

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

**DATE: Wednesday, August 23, 2023**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call was taken. Quorum was established, and the meeting opened at 9:00 am by Chair - Franklin Katschke.

**Members Present**

Franklin Katschke (Chair)	Chief Scott Lewis
Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner (VC)	Sarah Dillard
Assemblyman Gregory Hafen II	Brenda O’Neill (entered 9:10 am)
Stacy Smith	Dr. Whitney Owens (left 10:00 am)
Boonn Hem	Coleen Lawrence

**Members Absent:** Missie Rowe

**Staff/Others:** Mark Funkhouser, Southern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator; Joan Hall, NRHP President; Blayne Osborne, NRHP President; Laura Yanez, Director NAMI Western Nevada; Ryan Brunetto, NRHP Operations Coordinator; Lea Case, Vice President, Belz Case Government Affairs; Abbey Pike, Deputy Regional Representative, Senator Jackie Rosen; Cherylyn Rahr-Wood, Northern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator; Sara Hunt, and Linda Anderson.

2. Public comment was advised and offered but no comment was given.
3. Consideration of review and approval of minutes for the June 29, 2023 meeting was taken. Dr. Whitney Owens noted that she was not present at the last meeting and could only approve to form and not content. Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner made a motion to approve. Coleen Lawrence seconded. Minutes were approved.
4. Discussion was held on possible recommendation(s) for board member vacancy for a “law enforcement representative with behavioral health experience and knowledge” with approval to be sent to the Senate Majority Leader. Board Member Stacy Smith noted a potential candidate, a Lieutenant with the Nye County Sheriff’s Office who works with compliance checks. There was also discussion about Sheriff Derek Foremaster from Lincoln County and a deputy who works with crisis intervention. Stacy Smith asked Chair Katschke about contacting someone from Lincoln County. Boonn Hem also mentioned Esmerelda County Sheriff Nick Dondero. Coordinator, Mark Funkhouser, advised that Sheriff Dondero and Sgt. Bermudez from Esmerelda County had already been contacted but they declined. Board members were encouraged to continue reaching out to connect potential candidates with the coordinator.
5. Discussion was held on potential Board Member, McKaye Traynor, Aurora Center for Healing. There is currently an opening that the board can appoint in the category for “owners or administrators of residential treatment facilities, transitional housing, or other housing for persons with a mental illness or persons who have an alcohol or other substance use disorder.” McKaye Traynor was present and was asked by the Vice Chair

to convey interests and experience relating to her candidacy. She elaborated on her previous and current work with “twenty-three years of experience” in the field. Board member Boonn Hem asked McKaye about her professional experience between August 2014 and January 202 in “Raising \$1 million to build a one-of-a kind, state-of-the-art residential home for our neurodiverse students.” Boonn noted her personal experience as a parent and wanted to know more about the project. McKaye expanded upon that “passion project” in developing “Spark Academy” for youth. Dr. Osten-Garner made a motion to appoint McKaye Traynor to the board, and the motion was given a second by Dr. Whitney Owens. The vote was unanimously approved, and McKaye Traynor was appointed to the board.

6. Southern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator gave an update of deliverables, scope of work and activity including regional/state data and resources (link below). The report highlighted a website for the Southern Behavioral Health Region that contains an overview along with preliminary analysis of opportunities and needs (gaps and barriers) as well as priorities and initiatives (goals and objectives) that will lead to strategies and recommendations. The coordinator also noted that the policy board will continue to examine these areas and work together to enhance behavioral health in the region and state (the website can be found at <https://nvbh.org/southern-behavioral-health-region/>). The presentation can be found at the following link: <https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhngov/content/Boards/RBHPB/Meetings/2018/Coodinator%20Update%20August%202023,%202023.pdf>

Two of the main data sources highlighted are listed below:

- Regional BH Policy Board Meetings: [https://dpbh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board\\_Meetings/Meetings/](https://dpbh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board_Meetings/Meetings/)
- Office of Analytics – Data Dashboard and Reports Catalog: [https://dhhs.nv.gov/Programs/Office\\_of\\_Analytics/OFFICE\\_OF\\_ANALYTICS\\_-\\_DATA\\_REPORTS/](https://dhhs.nv.gov/Programs/Office_of_Analytics/OFFICE_OF_ANALYTICS_-_DATA_REPORTS/)

7. A brief overview of the board role and function was given by the coordinator (the presentation can be found at the following link: <https://dpbh.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dpbhngov/content/Boards/RBHPB/Meetings/2018/Policy%20Board%20Role%20Function%20Duties%20Discussion%20August%202023.pdf>

Vice Chair Osten-Garner then led a discussion on how the board can work with and support the coordinator in the advocacy and liaison role and efforts. A primary question is the role of the public in the work of the board around behavioral health. He went on to ask how the board could bring in those “voices” to the work of the board. A summary of the highlights is listed below:

- Continue ongoing (in-person) contact, soliciting letters from, and communicating with community members (Boonn Hem)
- Value of “public comment” and find ways to remove the “barrier” for them to give input during these meetings (Stacy Smith).
- “Increasing awareness” with potential social media exposure, community events, broader reach with “invitations to awareness and feedback” relative to the policy

board meetings” (McKaye Traynor).

