

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

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GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
with the DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (DPBH)  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 16, 2025  
9:00 AM to Adjournment

Meeting Locations:

This meeting was held online and by phone.

Online Meeting Link:

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_ZGU3N2Y2NTctNmI3OC00ZDg4LTg2ODMtYTc4MTI5ODQ0NDU0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22768e443d-3be6-48f0-9bb0-7e72f1276b8d%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZGU3N2Y2NTctNmI3OC00ZDg4LTg2ODMtYTc4MTI5ODQ0NDU0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22768e443d-3be6-48f0-9bb0-7e72f1276b8d%22%7d)

Phone Conference Number:

+1-775-321-6111

Phone Conference ID:

143 357 693#

## **1. CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present:

- Braden Schrag, Chair
- Lisa Ruiz-Lee, Vice Chair
- Lisa Durette, M.D.
- Nichole Schembre
- Dan Ficalora, CPC
- Arvin Operario, RN
- Gregory Giron, Psy.D.

Quorum was present.

Members Absent:

- Jasmine Cooper, CPC
- Natasha Mosby, LCSW

Others in Attendance:

Cody Phinney (DPBH); Faythe Baltisberger (DPBH); Carolyn Wilson (ADSD); Annie Vong (External); Nadine Kienhoefer (External); Julie Lindesmith (NNAMHS); Cherylyn Rahr-Wood (External); Nina McCartney (External); Dorothy Edwards (External); Susan Lynch (SNAMHS); Deanna Yates (External); Kathryn Martin (DCFS); Drew Cross (LLC); Gujuan Caver (DRC); William Hammargren (RRC); Kary Wilder

(DCFS); Valerie Cauhape (External); Michelle Sandoval (DPBH); Riley Harris (External); Leon Ravin (SNAHMS); Britt Young (External); Jessica Adams (ADSD); Krystal Martinez (External); Katie Pfister (ADSD); Jennifer Spencer (DAG); Barbara-Ann Keller (NNAMHS); Ronna Dillinger (LLC); Autumn Blattman (ADSD); Linda Anderson (External); Mark Funkhouser (External); Elyse Monroy-Marsala (External); Tray Abney (External)

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Chair Schrag opened the floor for public comment.

Presenter: Britt Young, Nevada PEP (aka. NV pep)

Summary: Young issued a reminder to youth mental health professionals in attendance that the agency (NV pep) offers trainings to professionals and family members as well a notice of a live webinar the agency (NV pep) will be hosting January 30<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm on Behavior and Discipline in Schools. Registration and more information can be found on their website at <https://nvpep.org/training-calendar/>

## **3. ACTION ITEM: CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2024**

Chair Schrag asked for any comments or corrections from commission members; there were none heard.

Chair Schrag then asked for a motion of approval for the minutes from the Commission on Behavioral Health meeting held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as presented.

MOTION: Commissioner Dan Ficalora made a motion for approval of the minutes as written.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Durette.

PASSED: Unanimous.

## **4. ACTION ITEM: CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2024**

Chair Schrag asked for any comments or concerns from commission members; none were heard. Chair Schrag then asked for a motion of approval for the minutes from the Commission on Behavioral Health meeting held on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 as presented.

MOTION: Commissioner Dan Ficalora made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schembre.

PASSED: Unanimous.

## **5. ACTION ITEM: CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

### **Approval of Agency Director Reports**

#### **1. Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS)**

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhngov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/Agency%20Director's%20Report%20-%20July%202024%20-%20Sept%202024.pdf>

2. *Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (SNAMHS)*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/SNAMHS%20Agency%20Director's%20Report.pdf>

3. *Lake's Crossing Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/COBH%20LCC%20Agency%20Dir.%20Report%20January%202025.pdf>

4. *Rural Clinics Services*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/Rural%20Clinics%20Agency%20Director%20Report%2020241231.pdf>

5. *Sierra Regional Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/2025%20January%203%20SRCAgencyDirectorsReport.pdf>

6. *Desert Regional Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/2025%20-%20January%20Agency%20Director's%20Report.pdf>

7. *Rural Regional Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/2025%20January%203%20ORRCAgencyDirectorsReport.pdf>

As this is a Consent Item, Chair Schrag asked for any comments or concerns from commission members; none were heard.

At this time, the administrative assistant facilitating the meeting interrupted to troubleshoot an issue with Commissioner Giron being unable to enter the meeting. The interruption lasted several minutes where those in attendance were encouraged to talk casually amongst themselves in the meantime. Once Commissioner Giron confirmed the issue resolved, Chair Schrag continued the meeting, asking the Agency Director's in attendance if there was anything they'd like to add at this time.

- Rural Clinics Services: Michelle Sandoval, sitting in on behalf of Ellen Richardson Adams, offered to answer any questions regarding the report.

