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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



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DRAFT GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
with the DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (DPBH)
MEETING MINUTES
November 20th, 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_MjMyZTNiMmQtZTgxNy00OGQ4LWl1NGltZTViYjQzMmNiYTl5%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%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:

534 467 937#

1. CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL – BRADEN SCHRAG, CHAIR

Commissioners Present:

- Braden Schrag, Chair
- Lisa Ruiz-Lee, Vice Chair
- Jasmine Cooper, CPC
- Nichole Schembre
- Dan Ficalora, CPC

Quorum was present.

Members Absent:

- Lisa Durette, M.D.
- Natasha Mosby, LCSW

Others in Attendance:

Andrea R. Rivers (DPBH); Faythe Baltisberger (DPBH); Brenna Hardtner (External), Carolyn Wilson (ADSD); Hailey Cornelia-Swift (LCB); Drew Cross (DPBH); Ellen Richardson-Adams (DPBH); Gujuan Caver (ADSD); Jamie Ross (External); Jennifer M. Spencer (AG); Jessica Adams (ADSD); Joseph Roche (DPBH); Julie Lindesmith (DPBH); Kathryn Martin (DCFS); Kimberly Abbott (DCFS); Lea NLN (External); Leon Ravin (DPBH); Linda Anderson (External); Linda Guastella (External); Lisa Sherych (External); Marla McDade Williams (DCFS); Michele Klem (ADSD); Jennifer Otto (LCB); Stephanie Africa (DPBH); Susan Lynch (DPBH);

Tray Abney (*External*); Valerie Cauhape (*External*); William Hammargren (*ADSD*); Yadira Gomez-Guerrero (*ADSD*); Jolene Zamora (*External*)

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chair Schrag opened the floor for public comment, none were heard.

3. ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPROVE OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 15, 2025

Chair Schrag asked for any questions or comments 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 May 15, 2024.

MOTION: Commissioner Cooper made a motion for approval of the minutes as submitted.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Lisa Ruiz-Lee.

PASSED: Unanimous.

4. ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPROVE 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://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/nnamhs-report.pdf>

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

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/snamhs-report.pdf>

3. *Lake's Crossing Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/lc-report.pdf>

4. *Rural Clinics Services*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/rural-clinics-report.pdf>

5. *Sierra Regional Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/src-report.pdf>

6. *Desert Regional Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

<https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/drc-report.pdf>

7. *Rural Regional Center*

Please see the report at the following link:

Chair Schrag requested to go down the list and invited agency directors to share any items of note, whether positive or negative, for the Commission's awareness or areas where support may be needed.

- Sierra Regional Center: Carolyn Wilson announced that the agency is collaborating with a new provider to open a new jobs and day training center. The center plans to offer pre-vocational support to help individuals prepare for both paid and unpaid employment as well as day habilitation support focused on life enrichment and personal development. Wilson emphasized that this initiative marks a major advancement in expanding opportunities and improving service quality for the community.
 - Schrag asked Wilson to provide some insight as to how the collaboration came about, and if it would be possible to replicate the partnership among other state agencies. Wilson explained that the collaboration began with a supported living arrangement provider who expressed interest in expanding into jobs and day training services, and this initiative was partly in response to the loss of such services during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that a location has been secured, and curriculum development is underway, with optimism about the program's potential impact. When asked whether the collaboration process could be replicated across other agencies in the state, Wilson confirmed that it could with emphasis on the importance of relationship-building, identifying service gaps, and engaging providers in collaborative efforts. She also noted that similar initiatives are already occurring in other regional centers to meet the needs of the individuals they serve.
- Desert Regional Center: Caver announced he is now the permanent ICF Agency Manager, transitioning from his previous interim role, and Michele Klem has been appointed as the new Agency Manager for Community Services, taking the position previously held by Caver. Caver went on to report that the ICF is currently managing the construction of three replacement homes, which is tied to the Stein building replacement project. The project is progressing well, with strong collaboration between Nevada Public Works, the contracted construction team, and the ICF maintenance group. Caver added that weekly coordination meetings have contributed to a smooth process.
 - Klem introduced herself as the new Agency Manager for Community Services at Desert Regional Center, expressing enthusiasm about joining the team and looking forward to collaborating with ICF and other partners in the future.
 - Schrag inquired when the IFC anticipates completion, certification, and operation of the buildings may be. Caver responded that construction is ahead of expectations with two target completion dates having already been identified, April 2026 and August 2026, and anticipates all buildings will be completed, certified, and operational by September 2026.

- Rural Regional Center: Hammergren shared that while there was nothing new to add to the submitted report, he wanted to announce that the center underwent accreditation this week for dual diagnosis services through NAD. After a thorough review on Tuesday and Wednesday, they were awarded a three-year accreditation, which he described as an exciting and meaningful achievement. Hammergren expressed hope that other regional centers will also receive similar accreditation, and that the process highlighted the strong team culture across their widespread offices as well as provided valuable feedback for continued improvement.