- Adding an agenda item in the local task force meetings to get the word out to stakeholders about “access to and awareness of” the policy board and meetings (Sarah Dillard).
- “Need for the public to know what the benefit is for them” to be involved or give input. Making sure they know the “value added” for them to have a “voice” in the board meetings and legislative process. People need to be “educated about policy issues” and how to navigate the process in this policy forum (Coleen Lawrence).

Dr. Osten-Garner also asked about “the role of local media” as a source for reaching the community. Suggestions would be to create a flyer, utilizing public service announcements, or newsletters. Another suggestion was to give feedback about the outcomes, solutions, and concrete evidence about this board work and the community input. The vice-chair suggested keeping this as an open item to check in with the coordinator and how we are doing and with the public.

8. The board started a discussion of the needs, barriers, gaps, and strengths at the local and regional level that may lead to future recommended action on emerging board strategies and priorities. Chair Katschke asked board members about concerns they are seeing in their local communities to assist the board in moving forward with strategies.
  - Board member, Stacy Smith, offered to assist with any reports or information that the coordinator needs in this work. She also noted the coordinator’s role as a “liaison to the state, agencies, and grants and opportunities for collaboration.”
  - Sarah Dillard also noted the vital connection between the coordinator and the work on the local level, e.g., behavioral health task groups. She also noted the importance of “changing the culture” and “decreasing stigma.” Sarah also noted the ongoing need for the coordinator to be “physically in the communities.”
  - Board member, Boonn Hem, noted the need for more “advocacy” and a voice to represent rural Nevada.

Board Chair Katschke asked, “what can we do as a board to help (the coordinator) and southern region?” The coordinator expressed a need to have the counsel and “expertise” of the board as it relates to the local and regional work and in the state. Board member, Scott Lewis, noted that when “establishing policy, the execution (needed) is where the disconnect occurs.” Because the “issues” seem “insurmountable,” communities need resources and a “follow-up system” around “what is actually happening.”

Vice Chair Osten-Garner then noted the value of the legislative aspect but asked what the board can do to “leverage the position as the board” with the state and agencies and how that connects to the work of the coordinator, e.g., letters, position statements, stating needs, local requests. Are there other “mechanisms and tools,” aside from a legislative initiative, to assist the coordinator and the work for the “initiatives the board is recommending?”

- Board member, Sarah Dillard, asked about developing some committees and what areas and issues around those working groups would best serve the board.
- Assemblyman Hafen noted one committee to follow would be the “Interim Health and Human Services Committee” to review “policies” in the emerging legislative

cycle around the behavioral health concerns in the state. He noted that with any legislative effort, “the more support the better.” He also suggested that the coordinator look at “funding (grant) sources available” through state agencies and at the “federal level.” He noted the move to assess the “needs in the rural area and “accessing resources and opportunities.”

- New board member McKaye Traynor noted the priority of addressing the “root cause of the identified needs” and move toward “specific committees” to support priorities.
- Board member Coleen Lawrence reiterated focusing on the “goals” of the board before “narrowing” those priorities into working groups. She noted HHS resources and GOED funding.

Board Chair Katschke then asked about any areas or needs that the board wants to focus on.

- Sarah Dillard noted specialty courts with a specific mental health focus. She also noted “creativity and access” for these courts. She also noted “transportation” as a priority, e.g., “reimbursement rates.”
- Dr. Osten-Garner noted “workforce development for behavioral health.” Examples could be hosting an online seminar for grants, education and training around behavioral health workforce and training, psychology, and education as well as geriatrics. He then went on to say this could help community agencies learn more about these opportunities and apply for grants and assist with retention of the workforce in rural areas and underserved populations, e.g., loan forgiveness programs.
- McKaye Traynor also noted the “need to strengthen the continuum of care and filling in the gaps” to assist people to become aware of resources. She noted family engagement and parenting around support for youth. This includes family systems and transition in care.
- Board member Scott Lewis mentioned that outreach to commissioners, law enforcement, and emergency personnel about the board to get “feedback” on “impact, tactics and strategies for the board.”

9. Discussion was held on various topics and presentations for future agenda items. Coleen Lawrence recommended that the board entertain a presentation on the Pediatric Access Line and Psychiatric Care in Communities by Dr. Lisa Durette, the Dean of UNLV Psychiatry Program. Another agenda item discussed was to continue tracking how the board can reach out to the public and stakeholders for involvement.
10. Various dates in the last week of September were considered for the next board meeting. Due to some potential conflicts, the coordinator advised he would send out a poll to find a good time for the meeting in September.
11. Public comment was offered but none was given.
12. The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.