Seeing and hearing none, Chair Schrag asked for a motion of approval of the agency director reports as submitted.

MOTION: Commissioner Arvin Operario made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dan Ficalora.

PASSED: Unanimous.

## **6. ACTION ITEM: CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNOR'S LETTER FOR 2025**

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://dphh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dphhnavgov/content/Boards/CBH/Meetings/2025/COBH%2001-01-25%20Gov.%20Report.pdf>

Chair Schrag asked for any comments or concerns from commission members regarding the letter as presented:

Presenter: Commissioner Lisa Durette, MD

Summary: Commissioner Durette pressed that, in light of the Governor's announcement of the creation of a new Office of Mental Health, it would benefit the Commission to add language seeking clarification on what role the Commission would have under this new office moving forward. Chair Schrag asked for Cody Phinney's input as the DPBH's administrator. Phinney stated that, regarding the structuring of this new office, she does not have many specifics at this time; however, she is aware that some functions that currently exist under the division will be affected, specifically the Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention and the Behavioral Health Policy Unit that deal with Medicaid. Chair Schrag agreed with Commissioner Durette's comments and asked for input from the rest of the commissioners present. Durette went on to add that there is a new Board and Commission bill to be presented during the upcoming legislative session and to add language requesting clarification regarding that as well. Per Schrag's request, Durette explained in further detail that the bill would include a proposal to consolidate some of the current regional boards and potentially eliminate the Commission as well. Durette further states concerns on which entity would possibly take on oversight of Behavioral Health matters in the state, suggesting quote,

"Here's an example we could say. You know, the board was instrumental in helping to bring to light through our oversight processes the concerns using the 'never give up' situation as an example, and that having an external multidisciplinary, multispecialty body is important on behalf of mental health services in this state. And thus we, as a Commission, have grave concern that eliminating the presence and function of such a body will take away oversight of the provision of care of our most vulnerable and marginalized individuals in the state."

Chair Schrag affirmed the statement and began discussion of which section the paragraph could be added to separately; Vice Chair Ruiz-Lee suggested that it be added under the recommendations. Cody Phinney interjected the bill, coming from the Business and Industry portion are of the executive branch, is formally named SB78 and summarizes that it is a, quote, "Complete revamp of Boards and Commissions in the State of Nevada."

Jennifer Spencer, a member of the Attorney General's office, advised the Commission to bring the addition of Commissioner Durette's language to a vote during this meeting.

Chair Schrag asked for a motion to approve adding the language provided by Dr. Durette to the Governor's Letter.

MOTION: Commissioner Durette made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Giron.

PASSED: Unanimous.

Chair Schrag then asked for a motion to approve the letter with the inclusion of the previous motion.

MOTION: Commissioner Ruiz-Lee made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Durette.

PASSED: Unanimous.

## **7. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS FROM AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION**

Presenter: Jessca Adams, standing in for Megan Wickland

Summary: Adams presented a verbal report of recent updates within the ASD developmental services programs.

### Key Points:

- Updates on the agency's budget were unavailable at the time the meeting was held.
- The agency had plans to use banked ARPA funds (an estimated \$12 million) to implement a new service that would focus on a population of dually diagnosed people with intellectual disabilities and mental health; however, plans at the time were scrapped as, with further research, staff realized that they would need to do a substantial amount of capacity building within state and mental health providers. A new plan has been developed and will be launched during this month.
- Some projects started under this new plan include: Enhanced Respite programs that is focused on providing relief to parents, such as day camps for kids out of school and even arrangements with providers for facility-based respite to be provided; There are trainings which will be hosted for other divisions, counties, and private providers which includes something called the Capacity Building Institute.
  - Adams went on to describe the capacity building institute as a workshop lasting around nine months, two days a month, and about 60 people of various professions and specialties train in various courses on Intellectual Developmental Disorders (IDD) and mental health, with providing networking opportunities for these professionals. The agency currently has plans to host one this year, and one next year.
- More trainings on IDD and mental health will be taking place, though right now facilitation of these trainings is to be determined. Adams reports there have been multiple requests for some training protocol to be developed for the juvenile justice bureau within the agency's service population as recently there are higher numbers of people with complex behavioral needs and providers struggling to care for them. Some of the ARPA funds mentioned will be going towards hiring a company with specialists in working with IDD dually diagnosed persons, that way providers have a peer training resource for those with more complex needs, rather than overstretching the provider staff and agency's ability to train without having to provide services directly.
- The agency also plans to bring in the National Association of Dual Diagnosis to provide trainings and NADD certification within the state, which will also be available to other divisions, counties, and private providers.

