

**SOUTHERN REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE: Wednesday, April 10, 2024**

**TIME: 8:00 a.m.- Adjournment**

**Meeting Location: Virtual - Online Only**

This meeting held via teleconference at: Join Zoom [Meeting Login Link](#) (see full details in the notes section below). – check online and links at the bottom.

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call:** the meeting for the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board was called to order with a quorum at approximately 8:00 am by Chair, Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner.

**Members Present:**

Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner (Chair)  
Stacy Smith (Vice-Chair)  
Assemblyman Gregory Hafen II  
Missie Rowe  
Boonn Hem

Chief Scott Lewis  
Sarah Dillard (approx. 8:54 am)  
Brenda O’Neill (approx. 8:07 am)  
Dr. Whitney Owens  
Jaren Stanton

**Members Absent:**

Coleen Lawrence  
McKaye Traynor

- 2. Public Comment** was offered but none given.
- 3. For Possible Discussion and Action:** Chief Scott Lewis motioned to approve the minutes for the March 13, 2024 Southern Behavioral Health Policy Board Meeting. Boonn Hem gave a second for the motion. All in favor, none opposed.
- 4. For Possible Discussion and Action:** the board had a robust discussion regarding the 2024 priorities around rural behavioral health (See attachment at the end of minutes).  
The top 3 priorities are as follows:
  1. Transportation and Transport: Medical, Behavioral and Crisis
  2. Access to Care & Services
  3. Crisis Response & Stabilization

Stacy Smith noted to still be mindful the other priorities that are listed. Assemblymen Gregory Hafen mentioned that he had met with Governor Lombardo a week prior, and there was discussion on the importance of having these broad-based interstate compacts, noting that there is a lot of bipartisan support for these initiatives. Dr. Osten-Garner encouraged Assemblymen Hafen to advise the Board on how they can be most effective regarding communication efforts with the legislature.

Stacy Smith explained that the conversation that day would primarily be Priority #1 (see above), and possibly some additional conversation regarding Priority #2 (see above). Vice-Chair Smith prompted the Board for their input on Transportation barriers in their communities. Boonn Hem explained that the largest barriers that they have in their community (Tonopah) are sending individuals for SUD (Substance Abuse Disorder) and OUD (Opioid Use Disorder) treatment, noting that individuals that qualify for medical detox are brought to Bishop (California) via volunteer EMS. For individuals that want to go to treatment, transportation is usually provided by the Nye County Sheriff's Department. To go along with Boonn Hem's comments, Dr. Whitney Owens emphasized the need for physical transportation.

Chief Scott Lewis mentioned a new proposed OSHA standard for all services including EMS, which involves a set of guidelines and criteria for training, response, level of certification, and having physicals that are not necessarily captured currently in the EMS. Chief Lewis expressed concern that if the proposal did go through, he wonders how the volunteer EMS and Fire service in Nye County would be sustainable. Chief Lewis noted that this proposal was extended until June 1, 2024, for comments. Chair Osten-Garner explained that he would like the Board to participate in drafting a response for the OSHA proposal. Chief Lewis will provide the coordinator with information regarding the proposal and the coordinator will set up a discussion as an Agenda item for the May Policy Board meeting if necessary, to make the June 1, 2024 deadline for comments.

Board member, Missie Rowe, mentioned that the Sheriff's Department manages the transport for Lincoln County due to reimbursement being an issue for EMS (also noting that the Sheriff's Department is short staffed, and there is lack of training for those that are transporting, as stated previously by other Board members. Vice-Chair, Stacy Smith, confirmed through discussion with board members that it is both staff and equipment (vehicles and people) that are required to meet the needs in the rural communities.

Assemblyman Hafen mentioned a brand-new provider fee that had just been implemented where the funds generated from that fee would be going toward mental and behavioral health. Mr. Hafen encouraged the Board to dig into this to possibly see if any of those funds could be utilized. Assemblyman Hafen noted that there would be an update on April 11, 2024 during the Interim Finance Committee meeting. Elyse Monroy with Belz and Case explained the breakdown of funds regarding the provider fee noting that 15% of an administrative fee would be going specifically to Nevada children's mental health. Elyse Monroy also encouraged the Board to investigate Medicaid MCOs (Managed Care Organization) Reinvestment Program as a possible funding source by reinvesting the dollars back into the overall community.

