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MS
Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



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Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention (BBHWP) Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council (BHPAC)

Meeting Minutes

Monday January 5, 2026

11:00 a.m. PST Until adjournment

This meeting was held using remote technology in compliance with Nevada Revised Statute 241.023

1. Call to Order

Present Members:	Absent Members:
<input type="checkbox"/> Anna Binder	<input type="checkbox"/> Drew Skeen
<input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Pearl Kim	<input type="checkbox"/> Isabella Tran
<input type="checkbox"/> Franklyn Morris	<input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Krista Hales
<input type="checkbox"/> Allison Wall	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana Miler
<input type="checkbox"/> Ariana Saunders	
<input type="checkbox"/> French Daфинone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lori Kearse	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lauren Wynn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sarah Dearborn	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tiffany Bearden	
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeneeah Girma	

Jennifer Tongol Lee took roll call, and it was determined that Quorum was met. Meeting called to order at 11:05 AM.

2. Public Comment

No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment unless the matter itself has been specifically included on the agenda as an action item. To provide public comment by phone, dial 775-321-6111 and enter phone conference ID: 685418807#. Comments will be limited

to three (3) minutes per person. Persons making a comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name.

No public comment was made.

3. For Possible Action – Approval of December 15th, 2025, BHPAC meeting minutes. (For Possible Action).

Vice Chair Anna Binder motioned to approve followed by a second from Jeneeah Girma. A unanimous approval vote was made by the council.

4. For Information Only – BHPAC Member Updates/Introduction.

Chair Ariana Saunders stated there are four new members who joined the council last month with three of the four members present.

Michael Galper introduced himself as new resident of Nevada, who has been here about a year. Mr. Galper was a healthcare consulting partner with Price water house Coopers for 27 years. While in Los Angeles he was the chairman of the board of mental health organization for five years. Spent 15 years on the board and currently faculty at the UCLA School of Public Health in the Department of Health Policy and Management.

Jamie Ross introduced herself and currently resides in Las Vegas. Ms. Ross is the coach, vice chair of the Clark Regional Health Policy Board, the former Co-Chair of the SAPTA Advisory Board, the CEO of PACT Coalition, which is a certified substance use prevention coalition out of Las Vegas, Director of the Nevada Statewide Coalition Partnership, as well as the Co-Chair of the Southern Nevada Opioid Advisory Council. Ms. Ross expertise is in the prevention of substance use, convening partners being a coalition member.

Lauren Wynn introduced herself and currently resides in Elko. Ms. Wynn is the executive director of PACE Coalition, also focusing on substance use prevention serving Elko, Eureka and White Pine County. Lauren has lived most of her life in rural Nevada and knows the need for more Behavioral Health resources in the area. Having a daughter who's 12 years old on the autism spectrum and going through all the steps with the schools and lack of services in the rural areas has gained Ms. Wynn has a lot of knowledge on which resources need to be increased in our areas.

Vice Chair Anna Binder stated she is also a member of the Commission on Autism spectrum disorder, and they are currently looking for a rural parent to join. If anyone is wanting more information, it is exactly how you applied for this Council through the Governor's board office and then for the seat and put in parent of a rural child.

5. For information Only – Presentation on Strategic Plan by Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention.

Stephanie Cook wanted to share January marks substance use treatment month and that many individuals in the substance use space are doing a lot of activities for substance use treatment month, which is acknowledged every year.

A presentation by the Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention was shared by Ms. Cook. Ms. Cook stated the presentation, and the strategic plan will both be posted to the Bureau's new website which was created in the last few months.

- From 19:45 – 23:14 the BHPAC meeting had a disruption during the online meeting. Two individuals labeled as “John” and “William” unmuted their microphones and turned on their cameras, swearing repeatedly while displaying sexually graphic and racist videos.

Chair Saunders instructed the meeting participants to leave the meeting.

Tierra Sears, who was administering the meeting removed the two individuals’ access to the meeting and at 23:15 the meeting had resumed while still holding the number of individuals present to hold quorum.

Ms. Cook shared what our mission here is at Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention. Our mission is to promote, protect and improve the physical and behavioral health and safety of all people in Nevada equitably and regardless of circumstances so they can live their longest, safest, healthiest and happiest lives.

Ms. Cook shared our vision for Nevada, where preventable health and safety issues no longer impact the opportunity for all people to live life in the best possible health, and our purpose is to make everyone’s life healthier, happier longer and safer.

Ms. Cook continued with sharing the strategic plan, which includes the methodology we used. The assessment and findings relate to as we look at strategies moving forward.

A link of the strategic plan which is posted to the Bureaus website is linked below.

[Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention Needs Assessment Findings and Strategic Plan \(2025-2030\)](#)

Ms. Cook encouraged everyone to look at the strategic plan which is broken down by all the component groups and will be happy to answer any questions.