Adams then opened the floor to questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Durette asked if there would be a central site where all the trainings will be announced and linked for people to access all which are being presented. Adams responded that the agency will be hiring a project manager to focus on the project details where "other duties as assigned" for other staff would be unable to be covered.

Chair Schrag then asked for any further questions or comments from Commissioners and Agency Heads; none were heard so the chair closed discussion on Item 7, as there are no motions to be made on informational only items.

## **8. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: PRESENTATION ON FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM**

Presenter: Drew Cross, *Statewide Forensic Program Director*

Summary: Cross presented a verbal report of recent updates within the forensic program to address the admission list with jail-based programs, the addition of beds in facilities, and initiatives from civil hospital leadership.

### Key Points:

- Cross talked about two forensic programs, one in Clark County and the other in Washoe county. Each program has a capacity number of 60 in Clark County, and 30 in Washoe. These programs have been in operation since 2024, with Clark county starting in June and Washoe in September. As of now 250 clients have been served or enrolled in these forensic programs which has resulted in an earlier initiation into treatment, in which the agency is also tracking the length of stay of these individuals.
- After the addition of 40 beds, the state total of forensic beds or slots has been increased to 239.
- Efforts partnering with the county courts and civil hospital leadership have helped in identifying and diverting forensic clients into the appropriate services. The forensic population today has reduced by 39% as compared to previous years.

Cross opened the floor to the Commission for any questions. Commissioner Ficalora asked what involvement Cross's facility has with specialty court coordinators when screening participants for those programs, if any, as the Commission has seen more severe mental illness involved in the program. Cross responded that his facility focuses on those that quote, "...require restoration services to the forensic pathway." Cody Phinney interjected to add that the division maintains contact with the courts and screenings and would be happy to facilitate a discussion with leadership at a later time regarding Commissioner Ficalora's inquiry. Chair Schrag himself had a question on how collaborations with agencies like the Clark County Detention Center have been coming along since the changes reported in 2024. Cross described how the DPBH leadership has been working towards building communication with their partners and referenced the jail-based SMART program as a success in communications with leadership to get updates and monitor their progress. Cross also made a point to mention that, while Washoe and Clark counties have large program initiatives in place, the agency is making a concerted effort to expand their services and resources into the rural counties as well. Schrag inquired further about how the reception to these forensic services has been in the rural areas. Cross explained that their programs are now getting referrals from those counties, showing the counties are taking advantage of these programs available to them. Support for these smaller counties has included having clinicians that go into or hold tele-visits in the jail to see individuals on the waiting list and also making sure they maintain those clients or potentially divert them to necessary services. Overall, the sentiment speaks to improved communication and a hopeful outlook going forward.

Chair Schrag then asked for any further comments or questions from the Commission; none were heard so the chair closed discussion on Item 8, as there are no motions to be made on informational only items.

## **9. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT/DENIAL OF RIGHTS, ADSD**

Presenter: Jessca Adams, standing in for Marina Valerio

Summary: Jessica indicated that Marina was out of office and unavailable to give a report, and Jessica did not have report to give the presentation in her stead. Gujuan Caver spoke up to say Marina had asked him to answer any questions asked during the meeting.

Chair Schrag opened the floor for questions; none were heard so the chair closed discussion on Item 9, as there are no motions to be made on informational only items.

**10. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON SELCUSION AND RESTRAIN/DENIAL OF RIGHTS, DPBH**

Presenter: Susan Lynch, *SNAMHS Hospital Administrator*

Summary: Lynch highlighted current numbers of seclusion and restraint reports at both the NNAMHS and SNAMHS campuses, as well as identifying a few of their criteria for data collection. The NNAMHS data shows a decrease in their overall restraint incidents since the summer. SNAMHS had an increase in restrain incidents with a spike in October's reports. Lynch went into further detail on the internal data collection happening with seclusion and restraints at SNAMHS. Current data is broken down according to criteria including shift schedules and admissions. It was found that there is an increase in events on Thursday and Friday mornings, as well as more events occurring with admissions from the jail than others. In the majority of these incidents, those being admitted do not have any prior SNAMHS admission in history and are being provided with emergency medication during these events. Additionally, SNAMHS has seen an increase in their waitlist within the community. Overall, the SNAMHS agency has a positive outlook on their report.

Chair Schrag then asked for any further questions; none were heard so the chair closed discussion on Item 10, as there are no motions to be made on informational only items.

**11. ACTION ITEM: CONSIDERATION, IDENTIFICATION, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Summary: Chair Schrag started the discussion with a request for administrative staff to identify and report a summation of the most recent, salient bill drafts that may impact the Commission or its oversight.

Chair Schrag then asked for any further recommendations for future agenda items from the Commission; none were heard so the chair closed discussion on Item 11 with no motions.

**12. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No comments were heard at this time.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Schrag adjourned the meeting at 9:59am.