

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

DATE: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

TIME: 8:00 a.m.- Adjournment

Meeting Location: Virtual - Online Only

1. Call to Order and Roll Call (Chair, Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner, and Coordinator)

The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:04 am by Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner.

Members Present

Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner (Chair)

Stacy Smith (Vice-Chair)

Boonn Hem

Chief Scott Lewis

Sarah Dillard

Brenda O'Neill

Dr. Whitney Owens

Coleen Lawrence

Jaren Stanton

Members Absent

Assemblyman Gregory Hafen II

Missie Rowe

Lt. Harry William

2. Public Comment

No action may be taken upon a matter raised under the public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on the agenda as an action item. To provide public comments telephonically, dial the number listed below. When prompted to provide the meeting ID, enter the number and password below. Comments will be limited to **three minutes** per person. People making comments will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments. *Public comments were opened with Agenda Item 2 & 3, but no comment was made.*

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3. For Information and Discussion (Chair/Board): general board updates and announcements regarding events, information, and relevant communication and data.

Chair Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner proposed combining agenda item 2 and 3. Chair opened the discussion by inviting board members and public attendees to share updates on the impact of federal funding uncertainties and Medicaid policy changes. Laurie Soriano from Nevada PEP

noted growing concern among families, while Scott Lewis warned that potential federal cuts could halt key behavioral health programs reliant on Medicare and Medicaid funding. Dr. Osten-Garner highlighted that workforce projections show the U.S. meeting only 70% of its behavioral health needs if grant funding is lost. Stacy Smith described funding delays forcing nonprofits to modify financial processes, while Sarah Dillard stressed that rural communities rely on nonprofits, as local governments cannot absorb these costs. Chair Osten-Garner confirmed that funding impacts will remain a standing agenda item. Before closing, Sarah Dillard announced an upcoming suicide prevention training in Hawthorne and NyECC's Drug Awareness Trailer event.

4. **For Discussion and Possible Action (Chair/Board):** review and vote on approving the minutes for the January 8, 2025 meeting - <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview/?id=5423>

Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner introduced the agenda item and requested a motion to approve the January 8, 2025, meeting minutes. Stacy Smith made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Jaren Stanton. A vote was conducted, with board members voicing unanimous approval, except for Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner, who abstained as he was not present at the January meeting. With no objections, the minutes were approved and adopted.

5. **For Discussion and Possible Action (Chair/Vice-Chair and Board):** discussion on taking action to request support from policy boards and other groups for Nonemergency Secure Behavioral Health Transport legislation.

Southern BH Regional Policy Board: [AB31](#) - *Provides for certain Medicaid reimbursement of providers of nonemergency secure behavioral health transport services. (BDR 38-368) - increase in Medicaid reimbursement and paying for unloaded miles - incentives for rural areas as well as an overall statewide increase for this transportation.*

The board discussed AB31, a bill to increase Medicaid reimbursement for nonemergency secure behavioral health transport services, including paying for unloaded miles, incentivizing rural areas, and raising statewide reimbursement rates. Mark Funkhouser explained the bill's goal to address transportation gaps, particularly in rural and frontier regions, where long distances and limited services strain EMS and law enforcement. The bill is currently in the legislative process. A hearing is scheduled for February 19th and a [fiscal note analysis was conducted](#) to assess costs and savings. Key action items included Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner volunteering to represent the board at the committee hearing, where he plans to highlight the bill's real-world impacts and cost-saving benefits. The board also approved Mark Funkhouser to send a one-page summary and template letter to stakeholders, encouraging letters of support or testimony. Stakeholders include local governments, EMS, law enforcement, and healthcare providers. Advocacy efforts will focus on engaging statewide organizations like the Nevada Sheriffs and Chiefs Association. The discussion emphasized the importance of concise, impactful testimony and letters of support, particularly from professionals and community members affected by the lack of behavioral health transport services. During the meeting, Jaren Stanton moved to approve the one-page summary and template letter to stakeholders, and Chief Scott Lewis seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved the outreach plan, with Dr. Osten-Garner leading the hearing presentation, and Mark Funkhouser coordinating advocacy efforts. Presentation on Legislative Overview and Action: <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview/?id=5451>

6. For Discussion and Possible Action (Chair/Vice-Chair and Board): discussion on taking action to support pending legislation known to affect behavioral health and related issues including letters of support, testimony, or input for the following or other legislation.