After each agency was heard, Chair Schrag asked if there were any additional questions or comments from Commissioners. Commissioner Cooper praised the SNAMHS and Rural Clinics agencies' efforts to fill vacant positions, noting SNAMHS accomplishment in filling 33 vacant positions within a quarter and the Rural Clinics vacancy rate falling from 22% to 8%. Schrag followed up asking the agency managers present if there were any specific factors which contributed to the positive changes. Speaking on behalf of SNAMHS, Richardson-Adams submitted full credit to their HR staff who have actively worked to recruit for the position and program staff who followed up with timely interviews, background checks, and the like.

Schrag then asked for a motion of approval of the written and verbal agency reports as submitted.

MOTION: Commissioner Cooper made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ficalora.

PASSED: Unanimous.

Here Schrag paused the agenda to welcome Andrea Rivers as the new Administrator of the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH). After some initial technical difficulties with her microphone, Andrea was able to introduce herself. She shared that she has been with DPBH for nearly 23 years, starting in the Nevada Trauma Registry, and has held various roles in data analytics, maternal and child health, and fiscal services within the division. She previously served as Deputy Administrator over Fiscal Services and had been the Acting Administrator since late August before officially stepping into the Administrator role the previous Monday. Rivers expressed enthusiasm about her new position and her eagerness to collaborate with the Commission. Braden thanked her and reiterated his excitement about working together as well.

5. ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO ELECT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Chair Schrag asked for any questions, comments, or concerns from the commission members, none were heard. Chair Schrag then asked for a motion to approve the listed Commissioners to be added to the subcommittee.

MOTION: Commissioner Ficalora made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cooper.

PASSED: Unanimous.

6. ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED DCFS POLICY ON SUPERVISION AND PROCEDURES

Presenter: Kimberly Abbott, *Deputy Administrator for Children's Mental Health Services (DCFS)*

Summary: Abbott stated that this is her 12th week in the role and is still learning the department's procedures. She went on to explain that any new or updated policies must be approved by this governing body and since there was no existing policy clearly outlining supervision types- especially clinical supervision- a new policy was drafted by program managers and is now being presented for approval.

Chair Schrag opened the floor for any questions, comments, or concerns from the commission members.

Question: Commissioner Ficalora commented he was surprised to hear there had not already been a policy in place and asked what necessitated the addition to policy.

Response: Abbott responded that the process to revise policy had started before her time in her current position and that to her understanding there were concerns regarding processes in clinical supervision over interns, particularly when there are changes in supervising staff.

Building on Ficalora's question, Schrag proposed the agency perform an internal review to identify other critical operational areas which might benefit from additional policy updates, restructuring, or alignment to improve stability and risk mitigation. Schrag also encouraged other agencies present to do the same with a focus on streamlining processes, reducing "red-tape", and ensuring that essential functions are not overlooked- actions which ultimately protect procedures, personnel, and the communities served.

Abbott shared that going into 2026 there will be a major focus on overhauling outdated policies within children's mental health. Although the project began earlier, it had stalled and is now a top priority for the coming year. The goal is to review and revise all existing policies, assessing whether they are still needed, can be streamlined or combined, and identifying any gaps where new policies may be required.

Question: Commissioner Schembre questioned, "will the requirement for a Peer Recovery Support (PRS) specialist be to have a PRS supervisor as a requirement from the Nevada Certification Board?"

Response: Abbott answered, stating the policy was written by the agency's managers and clinicians. While she did not know the answer to that question, Marla McDade Williams, the Administrator for DCFS, took the floor to clarify that the peer supervision mentioned in the policy relates to clinical supervisors over interns, and PRS specialists are not part of DCFS scope.

Chair Schrag asked for any more questions, comments, or concerns from the commission members, none were heard. Chair Schrag then asked for a motion to approve the policy on supervision and procedures as presented.

MOTION: Commissioner Dan Ficalora made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nichole Schembre.

PASSED: Unanimous.

Schrag thanked Abbott and Williams for the presentation and advised that they reach out to the Commission for support in the future. Schrag also commented to Commissioners Schembre and Ficalora on their interest in the topic and suggested they reach out and provide additional support as well.

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

Presenter: Jessica Adams, *Interim Administrator (ADSD)*

Summary: Adams began her presentation noting recent Administration changes: Rique Robb, the original Administrator for ADSD, is now acting interim director, Adams has taken over as the interim administrator. As for health program updates, the agency's ARPA projects are moving forward with the first collaborative capacity building institute (CBI) project being near halfway through. CBI is a group of roughly 50 persons from various backgrounds across the state, "anything from direct support staff up to a psychiatrist". This cohort will be meeting two days a month for nine months, which started in July. The focus of the program is to discuss individuals with intellectual development disabilities (IDD) and complex needs, including dually diagnosed behavioral health issues. Another cohort will be opening for application in December with intention of starting the program in April and going through to December 2026. The agency has received good feedback on the program and expressed appreciation for the experience in bringing together these many types of professionals into the group. The agency was also able to use ARPA funds to receive certification and training through the National Association of the Dually Diagnosed. The organization recently did a site visit at the Rural Regional Center where the RRC was appointed a three-year accreditation. RRC was the first center or the rural centers to receive such, serving as "guinea pig" for the others. Adams finishes stating the other regional centers as well as various private providers will be doing additional training over the next year.