Ms. Girma stated that she appreciated the holistic approach to the strategic plan as a newer council member. However, as the affordable housing liaison, she is very pleased to see how much attention to detail has gone into identifying barriers to housing for not only recovery those facing addiction and recovery supports. Hoping this is the type of research and work that will help expand supportive housing throughout the state. Had a great run of funding for attainable housing and supportive housing and that this will play a huge piece. Thank you and Ms. Girma, concur.

Lori Kearse questioned the demographics when you surveyed people, what were the individuals made up of in terms of cultural race, language?

Ms. Cook stated the demographics are unknown and could follow up on that, and the criteria for the community members that we were looking for to participate in the needs assessment were somebody that had lived experience, either access trying to access care or had access care. As well as a mental health diagnosis or substance use diagnosis. Anybody with lived experience that has touched the behavioral health continuum at some point.

Ms. Kearse also had a question about different barriers for individuals and noticed language wasn’t included in that, was that looked at individuals not accessing different types of service like transportation. Was language included?

Ms. Cook stated based on the community members, they had focus groups. Not something that was brought up to the forefront as to why someone wasn't accessing care is why it's not shown in the plan.

Ms. Kearse wanted to comment about making different resources available. You have to have recreation services available for people that are meaningful, giving us joy and hope. With gambling addiction people are going off the endorphins in the brain, we could have the same thing with recreational activities. With the wrap around services, recreational services need to include families and individuals. When Ms. Kearse attended school in 1997 in recreation class, some of the best public recreation agencies coming out of Clark County were at the top, when we moved here tons of resources, one of the things as a retired state employee never tapped into the resources in. The city of Las Vegas as well as the rural areas to help with juvenile justice kids and foster kids were getting no type of support and people didn't know how to reach out, trying to find what they could to create activities.

Data collection- Ms. Kearse stated one of the problems is data collection. In this state there never seems to be very little follow-through on the data that is collected. So, we can recognize and identify there is a problem.

Mr. Galper questioned the process regarding the strategic plan. On a yearly basis will you be presenting how we have done versus the plan? What is the process of keeping us updated? What has been implemented, what still needs to be done and how have you progressed towards the plan?

Ms. Cook stated the Bureau is looking at establishing a tracker to track all the various things. Looking at how to capture this all-in-one place and reporting out every year is the intention. We are spending this first year establishing where does the baseline data comes from. Establishing, creating, checking datasets every year or every quarter to ensure the strategic plan is moving the dial in the right way.

We plan on presenting yearly what we got our structure to look like on what initiatives focusing on to touch these various component group of our plan and then what progress has been made. We also intend to release funding and have you submit an application if you're interested and being more intentional about what we see in our plan, what gaps we know are out there and intentionally putting forth our efforts to meet those needs.

Mr. Galper stated one of the things that I find helpful when you implement a strategic plan is taking those goals and putting them into the HR system and how you evaluate the key leaders within the department. Has that been considered or how is the leadership going to be evaluated as far as moving towards the strategic plan?

Ms. Cook stated what we identified in this process is the kind of shift in how we historically managed things in the Bureau. Because everything is Co-occurring, our Bureau kind of all works together a lot on these projects. With the strategic plan and the focus, we have on a lot of these higher-level projects, I think it's clear that a lot of systems and policy stuff must happen. Working at the higher level is going to be more different for the main components of our Bureau in getting the stakeholders to the table and working at that level instead of pushing money out the door to all the community partners without understanding that those projects are of highest need. We are shifting to focus on every subgrant or contract

that we push out the door tied to a strategy in our plan. The strategic plan is telling us more that there's a policy and system environmental change that must happen, not always pushing something out the door. We are restructuring ourselves in that way and aligning that very early, pulling all these things together in how it aligns with our plan.

Vice Chair Binder stated for example at the Early Childhood Advisory Council, we got grant funds during COVID and one of our projects was to do a system alignment, which took years going through every potential data source in early childhood in the State of Nevada and created relationships, sources and data sharing. Sometime in this quarter the Nevada Department of Education is going to be showing Nevada the results of that work. When Vice Chair Binder saw that in the plan and as we are talking about data, a goal within the department is to reach down into the system and make a forward-facing dashboard so anybody can go in and eventually what you can align will be there?

Ms. Cook stated we are looking at pulling the best data to tell certain stories. We need to be more intentional with what stories we're telling instead of just broad. Everybody needs behavioral health services and figuring out how to dive deeper than just that and pulling systems together to do that. It could be dashboards; it could be reports like annual reports on how kids are doing with accessing after school activities. Really looking at intentional report building or dashboards. As it relates to the current data that we currently get, how can we take the data and present it in a way that makes sense to the people. We have a lot of data sets right now as it relates to services, treatment, and mental health treatment for the agencies that are certified by us. We are starting is our certified agencies by taking that data and seeing those agencies that we certify start with that data and pull it together and present it, like Ms. Kearse said earlier, keep track of the data as we move and then trend it out as we start looking at impact.