- a. **Northern Policy Board (AB60):** HHS - *Revises provisions relating to certain behavioral health services. (BDR 39-434) - pertaining to youth peer support and Certified Prevention Specialists.*
- b. **Rural Policy Board: (SB68) - Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor -** *“AN ACT relating to behavioral health; requiring licensing boards that regulate various professions relating to behavioral health to report certain information; ratifying and entering into the Social Work Licensure Compact; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.”*
- c. **Washoe Policy Board (SB47):** *“AN ACT relating to insurance; providing for a study of certain issues relating to coverage for behavioral health care; requiring the submission of certain information for the purposes of that study; providing for the confidentiality of such information; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.” This bill supports a study of parity by insurance plans.*
- d. **Clark (AB75):** **Revises provisions governing grants made by the State. (BDR 31-433) - Assembly Committee on Government Affairs**
AN ACT relating to grants; declaring the policy of this State to make payments under a grant agreement within a certain period of time; imposing interest on amounts due under a written grant agreement which are not timely paid after the receipt of a proper invoice; requiring State entities that take grants to certain actions upon receipt of an invoice; authorizing use of media other than original paper documents to process grant payments; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.
- e. **BDR 54-129** Assemblymember Hafen and Joint Requester: Senator Titus - *Revises provisions governing health care – counseling compact (7/26/2024).*
- f. **SB78:** *Revises provisions relating to boards commissions, councils, and similar bodies. May impact on the structure and oversight of mental health professionals and services.*

Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner opened the discussion on whether the board should provide letters of support, testimony, or input for pending behavioral health legislation from various policy boards. He invited board members to identify bills they felt strongly about, either in support of or with concerns. Stacy Smith expressed interest in SB47, the study on insurance parity, and SB68, the Social Work Licensure Compact, but notes she needed more details before forming a position. Mark Funkhouser clarified that AB60 had been amended to remove the youth peer support provision but retained the Certified Prevention Specialists language. During the discussion, Dr. Osten-Garner and Dr. Whitney Owners raised concerns about SB78, which proposes consolidating behavioral health licensure boards under the executive branch. They noted that this change could reduce professional oversight, potentially diminishing the quality of behavioral health services by placing non-licensed individuals in decision-making roles. Dr. Owens emphasized that while streamlining administrative tasks could be beneficial, the bill’s approach to licensure and ethical oversight could be problematic. She urged all board members who hold professional licenses to carefully review SB78, as it may significantly impact governance and practice standards. Recognizing the need for a clearer understanding of each

bill's implications, Dr. Osten-Garner suggested that Mark Funkhouser reach out to other policy board coordinators to obtain one-page summaries of their respective bills, like the summary document previously prepared for AB31. This would allow board members to review the bills in a digestible format before making informed decisions.

Given the complexity of the legislative session and the volume of proposed bills, the board decided to schedule the discussion for the March meeting, allowing time for further review. Board members were encouraged to individually support or oppose legislation as they saw fit, but no formal endorsements would be made until the next meeting.

7. **For Discussion and Possible Action (Chair/Vice-Chair/Board):** discussion on updates and possible action to vote on recommended changes to the Non-Emergency Secure Behavioral Health Transportation Bill (AB31): *vote on request to approve moving to amend "effective date" from October 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026 as requested by the Division of Health Care and Financing and Policy (DHCFP).*

Dr. Osten-Garner introduced a requested amendment to AB31, changing the effective date from October 1, 2025, to January 1, 2026, as requested by the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP). There were no objections or concerns from board members. Chief Scott Lewis made a motion to approve the amendment, seconded by Sarah Dillard. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Osten-Garner confirmed that Mark Funkhouser would communicate the board's approval of the amendment to the appropriate legislative parties and then closed the agenda item.

