

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 14, 2022**  
**Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE**  
**9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**I. Open Meeting:**

Call to Order/Welcome – Danielle Smith, Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Chair Smith welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced the 2022 officers for the Mental Health Committee, and introduced Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services, Beau Boryca. Chair Boryca introduced the 2022 officers for the Substance Committee. John Trouba, Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) Federal Aid Administrator, informed attendees that the joint meeting follows the **Open Meeting Act**, which was posted at the meeting room entrance, and can be found on the DBH website identified on the agenda. Attendees were reminded that there would be two allotted time periods for public comment, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

**Quorum for Committees**

Roll call was conducted and a quorum was determined to exist for the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (Substance Abuse Committee). Roll call was conducted but quorum was not met for the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services (Mental Health Committee). Due to no quorum for the Mental Health Committee, several items on the Membership Business agenda could not be addressed.

State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services

Members in Attendance: Ashley Berg, Heather Bird, Beau Boryca, Victor Gehrig, Diana Meadors, Kelli Means, Daniel Rutt, Michael Sheridan, Mike Tefft.

State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services

Members in Attendance: Margaret Damme, Roger Donovan, Kris Elmshaeuser, Timothy Heller, Robert Hutt, CJ Johnson, Jennifer Reyna, Carisa Schweitzer Masek, Athena Sherman, Danielle Smith.

DHHS Staff

In Attendance: Sheri Dawson, Jennifer Ihle, Jeri Keller-Heuke, Michelle Nunemaker, John Trouba, Betty Jean Usher-Tate, Barbara Vogel, Linda Wittmuss.

**II. Membership Business:**

Introduction of New Members—

Due to the presence of new committee members for both the Mental Health Committee and the Substance Abuse Committee, all attendees present introduced themselves.

Meeting Minutes from November 4, 2021—

Substance Abuse Committee Chair Boryca presented the November 4, 2021 meeting minutes for review. Chair Boryca asked if there were any corrections or comments. Hearing none, Chair Boryca asked the Substance Abuse Committee for a motion to accept the November 4, 2021 meeting minutes as written. Motion was made and seconded by Substance Abuse committee members to accept the November 4, 2021 minutes as written. Motion was carried unanimously by vocal vote.

Mental Health Chair Smith tabled the vote due to no quorum present for the Mental Health Committee.

#### Member Term of Appointment Reminder—

John Trouba reminded committee members that terms are three (3) years in length, with a limit of two (2) terms that can be served consecutively. If a member's term expires, they may apply for a different vacant seat, if one exists. Detailed information regarding applying or reapplying will be emailed to committee members. It was noted that this is the last meeting for Substance Abuse Committee members Victor Gehrig and Diana Meadors. These members were thanked for their service to the committee.

#### Mental Health Committee Election—

Chair Smith tabled the nominations and election of officers for the Mental Health Committee due to no quorum being present. Danielle Smith will remain as Chairperson, and Wendy Kaiser will remain as Secretary, until elections can be held.

### **III. Office of Consumer Affairs Updates:**

Jennifer Ihle, Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) Program Coordinator, gave an update on OCA trainings to be offered this year and opened discussion on what other training topics and systems information would be beneficial to incorporate.

Among the training suggestions from committee members were the following topics:

- Consumer Training on Privacy:
  - MLTC resource is the statewide exchange Seek Help
  - How incarceration affects MLTC enrollment and eligibility
  - How privacy and confidential information is managed by Parole and Probation
- Resources for Parents and Family Organizations Training
- Cultural Equity and Diversity Training:
  - Facts about diversity in the state
  - How cultural background impacts trust with providers
  - Base level of cultural competencies
- Psychiatric Advanced Directives Training:
  - LB 247, passed in 2020, establishes the Advanced Mental Health Directives.
  - <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/Advanced%20Mental%20Health%20Directive%20FAQ.pdf>
- Alternatives to Guardianship training
- Mental Health Respite Care training:
  - Training for families of youth and young adults from a parental perspective
- LGBTQ Community:
  - Names and pronouns usage
  - How to manage paperwork related to LGBTQ chosen or preferred name versus legal name
- Consumer Training Preparation for Serving on Boards and Committees
- Committee Member Training On Consumer Advocacy

Information was presented about the Recovery Friendly Workplace concept and the OCA's plans to create the Nebraska Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative (RFWI). The slide show that was presented will be posted on the DBH website as part of this meeting's materials. The video on New Hampshire's RFWI can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/0QvowsecnuE>.

Discussion was held regarding what a recovery friendly workplace should offer employees:

- Sensitive to needs for reasonable accommodation to support recovery needs.

- Staff are trained in how to ask for reasonable accommodations.
- Both management and staff have the same understanding and expectations.
- Supportive of Medication Assisted Treatment.
- Management trained in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT).
- Employee Assistance Program services are available through the employer.
- Employer sanctioned employee resource group for employees and families.
- Employee Resource Groups have approval to share information about availability of MAT and connecting with treatment avenues and public assistance such as MLTC.
- Business supports LB917 (2022), Senator Wayne's bill, which creates a state income tax credit available to businesses that employ felons.
- Review of workplace policies and procedures to be recovery friendly, for example corrections employees face limitations on job assignments due to a behavioral health condition.
- State level administrative service changes to support recovery.
- State licensing offices adopt policies and procedures that facilitate retention of licenses.
- State licensing offices adopt policies and procedures that facilitate reinstatement of licenses.

