

Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health – Joint Meeting
State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services (§ 71-814)
State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (§ 71-815)

April 9, 2026 – In Person Meeting

Country Inn and Suites, 5353 No. 27th Street, Lincoln, NE 68521

Meeting agenda and materials will be posted on the DBH website page Public Participation and State Committees URL <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/behavioral-health-public-participation.aspx>

- I. **Open Meeting – 9:00 a.m.**

Mike Tefft, Chair, Substance Abuse Committee
Timothy Heller, Chair, Mental Health Committee

Open Meetings Law & Housekeeping	Inform	Mike Tefft, Timothy Heller
Quorum for Committees - Attendance	Roll Call	Jeri Keller-Heuke
- II. **Membership Business**
 - a. Meeting Minutes Chairpersons

Substance Abuse Committee Roll Call Vote on minutes from:
November 16, 2023; August 22, 2024; November 14, 2024;
May 1, 2025; August 7, 2025; November 13, 2025 Chair Tefft

Mental Health Committee Roll Call Vote on minutes from:
August 7, 2025 and November 13, 2025 Chair Heller
 - b. 2026 Meeting Schedule Reminder Chair Heller
- III. **Opioid Treatment Infrastructure Cash Fund – Construction Update** Reecha Dixit
- IV. **Service Definitions – Updates & Shared Definitions with MLTC** Dep. Dir. Jessica McDevitt
- V. **Nebraska Range Fires – Behavioral Health Resources** Paige McDowell
- VI. **Public Comment – 10:00 a.m.**
 - a. Each person wishing to speak at the meeting should sign up on the Public Comment Sign-in Sheet.
 - b. Each person will be called on from the Public Comment Sign-in Sheet; they may have five minutes.
 - c. Public comments not provided verbally may be sent to: Division of Behavioral Health, Attn: John Trouba.
- VII. **Break**
- VIII. **Community Behavioral Health Trending Matters** JAC Members
- IX. **Director’s Update** Dir. Thomas Janousek
- X. **State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services Bylaws** Chair Heller
- XI. **Lunch – 12:00 p.m.**
- XII. **Public Comments – 1:00 p.m.** Chairpersons
- XIII. **2027 SAMHSA Combined Block Grant Mini-Application** Betty Jean Usher-Tate
 - a. Block Grant Priority Areas & Goals - Discussion and Recommendations
- XIV. **Recovery Friendly Workplace** Payton Shreves
- XV. **Last Official Meeting of the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services** Chair Tefft
- XVI. **Meeting Wrap Up – Next Meeting August 6, 2026** Chairpersons
- XVII. **Adjourn –** Chairpersons

Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health – Joint Meeting
State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services - (§ 71-814)
State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (§ 71-815)

August 7, 2025

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road Suite A, Lincoln, NE

9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

I. Open Meeting

Call to Order/Welcome – Mike Tefft, Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services, called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Chair Tefft welcomed attendees to the meeting. Timothy Heller, Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services, welcomed attendees also. Chair Tefft informed the attendees that the joint meeting follows the **Open Meeting Act**, which was posted near the meeting room entrance, and can be found on the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) website identified on the agenda. Chair Tefft informed attendees there would be an opportunity for Public Comment later in the meeting as identified on the agenda.

Quorum for Committees

Roll call was conducted, and quorum met, for the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services (Mental Health Committee), with 11 members present. Roll call was conducted, but quorum was not met, for the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (Substance Abuse Committee), with 5 members present.

State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services

Members in Attendance: Heather Bird, Heather Crawford (late arrival), Jill Gregg, Kelli Means, Gage Stermensky, Mike Tefft.

Members Absent: Leah O'Brien.

State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services

Members in Attendance: Verdell Bohling, Mary Ann Borgeson, Micki Charf, Margaret Damme, Roger Donovanick (late arrival), Lindy Foley (late arrival), Ingrid Gansebom, Victor Gehrig, Timothy Heller, David Kass, Kristen Larsen, Angela Miles, Carisa Schweitzer Masek.

Members Absent: Susan Jensen, Tracy Jordan, Kyle Long, Jennifer Reyna, Melody Sandona, Danielle Smith, Paul Zeiger.

DHHS Staff

In Attendance: Jessie Case, Reecha Dixit, Jacob Grell, Candice Helem, Delainie Johnson, Thomas Janousek, Jeri Keller-Heuke, Ashley Lampkin, Paige McDowell, Valerie Standeven, John Trouba, Betty Jean Usher-Tate, Erica Ziemann.