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

- a. **Board Opening:** "representative of residential treatment facility, transitional housing or other housing program serving persons with mental illness or who abuse alcohol or drugs. Section 3, subsection 8(b) - Board appointed ([Link](#)).
- b. **Information:** Possible experts or additional input on LCB review and possible feedback related to legislative priority (BDR) on non-emergency behavioral health transportation.

Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner provided a reminder that the board still has an open position for a representative of a residential treatment facility, transitional housing, or other housing program serving individuals with mental illness or substance use disorders. This is a board-appointed position, and nominations are still being accepted. Additionally, the board will continue to keep Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) review and possible feedback related to non-emergency behavioral health transportation on future agendas. Dr. Osten-Garner confirmed that the impact of federal funding changes on local nonprofits programs and grants will remain an ongoing agenda item until further notice. He invited board members to suggest additional topics for future discussions, but none were raised at this time.

9. **Public Comment**

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the number and password listed below. Comments will be limited to **three minutes** per person. People making comments will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments.

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Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were received.

10. For Possible Action: Adjournment (Chair/Vice-Chair)

Chair Osten-Garner adjourned the February Southern Behavioral Health Policy Board meeting at approximately 9:13am.

AGENDA POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Physical Locations:

Nevada Rural Hospital Partners: 4600 Kietzke Lane; Suite I-209, Reno, Nevada 89502, and
Division of Public Behavioral Health: 4126 Technology Way, 2nd Floor, Carson City, Nevada 89706.

Southern Regional Behavioral Health Website: <https://nvbh.org/southern-behavioral-health-region/>. Please refer to the Publications and Reports Section for more information.

Department of Health and Human Services Website:

https://dpbh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board_Meetings/Meetings/ (here you can find the agendas and minutes for current meetings including an archive of previous meetings and a listing of board members)

Nevada Public Notices: <https://notice.nv.gov/>.

Accommodation Requests:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93496856860?pwd=RnUxd0xYV0dHeXpZcklwazFuNmN0Zz09&from=addon>

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Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/j/absjhTR8SJ>

Meeting Materials:

- This meeting is a public meeting, recorded and held in compliance with and pursuant to the Nevada Open Meeting Law, NRS 241. By participating, you consent to recording of your participation in this meeting. All voting members should leave their cameras on for the duration of the meeting and refrain from entering any information into the chat function of the video platform.
- Items may be taken out of order, combined for consideration, and/or removed from the agenda at the Chairperson's discretion. The public body may combine two or more agenda items for consideration. The public may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time. The public body may place reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of public comments but may not restrict comments based on viewpoint.
- We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who are disabled and wish to attend the meeting. If special arrangements for the meeting are necessary, please notify the contact below. Also, if you need supporting documents for this meeting, please use the following contact: Mark Funkhouser, Southern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator; 4600 Kietzke Lane I-209, Reno, Nevada 89502, or by email at mark@nrhp.org, or by calling (775) 827-4770 ext. 107 as soon as possible.
- If at any time during the meeting an individual who has been named on the agenda or has an item specifically regarding them included on the agenda is unable to participate because of technical or other difficulties, please email Mark Funkhouser at mark@nrhp.org and note at what time the difficulty started so that matters pertaining specifically to their participation may be continued to a future agenda if needed or otherwise addressed.
- Please be cautious and do not click on links in the chat area of the meeting unless you have verified that they are safe. If you ever have questions about a link in a document purporting to be from Nevada Rural Hospital Partners, please do not hesitate to contact mark@nrhp.org for verification.