and anxiety about going home for the holidays. She said that the average amount of time in restraints is roughly six minutes, which is not a large amount of time.

Braden Schrag asked Marina what was going into this from a preparation standpoint. He explained that it may be a good idea to work with the individuals' months before to help ease them through as it comes up.

Marina explained that the agency's mental health counselors do talk with them, but at the end of the day, it is up to the families to give timelines for when they may be going home. Although for patients this is hard because they want exact dates and times, the families are unable to provide that with too much time in advance.

12. Informational Item: Update on Seclusion and Restraint/Denial of Rights, DPBH – *Susan Lynch, Hospital Administrator, SNAMHS, DPBH*

Susan Lynch explains that there has been no real change in the numbers from what she previously presented to the commissioners.

13. For Possible Action: Discussion, Identification, and Possible Approval of Future Agenda Items – **Commission**

Chair Braden Schrag requested to bring back item number six, after sending out information regarding the subcommittee.

Dr. Leon Ravin reminded Chair Braden Schrag of the possible presentation of management of psychiatric emergencies associated with acute agitation. Braden Schrag agreed and requested to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting.

14. Public Comment: Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled on an agenda for a later meeting.

Jasmine Cooper explained that she renewed her commission, so she will be on the Commission for another four years.

15. Adjournment of Open Session – *Braden Schrag, Chair*

Chair Braden Schrag adjourned the Commission on Behavioral Health Meeting at 10:12 AM