II. Membership Business

- a) All attendees introduced themselves.

b) Meeting Minutes—

Mental Health Committee Chair Heller presented the November 16, 2023, August 22, 2024, November 14, 2024, and May 1, 2025 meeting minutes for the Mental Health Committee's review. Chair Heller asked if there were any corrections or comments. Hearing none, Chair Heller asked for a motion to accept the November 16, 2023, August 22, 2024, November 14, 2024, and May 1, 2025 meeting minutes as written. Motion was made by Mary Ann Borgeson, and seconded by Victor Gehrig, to accept all minutes as written. Roll call vote was conducted, and minutes approved, with the following results:

Yea: Verdell Bohling, Mary Ann Borgeson, Micki Charf, Margaret Damme, Ingrid Ganseboom, Victor Gehrig, Timothy Heller, David Kass, Kristen Larson, Angela Miles, Carisa Schweitzer Masek.

Nay: None.

Abstain: none.

Because there was no quorum on the Substance Abuse Committee, the business items of this committee approving the November 16, 2023, August 22, 2024, November 14, 2024, and May 1, 2025 meeting minutes could not be addressed.

c) Election of Officers for Calendar Year 2025 –

Mental Health Committee Chair Heller asked for nominations for officers for the Mental Health Committee.

Tim Heller was nominated for Chairperson; Jennifer Reyna was nominated for Vice Chairperson; Victor Gehrig was nominated for Secretary. Hearing no further nominations, a motion to close nominations was made and seconded. Chair Heller opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, votes were made by acclamation. Tim Heller was declared to be the elected Mental Health Committee Chairperson for CY2025. Jennifer Reyna was declared to be the elected Mental Health Committee Vice Chairperson for CY2025. Victor Gehrig was declared to be the elected Mental Health Committee Secretary for CY2025.

These officers will begin serving in their respective capacity on November 13, 2025.

Elections for Substance Abuse Committee officers could not be held due to lack of quorum for the committee. Elections for this committee's officers will be held at the November 13, 2025 meeting.

Ashley Lampkin, Office of Consumer Affairs Program Coordinator, discussed the upcoming Recovery Month activities planned for September 28th. Recovery Month is an opportunity to promote and support recovery practices while highlighting recovery-centered initiatives, recognizing the efforts of service providers and communities, and increasing public awareness around substance use recovery in Nebraska among individuals, families, providers, organizations, officials, and the broader public. The upcoming Recovery Month event will be held on Sunday, September 28th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM, with vendor setup beginning at 12:00 PM. Those interested in becoming a vendor should reach out to the

Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) at dhhs.dbhoca@nebraska.gov. The keynote speaker for the event will be David Swan from House of Hope, who will be sharing his personal and inspirational recovery story. An email has been sent out regarding Recovery Month Award nominations. There are three categories: Excellence in Recovery and Resiliency; Excellence in Prevention; and Excellence in Behavioral Health Treatment. Award winners will be announced and recognized at the end of the Recovery Month event.

Jacob Grell, DBH Housing Administrator, gave an overview of Nebraska's FY2026-2031 Olmstead Plan and Housing Goals. The new Olmstead Plan was added to the Nebraska Legislature website on 7/29/2025. This new plan addresses the broad scope consistent with Olmstead decision that people with disabilities have access to services in the most integrated settings.

Specific Housing goal: Nebraskans with disabilities will have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing in the communities in which they choose to live. There are four major goals in this area:

- 1) Cross-listed resources to enhance access to affordable and accessible housing for individuals with disabilities.
- 2) Increase housing access for individuals with Severe Mental Illness (SMI).
 - a) Identify process gaps.
 - b) Pilot training. Developing a statewide coordinated referral and tracking system. Some aspects of this may be borrowed from the Coordinated Entry process HUD mandates for CoC grantees.
 - c) Publish resources.
 - d) Evaluate for expansion.
- 3) Strengthen data and planning to address gaps in affordable and accessible housing.
- 4) Support individuals to stay in their homes.

Explained the Coordinated Entry process that entails an initial vulnerability assessment. The score on the assessment determines where the respondent will be on the binding housing list specific to the geographical Continuum of Care (CoC) receiving HUD funding.