Vice Chair Binder stated comparably over the DD council we award sub grants and we have a dedicated agenda item for those awardees to have space on our agenda as if they were experiencing any barriers or issues or anything just to keep us updated of where they are in the process. We have a lot more grantees than my council, I don't see how that could work here. In other conversations with Shannon Bennett, I would hope that there is a reporting mechanism for them that they're encouraged to reach out sooner than later because if you are going to be reporting back annually on this, there's a lot of damage and wasted funds that could happen if one of these contracts isn't able to fulfill the strategy that they were funded for. Another concern is where does the Bureau see the greatest value in BHPAC's involvement across the agencies? Support policy, support the data, support what role do you think the Bureau's looking for us to fulfill as you guys are implementing the new strategic plan?

Ms. Cook stated collecting data is a continuous process for the Bureau. We have about 160 subgrants in our Bureau right now and pulling together that data monthly is what we require. It's not always the same types of data is the problem. We have to group data sets based on the subgrant or contract we're issuing on where the data falls, then the grouping data together is what we do and then our teams meet with or sub awardees or contractors monthly for technical assistance and talk about all those items. We also track with quarterly reports about the progress of all our funded entities.

With BHPAC involvement we look at establishing the baseline of all these things. We will probably need the BHPAC's help to ensure we're not missing component groups or missing

maybe baseline data efforts that we haven't thought about. As we look at disseminating some of this information, I talked about our anti-stigma campaign earlier. The gold standard for anti-stigma campaign for the state is where we're hoping to go. Ensuring we can get that out and support throughout all our component groups. BHPAC is one of them to really get that established out and then as we work on various projects in these spaces, just the Advisory Council helping us to ensure that we're not missing certain pieces and that this information is known to the BHPAC and you can help us figure out the missing ideas or gaps in all of this. I think if we were just to look at the strategic plan, it would be big with all the different components. We are dialing in with each strategy on how we can touch that strategy and then working with you all as the BHPAC to make sure we've got the right people at the table doing the right thing and helping us heading us forward down the path.

Vice Chair Binder stated she is probably five steps ahead. Already drafted a workbook aligned with the strategic plan and will talk more at one of our future agenda items.

Ms. Kearse had a concern of a challenge when in this data around the country is that people with mental illness, mental health and addiction problems usually end up in the criminal justice system. We tend in this country, practice from the moral theory of addiction. We practice with that bad person; you choose that you must be punished. With others that are not familiar with the addiction they don't think of the bio, psych, social or the medical or disease concept. They think of moral things. How do we remove that stigma? I think that is going to be a challenge.

I think by tracking our progress with what changes are going on, what, where their barriers are, what needs to be modified when you need to bring in another expert somewhere is so critical.

Chair Saunders added what you highlighted about the stigma and people ending up being in the justice system as some of the executive orders that came out around our COC funding and housing first principles as a council that is under Chair Saunders and Ms. Girma professional area supportive housing and will keep an eye on that as well because that is going to put a lot of demand on the state as well and how to address those.

Vice Chair Binder stated there are additional questions that she has for Ms. Cook and Ms. Bennett and will email them over separately.

Ms. Cook stated she can pull the questions together and maybe a FAQ and pull together a FAQ for our various presentations.

Chair Saunders encouraged council members to take some time and to sit with this information on the strategic plan. If anything comes up to please email Chair Saunders, Vice Chair Binder and the BHPAC email and we can start pulling those emails maybe as a council. We just want to all stay informed and educated.

6. For Possible Action- Vote on nominating sub-committee members (For possible Action)

Chair Saunders stated she has two volunteers, Montana Miller and Krista Hales, to be elected to our nominations committee and would like a motion for anybody to have the council officially vote them in.

Vice Chair Binder motioned, followed by Mr. Galper with a second. No discussion. Nine members approved with no one opposed. Motion passed with two new members.

7. For Possible Action – Discussion for next meeting agenda topics. (For possible Action)

Chair Saunders stated we have proposed by the Bureau is they want to review some proposed regulations for the council.

8. For Possible Action – Vote on future meeting dates discussed 12/15/2025. (For Possible Action)

Vice Chair Binder shared the proposed BHPAC meeting schedule for the year and would like the council to vote on the days.

March 2nd, 2026, at 11:00am

May 4th, 2026, at 11:00am

July 13th, 2026, at 11:00am

September 14th, 2026, at 11:00am

November 9th, 2026, at 11:00am

Ms. Kearse motioned to approve, and Dr. Kim seconded the motion. Ten approvals from the council with no one opposing and no abstentions. Motioned carries unanimous.

9. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 PM.