Dr. Osten-Garner explained that one must be a resident of the state to qualify for Medicaid. Once state lines are crossed, patients no longer qualify and thus there is no reimbursement. Chair Osten-Garner noted that this is not the case with private insurance, but it is one of the barriers to Medicaid Programs. Dr. Osten-Garner reiterated the possible need to further explore the provider fee language that was brought up previously to see how to direct some of the funding.

Missie Rowe explained that in Lincoln County, the barriers come down to the lack of people and the act of volunteerism, as it seems to be a “thing of the past.” Board member Rowe also mentioned that there is an opportunity for training, and a new approach needs to be investigated. Chair Osten-Garner noted that instead of looking for volunteers, it has now shifted to where there must be paid training for staff who are paid for services rendered.

Discussion was had between the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Scott Lewis regarding jurisdiction for health districts regarding medical transportation. Chief Lewis noted that there are different regulations depending on where you are within the State geographically. Chair Osten-Garner recommended drafting another letter for the state regarding the creation of uniform standards across all health districts.

The Board moved on to robust discussion regarding priority #2- Access to Care and Services. Dr. Whitney Owens, board member, and Dr. Sarah Hunt with BeHERE NV mentioned a couple of the bills that either did not pass or were modified in the last legislative session. The first one being SB 149 brought forth by Senator Lang that allows those employed by a medical school within the state to get paneled and credentialed by the insurance companies if that person is teaching at least 50% of the time in that medical school. SB 267, brought forth by Senator Heidi Gansert, allows for the Board of Psychology to register psychology students with commercial insurance companies for reimbursement.

Chair Osten-Garner brought up a couple of additional topics: what is the cost of practice compared to the reimbursement and the cost of licensure to practice? Another topic was continuing education for providers, and how that relates or makes sense. The more CE (continuing education) credits that are put on the license types, the less and less attractive it is for providers because it is more expensive for them to maintain their licenses. Lastly, Dr. Osten-Garner mentioned the topic of how commercial insurers are taking the money they are getting from premiums and utilizing it to direct care vs. administrative costs.

Dr. Whitney Owens discussed the benefits of a more competency-based model (as the Board of Psychology is moving towards) and moving other boards toward that model as there are a lot of activities that providers engage in regularly to provide professional development and continuing competency for less expensive costs. Assemblyman Gregory Hafen agreed with Dr. Owens and mentioned that if there is anything in regulations regarding the continuing education classes or even the fee structure that could make things easier or more efficient, to bring that to the attention of the Legislative Agencies and Boards. Dr. Owens and Chair Osten-Garner encouraged collaboration with other boards to be advocates to change regulations and maintain the quality of the practitioners but also to incentivize individuals to come to Nevada and practice.

Vice-Chair, Stacy Smith, concluded the segment by explaining that at the next meeting, the Southern Policy Board will continue to look at Access to Care and Crisis Response and Stabilization (Priorities #2 and #3).

Chair, Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner, moved to agenda #7 at this time.

5. **For Information and Discussion:** the coordinator gave an update noting the submission of the annual report for internal review at NRHP, noting once he gets the report back, he will distribute the information to the Board and State. The coordinator made a recent visit to Tonopah and will be traveling to Lincoln County in May. The coordinator mentioned the efforts that are being put forth to put together and distribute Opioid kits and Naloxone boxes throughout the region. Boonn Hem noted that she would provide the coordinator with locations that have been put in her area. Lastly, the Coordinator explained that there will be updates being made to the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Resource Guide, and that they will be made digitally going forward.

6. **For Possible Action:** Discussion and Approval of Future Agenda Items (Coordinator/Board)

- a. Board Opening: “law enforcement representative” with “behavioral health experience/knowledge.” (NRS.433.429 (4)). (ongoing)

Chair Osten-Garner reminded the Board that there is an opening for a law enforcement representative with a behavioral health background and encouraged both the current board members and the public to come forward with any recommendations to fill that vacancy.

7. **Public Comment:** no Public Comment given.

8. **For Possible Action:** the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:19am by Chair Kevin Osten-Garner. Dr. Whitney Owens motioned to approve the adjournment, Chief Scott Lewis to second the motion. All in favor, none opposed.

**Board Discussion Documents:**

[Board Planning Grid -Board Meeting Work - 04.10.24.pdf](#)

Nevada Children’s Behavioral Health Project Final: <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5161>

Links to board documents can be found in the following location:

Southern Behavioral Health Region: <https://nvbh.org/southern-behavioral-health-region/> in the Publications and Reports Sections

2024 Southern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board:

[https://dpbh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board\\_Meetings/2024/southern/](https://dpbh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board_Meetings/2024/southern/)