Housing providers funded by HUD then offer housing interventions and support services to those on the top of the list when a housing opportunity is available.

The individual then works with support staff on identifying housing options and support services in which they are eligible.

III. Presentation

Dianne DeLair, Legal Services Director for Disability Rights Nebraska, gave an overview of the organization's work and purpose in supporting and advocating for Nebraska citizens with disabilities.

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments received during the morning Public Comment opportunity.

V. Break

VI. SAMHSA Block Grant Application

Valerie Standeven, DBH Budget Officer, Dr. Betty Jean Usher-Tate, DBH Data & QI Administrator, and Delainie Johnson, DBH Prevention Administrator, presented the SAMHSA Block Grant Application for FY26/27.

FFY26-FFY27 2-Year Planned Expenditures for the Block Grant Application were presented. This application is due to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) by September 1, 2025. Planned expenditures for this time period are broken down into four categories: Substance Abuse Block Grant, Mental Health Block Grant, Other Federal Funds, and State Funds. Presentation is attached at the end of these minutes.

Priority Areas are focused on critical areas for treatment and recovery success, including stable housing outcomes, employment, person-centered care, and access to treatment and support systems in one's community. The seven Block Grant Priority Areas are: #1-Prevention of binge drinking among youth and young adults; #2-Increase the use of Evidence-Based Strategies employed by prevention coalitions; #3-Consumers in Stable Living Arrangement at discharge from residential services; #4-Percentage of consumers in the labor market who are employed at discharge; #5-Access for Priority Populations to SUD services; #6-Increase utilization of treatment programs for first-episode psychosis; and #7-Referral to services for persons with tuberculosis. For FY25, 22,853 persons have been served by DBH community-based services. This number has declined slightly due to increases in Medicaid and marketplace insurance coverage. Discussion centered on types of data available to DBH in creating targets for each priority area.

Director's Update

Dr. Thomas Janousek, DBH Director, highlighted several updates within the Division of Behavioral Health.

LB346 – This bill was passed during the 109th legislative session in June 2025. This law provides for the termination or combination of various boards, committees, councils, etc. throughout state agencies. This will impact the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), as this committee is comprised of two separate committees on Mental Health and Substance Abuse. This will most likely require updating the committees' by-laws.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) –Seven providers have been chosen as the initial CCBHCs. Two providers, South Central Behavioral Health Services and Heartland Counseling Services, now have official designation as CCBHCs. Operations are slated to begin on January 1, 2026.

Pathways Home Waivers – These waivers target the Serious Mental Illness (SMI) population and are the result of a Department of Justice (DOJ) findings outcome. The case management system is being built, with the goal of moving interested consumers from residence or day programs to supported employment, community support and in-home services. November 1, 2025, is the projected live date.

Opioid Settlement Funds – Grant applications began on July 1, 2025, for settlement funds held at the state level. These funds are intended for infrastructure use, since regional and municipality funds are targeting prevention and treatment activities.

Service Definition Project – DBH and Medicaid continue to work on aligning service definitions with each other so that consumers who transition between payors will see minimal differences in their services.

VII. Public Comment

There were no public comments received during the afternoon Public Comment opportunity.

VIII. Opioid Settlement Infrastructure RFA

Reecha Dixit, DBH Opioid Remediation Program Coordinator, reviewed the recent Opioid Treatment Infrastructure Cash Fund Request for Applications (RFA). This RFA started on July 1, 2025, and closed on August 1, 2025. Approximately 24 applications were received and are currently being reviewed. This grant opportunity stems from LB1355 from 2024, which created the infrastructure cash fund. Details of this funding process and application requirements were presented to the committee.

IX. Review of Committee By-Laws

Chair Heller noted that the committee's bylaws will be reviewed at the next meeting, since there may be possible restructuring of this committee.

X. For the Good of the Order Roundtable

Members suggested possible topics for the next meeting, which include: Dr. Janousek discussing outpatient therapy; a review of the 988 hotline and the removal of the LGBTQ option; and review of the committee's bylaws, with emphasis on a possible new quorum number and attendance requirements.

XI. Meeting Wrap Up

The next Joint Advisory Committee meeting will be November 13, 2025, with location to be determined. Members were reminded that Substance Abuse Committee officer elections, bylaws review, and Substance Abuse Committee approval of the November 16, 2023, August 22, 2024, November 14, 2024, and May 1, 2025 minutes will be conducted during this meeting.