No questions or comments on the item were heard.

8. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT/DENIAL OF RIGHTS, ADSD

Presenter: Gujuan Caver, *Agency Manager (ICF)*

Summary: Caver specifically wanted to highlight the last three months of data from the submitted report- August, September, and October- and the slight increase in the number of restraints and individuals. Caver stated the increase is, "primarily related to one individual" who had arrived on campus the last week of July. Their team has mobilized a lot of clinical supports towards her clinical occupational therapies, as well as mental health counselor supports, on-site psychiatric support, and even referral to a recently contracted board-certified behavioral analyst group.

Chair Schrag states that he has a question in relation to the RADS reports but decided to abstain until after the Commission was able to hear Agenda Item 9. No further questions or comments on the item were heard.

9. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT/DENIAL OF RIGHTS, DPBH

Presenter: Susan Lynch, *Hospital Administrator (SNAMHS)*

Summary: Lynch stated that, while there weren't any changes in the report for the quarter, she wanted to highlight that both NNAMHS and SNAMHS showed a decrease in restraint incidents after May.

Question: Commissioner Cooper questioned why, in reference to slides 17 & 18, reporting on evaluation clients appears to stop in FY23.

Response: Lynch explained that the Division no longer accepted those clients into facilities at that point, due to a shift that focused more on the restoration and long-term commitment clients. She calls on Drew Cross, the forensic director, for more information. Cross added that clients under NRS 178.415 are now managed by the county jurisdiction of

the court once they are deemed incompetent to stand trial; whereafter, they are then committed to in/out-patient forensic services.

No further questions or comments on the item were heard.

It's here that Chair Schrag shared his comment, emphasizing the ongoing effort to standardize the seclusion and restraint process across both adult and pediatric populations. He requested that the Commission review related forms before the next meeting and direct any concerns to the supporting administrative assistants (Faythe and Kelli) for further review. Schrag then also raised concern about a recent judicial injunction that temporarily halted a state investigation into a children's facility. Marla McDade Williams confirmed the injunction, noting a 14-day pause on inspections pending a court decision. Due to the topic's sensitivity and absence from the agenda, Ellen Richardson-Adams recommended deferring the discussion to a future meeting. Vice Chair Ruiz-Lee supported this and suggested the Commission explore the broader challenges investigators face, including legal and procedural barriers, and consider potential statutory or advocacy solutions. It was decided the topic will be added to a future agenda for a more comprehensive discussion, once additional information becomes available.

10. ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF 2025 MEETING DATES WITH THE DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH – COMMISSION

The following meeting dates were prepared by Kelli Knutzon for approval:

- January 15th, 2026
- March 19th, 2026
- May 21st, 2026
- July 16th, 2026
- September 17th, 2026
- November 19th, 2026

Summary: Beginning the discussion, Commissioner Cooper noted she would be unavailable for the March and September meetings due to work-related training but could attend if those dates were adjusted. Commissioner Schembre inquired about the scheduling of the new Subcommittee for Children's Behavioral Health, and it was confirmed that those dates would be publicly set early in the new year. Schrag proposed moving the January 15th meeting to January 8th due to a scheduling conflict, and after confirming availability with other commissioners, the change was agreed upon. No other changes were made; however, Schrag acknowledged to make adjustments for Commissioner Cooper when those other conflicting dates are closer.

Chair Schrag then asked for a motion to approve the schedule for 2026 with the change of January 8th instead of the 15th.

MOTION: Commissioner Cooper made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruiz-Lee.

PASSED: Unanimous.

11. ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION, IDENTIFICATION, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – COMMISSION

Summary:

Two items were proposed:

1. As previously reviewed, Chair Schrag proposed a future discussion to better understand the current court injunction affecting DCFS and the state's inspection of facilities.
 - Commissioner Ficalora added inviting the organization involved in the inspection-related litigation to share their perspective, acknowledging that their participation may depend on the status of ongoing legal proceedings. Schrag agreed and emphasized the importance of offering the opportunity to speak.
2. Schrag also suggested a Commission review of the seclusion and restraint reporting forms and emphasized ensuring all members have access to the necessary materials by the January 8th meeting.

No additional agenda items were proposed, but members were encouraged to send suggestions to Kelli and Faythe.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No comments were heard at this time.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Schrag expressed appreciation for the Commissioners' dedication, collaboration, and commitment to serving the community, wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season, and adjourned the meeting at 10:06am.