Committee members identified resources to assist with developing the RFWI and businesses/organizations that should among those approached and introduced to the RFWI:

- Connect with existing Employee Assistance Programs and healthcare groups, including for example, Union Pacific and MLTC Heritage Health providers.
- Utilize information collected by local organizations sponsoring Best Places to Work and recognition surveys.
- Partner with consumer organizations on outreach and presentations.
- Target existing businesses by partnering with Nebraska Secretary of State's office to share information through their regular communications activities.
- Target new businesses by working with community colleges and business recruitment organizations.
- Include agribusiness (the farming, management, production, and marketing of agricultural commodities).
- Include law enforcement and corrections organizations.
- Reach out to employers while many businesses are understaffed, as this may be a way to gain employees.

OCA will be forming a workgroup to identify a specific RFWI model to use in Nebraska, and ideally include consumers in this workgroup as well. Those committee members interested in serving on an RFWI workgroup include Diana Meadors, Jennifer Reyna, Margaret Damme, Robert Hutt, Kelli Means, Heather Bird, and Mike Tefft.

The OCA website can be found at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Consumer-Advocacy.aspx>. Questions and comments regarding OCA and their activities can be emailed to [Brenda.moes@nebraska.gov](mailto:Brenda.moes@nebraska.gov) or [Jennifer.ihle@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jennifer.ihle@nebraska.gov). The OCA can also be reached at 402-471-7736.

#### **IV. PATH Grant**

Nebraska State PATH Contact John Trouba presented an overview of the Nebraska Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program. Nebraska applies for an annual formula grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide funding to help reduce homelessness for individuals with serious mental illnesses, co-occurring substance use disorders, and who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The Nebraska PATH program prioritizes

services to meet individuals where they are at through persistent and consistent outreach and case management to connect individuals to mainstream services to secure safe and stable housing, improve their health, and live a self-directed, purposeful life.

#### **V. Public Comments:**

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

#### **VI. Break**

#### **VII. Block Grant Updates:**

Betty Jean Usher-Tate, DBH Data & QI Administrator, introduced the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Mini Application and Priority Area Review for FY2022-FY2023. There are currently seven (7) priority areas for FY22/23 (priority #7: “Referral to services for persons with tuberculosis” is included for contractual purposes only; DBH does not generate any data on this point). Recent Medicaid expansion in Nebraska has resulted in lower numbers of populations served by DBH, as compared to previous years. Current data supporting each priority area was reviewed. These slides will be posted on the DBH website as part of this meeting’s materials. The question was posed as to whether service providers would be able to post notice of upcoming consumer surveys for their clients, such as the ones used to support the block grant. DBH is looking into having flyers and/or QR codes available for future surveys.

#### **VIII. Lunch—Lunch & Learn Presentation:**

Jessica Ern, MPH, from the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s College of Public Health, presented “A Statewide Assessment of Mental and Behavioral Needs and Services among Children in Nebraska during the COVID-19 Pandemic”.

#### **IX. Director’s Updates:**

Sheri Dawson, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health (DBH), thanked members of the committees for attending today’s meeting.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This year will be the 15th Annual Pony Express Ride for Children’s Mental Health Awareness ride across Nebraska. The event starts in Scotts Bluff on May 18th and ends in Lincoln on May 21st. Activities and awareness messages will also be posted through social media and FaceBook Live sessions.

Narcan – The state is reemphasizing the process on prescribing and dispensing Narcan across the state. There are currently 61 pharmacies across Nebraska that dispense Narcan to those with prescriptions, such as first responders and at-risk individuals.

Opioid Settlement – The office of the Nebraska Attorney General is organizing Opioid Settlement Remediation Advisory Committee and subcommittee groups to plan for use of the Opioid Remediation Settlement. Nebraska anticipating receiving up to \$110 million over a period of up to 18 years. Meetings are open to the public. The DHHS website with more information is <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>.

DHHS is partnering with the Veterans Administration on the SAMHSA/Veterans Administration Suicide Challenge. The goal of this group is to develop an action plan to prevent the suicides of veterans.

988 and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline—988 is a national effort, organized at the state level, to meet the growing need for crisis intervention and save lives. In July 2022, 988 will become the national three-digit dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. More information can be found on the DHHS website at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/988.aspx>.

DBH Strategic Plan – The DHHS Behavioral Health Strategic Plan 2022-2024 presents information about a cross-systems understanding of resources and the continuum of prevention, treatment and recovery, including earlier intervention and prevention needs. The plan is on the DBH website at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/DBH%20Strategic%20Plan%202022-2024.pdf>.

Emergency Protective Custody – DBH and our partners are reviewing how the Tribal and Mental Health Boards processes and existing state statute language align. This is an opportunity to identify recommendations for proposed legislation to improve processes. In addition, we are reviewing Nebraska’s Outpatient Competency Restoration service, a community-based outpatient service, and state statutes again to search for opportunities to improve processes.