XII. Adjournment

Chair Tefft and Chair Heller declared the meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health – Joint Meeting
State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services - (§ 71-814)
State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (§ 71-815)

November 13, 2025

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road Suite A, Lincoln, NE

9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

I. Open Meeting

Call to Order/Welcome – Mike Tefft, Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services, called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Chair Tefft welcomed attendees to the meeting. Victor Gehrig, Secretary of the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services, acting on behalf of Chair Timothy Heller, welcomed attendees also. Chair Tefft informed the attendees that the joint meeting follows the **Open Meeting Act**, which was posted near the meeting room entrance, and can be found on the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) website identified on the agenda. Chair Tefft informed attendees there would be an opportunity for Public Comment later in the meeting as identified on the agenda.

Quorum for Committees

Roll call was conducted, but quorum was not met, for the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services (Mental Health Committee), with 6 members present. Roll call was conducted, but quorum was not met, for the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (Substance Abuse Committee), with 4 members present.

State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services

Members in Attendance: Heather Bird, Heather Crawford (late arrival), Jill Gregg, Kelli Means, Mike Tefft.

Members Absent: Leah O'Brien, Gage Stermensky.

State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services

Members in Attendance: Verdell Bohling, Margaret Damme, Roger Donovanick (late arrival), Victor Gehrig, Timothy Heller, David Kass, Kristen Larsen.

Members Absent: Mary Ann Borgeson, Micki Charf, Lindy Foley, Ingrid Gansebom, Susan Jensen, Tracy Jordan, Kyle Long, Angela Miles, Jennifer Reyna, Melody Sandona, Carisa Schweitzer Masek, Danielle Smith, Paul Zeiger.

DHHS Staff

In Attendance: Jacob Grell, Thomas Janousek, Jeri Keller-Heuke, Diana Meadors, Rachel Meier, Dawn Peters, Jobert Tiendrebeogo, John Trouba, Betty Jean Usher-Tate.

II. Membership Business

- a) All attendees introduced themselves.

b) Meeting Minutes—

Because there was no quorum for the Mental Health Committee, the business item of this committee approving the August 7, 2025, meeting minutes could not be addressed.

Because there was no quorum for the Substance Abuse Committee, the business items of this committee approving November 16, 2023, August 22, 2024, November 14, 2024, May 1, 2025, and August 7, 2025, meeting minutes could not be addressed.

c) Election of Officers for Calendar Year 2026 –

Elections for Substance Abuse Committee officers could not be held due to lack of quorum for the committee. Elections for this committee’s officers will be held at the first meeting of 2026.

Mental Health Committee officers were elected at the August 7, 2025, meeting.

Tim Heller is the elected Mental Health Committee Chairperson for CY2026. Jennifer Reyna is the elected Mental Health Committee Vice Chairperson for CY2026. Victor Gehrig is the elected Mental Health Committee Secretary for CY2026.

These officers will begin serving in their respective capacity on November 13, 2025.

d) 2026 Meeting Schedule –

Possible dates for the calendar year 2026 Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meetings were reviewed. Dates selected for the CY2026 JAC meetings are April 9, August 6, and November 12. The locations of the 2026 meetings have yet to be determined.

III. Presentation

Jackie Alba, Senior Outreach Coordinator for Oxford House, Inc. presented an overview of the organization’s work in supporting and advocating for Nebraska citizens working through substance abuse issues.

IV. Public Comment

Dr. Ryan Carruthers from CenterPointe in Omaha thanked committee members for their service. Concerns were expressed regarding the amount of notice given on amending contracts to end funding.

Brad Negrete from Lutheran Family Services stated that the recent change in billing rates for crisis services is not sufficient for their organization to cover necessary components and staffing for this service.

V. Break

VI. 2025 SAMHSA Block Grant Implementation Reports

Dr. Betty Jean Usher-Tate, DBH Data & QI Administrator, and Jobert Tiendrebeogo, DBH Epidemiologist, presented the 2025 SAMHSA Block Grant Implementation Reports.

The FFY 2026 Annual Synar Report, including history, requirements and timelines, was shared. For FFY2026, 291 inspections were completed, with 44 violations, resulting in a 15.1% violation rate. This violation rate is below the federal requirement of 20.0%. Retailer violation rates were broken down by region, sex of the cooperating individuals (CIs), tobacco type, and retail type. It was noted that “vape shops” are considered as tobacco stores for the purpose of this report. Several recommendations were made in the areas of law and policy, environmental enforcement, and media messaging.

The DBH Block Grant Priority Areas Close Out Review for SFY2024-SFY2025 was presented. DBH is currently reviewing and revising the Year 1 2026-2027 Block Grant Application submission that was sent to SAMHSA on September 1, 2025.

Priority areas of the block grant are focused on critical areas for treatment and recovery success, including stable housing outcomes, employment, person-centered care, and access to treatment and support systems in one’s community. The eight Block Grant Priority Areas are: #1-Prevention of binge drinking among youth and young adults; #2-Increase the use of Evidence-Based Strategies employed by prevention coalitions; #3-Consumers in Stable Living Arrangement at discharge from residential services; #4-Percentage of consumers in the labor market who are employed at discharge; #5-Access for Priority Populations to SUD services; #6-Increase utilization of treatment programs for first-episode psychosis; #7-Referral to services for persons with tuberculosis, and #8-988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline dashboards. For FY25, 22,898 persons have been served by DBH community-based services.

VII. Public Comments

There were no public comments received during the afternoon Public Comment opportunity.

VIII. Pathways Home – 1915(i) Waiver

Dawn Peters, DBH Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Waiver Administrator, reviewed the 1915(i) Waiver: Pathways Home program, which is the result of the Department of Justice’s findings in Nebraska. This program is scheduled to go live on January 1, 2026, pending approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). There will be six types of voluntary waivers that will be similar to Developmental Disability (DD) waivers. DBH currently has three staff members who will use prescribed criteria to determine eligibility on submitted applications. There are approximately 55 providers statewide between DD and DBH.

IX. Director’s Update

Dr. Thomas Janousek, DBH Director, highlighted several updates within the Division of Behavioral Health.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) –Seven providers have been finalized as CCBHCs. Work currently focuses on technical aspects of the program, and there is continual communication with the providers.

Opioid Settlement Funds – A Request for Applications (RFA) was issued this summer to qualified entities to renovate, develop, or expand facilities to implement treatment programs and services for

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and/or Substance Use Disorder (SUD). 24 applications were received, with 5 being approved for a total of \$10.5 million. Awardees were notified at the end of August. Funds have not yet been disbursed as DBH is currently evaluating timelines for implementation.

Crisis Stabilization services are being created in the panhandle and in South Sioux City. Three other areas of the state will be expanding their current services. These services will be expanded beyond just opioids, in accordance with “Exhibit E – List of Opioid Remediation Uses”.

Service Definition Project – DBH and Medicaid have combined service definitions on shared services in order to be consistent for consumers. A manual will be posted for public comment in the coming months.

Rural Health Transformation Funds – These federal funds are intended to expand health care access in rural areas. States can receive \$100 million per year for five years; Nebraska has submitted a proposal for \$200 million per year. Public Health funds could cover such things as healthy foods, weight loss programs and medications, health education, and technologies. Mental Health funds could cover integrated clinics, crisis center renovations to expand services, integrated mobile crisis platforms, and a pilot program for nursing homes to expand care to behavioral health patients with higher needs.

2026 Initiatives –

1. Plans to clean up and integrate Medicaid data with DBH.
2. Review the use of Outpatient Competency Restoration (OCR) and Emergency Protective Custody (EPC) for individuals with misdemeanor charges.

ARPA Funds – In March, the federal government cut these funds effective immediately. Because of this, state contracts were updated without a standard 30-day notice.

X. For the Good of the Order Roundtable

It was requested that DBH send a reminder email to committee members of the chosen meeting dates for 2026. It was also requested that speakers use microphones if they are available in the meeting room.

XI. Meeting Wrap Up

The next Joint Advisory Committee meeting will be April 9, 2026, with location to be determined. Members were reminded that Substance Abuse Committee officer elections, Mental Health Committee approval of August 7, 2025, minutes, and Substance Abuse Committee approval of November 16, 2023, August 22, 2024, November 14, 2024, May 1, 2025, and August 7, 2025, minutes will be conducted during this meeting.

Attendees were asked to reach out to non-attending members to encourage their attendance at future meetings.

XII. Adjournment

Chair Tefft and Chair Heller declared the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.