System Flow – DBH is reviewing system flow, the movement between the state treatment facilities and the community, in terms of available bed capacity. Recent impacts on system flow include a growing court ordered treatment wait list, remodel work at the Lincoln Regional Center to remove ligature risks which has reduced the number of beds available, COVID impacts, and disruptions caused by assaultive behavior. With our partners, we are working to get out in front of issues which fuel criminal justice involvement and the court order wait list by investigating strategies such as diversion and prevention, municipal jail in-reach activities and outpatient competency restoration.

#### **X. Public Comments:**

At the afternoon Public Comment opportunity, Brad Muerrens, Public Policy Director with Disability Rights of Nebraska introduced himself, shared information about his organization, and discussed several Legislative bills surrounding behavioral health issues that his organization is monitoring.

#### **XI. Break**

#### **XII. Director’s Updates-Continued:**

Director Dawson resumed her Director’s Update to engage committee members in a discussion about how to best integrate lived experience, that voice which is critical to this discussion, into the following activities:

- **988 Messaging:**

Director Dawson introduced Michelle Nunemaker, DBH System of Care Administrator, to report on the work of the 988 Workgroups to implement the 988 crisis intervention line. In July 2022, 988 will become the national three-digit dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Members identified community engagement activities to share information about the 988 crisis intervention line.

Recommended channels to Get Information and Updates Out into the Community included: Distribute materials to consumers, service providers, hospitals and treatment facilities; Sponsor booths at county fairs to share information and opportunities to promote meaningful conversations; Sponsor Public Service Announcements for radio and community cable channels; Sponsor campaign teams to distribute information at Farmers Markets, car shows, etc.; Create a 988 corn maze; Sponsor a display and campaign teams at Huskers and other college athletic events; and, Distribute updates to current warm and crisis lines.

Members recommended the 998 Workgroups create and make available resource information materials appropriate for varied venues and communication modes and in several languages. This includes: Development of targeted leaflets and information materials, including social media-ready graphics; Create digital Public Service Announcements; Brand all information materials with QR codes to provide links to additional information; Giveaway items for service providers; T-Shirt/merchandise for providers to wear on designated days by their agencies; and, Customizable branded prevention and diversion signage.

Members identified recommended events for committee members and stakeholder to spread the word about the 988 crisis intervention line and also the transition to the new 988 three-digit dialing code. These include: Elevator speeches to share at association and community meetings; July 29th Disability Pride Day in Lincoln; community Cinco de Mayo events; October 7th Project Connect; Veterans Affairs sponsored events; events at all colleges/universities across the state; Professional association training events; Jails and prison; Mental health and substance use treatment institutions; Probation sponsored events; State agencies' local service networks events; State agencies' community partner (such as Department of Education share with school Resource Officers); and, within state agency human resources offices.

- **Defining Lived Experience within the context of RFWI:**  
Committee members discussed ways in which an individual with lived experience is defined. These individuals have received behavioral health services and maintained a level of wellness, including the areas of physical health and justice involvement.; anyone with a behavioral health diagnosis; caregivers, loved ones, and guardians.  
Ideally, individuals with lived experience could be a valuable voice in RFWI activities, such as serving on related committees and meetings and offering insight and feedback. These individuals may benefit from having education on what it means to serve in these capacities, and possibly have a mentor to guide them. Listening sessions for professionals from consumers could increase the knowledge of why people with lived experience are important to the face of behavioral health.
- **How we measure outcomes and change in systems transformation:**  
Some of the potential outcomes from systems transformation include fewer people on waitlists, Olmstead compliance, consistency in maintaining the same care team, corrections and behavioral health working together in accessing/providing services, increased workforce/retained staff, incentives to community providers for accepting walk-ins, law enforcement trained in crisis intervention, increased technology resources and telehealth utilization, decreased criminalization of behavioral health needs.

### **XIII. Meeting Wrap Up**

#### **Committee Announcements—**

There were no additional announcements from the committees. No additional business was identified by members.

#### **Staff Announcements—**

Jeri Keller-Heuke, DBH Administrative Technician, will be contacting traveling members to complete expense reimbursement forms.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2022 at the Lancaster County Extension Office at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528.

#### **Future Agenda Items—**

Committee members identified four topics they would be interested in having on a future meeting agenda:

- Behavioral Health 101 – The landscape of the Nebraska Behavioral Health System;
- A presentation by DHHS Medicaid Long Term Care on behavioral health services offered by Heritage Health;
- Lunch & Learn presentation by Disability Rights of Nebraska; and,

- Lunch & Learn presentation by Union Pacific Railroad on how they created their Employee Assistance Program (from the perspectives of the corporate human resources department, employees, and the labor unions).

Suggestions for other meeting agenda items can be emailed to [DHHS.BehavioralHealthDivision@nebraska.gov](mailto:DHHS.BehavioralHealthDivision@nebraska.gov).

#### **XIV. Adjourn**

The meeting agenda having been completed, Chairs Boryca and Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.