

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 20, 2023
Lancaster Extension Education Office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE
9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes DRAFT

I. Open Meeting

Call to Order/Welcome – Tim Heller, Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Chair Heller welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced the Vice Chair of the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services, Heather Bird, who was acting in Chair Beau Boryca’s absence. Vice Chair Bird welcomed all attendees as well. Chair Heller announced the officers of the Mental Health Committee, and Vice Chair Bird introduced the officers of the Substance Use 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 near 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 Mental Health Services (Mental Health Committee). Roll call was conducted but quorum was not met for the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services (Substance Abuse Committee). Due to no quorum for the Substance Abuse Committee, some items on the Membership Business agenda could not be addressed.

State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services

Members in Attendance: Heather Bird, Kelli Means, Daniel Rutt, Michael Sheridan, Gage Stermensky, Mike Tefft.

State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services

Members in Attendance: Verdell Bohling, Mary Ann Borgeson, Margaret Damme, Roger Donovanick, Lindy Foley, Victor Gehrig, Timothy Heller, Robert Hutt, Tracy Jordan, David Kass, Kristen Larsen, Kyle Long, Diana Meadors, Angela Miles, Jennifer Reyna, Carisa Schweitzer Masek.

DHHS Staff

In Attendance: Tony Green, Zack Hicks, Thomas Janousek, Jennifer Ihle, Jeri Keller-Heuke, Michelle Nunemaker, Sean Olson, John Trouba, Betty Jean Usher-Tate, Rebekah Willoughby, Danielle Wing, Linda Wittmuss.

II. Membership Business

Member Introduction—

Following committee member introductions, the committees took up membership business items.

Meeting Minutes from November 17, 2022 —

Mental Health Committee Chair Heller presented the November 17, 2022 meeting minutes for review. Chair Heller asked if there were any corrections or comments. One change was noted, in that Daniel Rutt’s name was not included in the list of Substance Abuse Committee members present. Chair Heller asked for a motion to accept the November 17, 2022 meeting minutes as written, including the update in attendance. Motion was made and seconded to accept the November 17, 2022 minutes as written, including the updated attendance list. Roll call vote was conducted, and minutes approved, with the following results:

Yea: Verdel Bohling, Margaret Damme, Lindy Foley, Victor Gehrig, Timothy Heller, Robert Hutt, Tracy Jordan, David Kass, Kristen Larsen, Diana Meadors, Jennifer Reyna.

Nay: none.

Abstain: Kyle Long, Angela Miles.

Substance Abuse Vice Chair Bird tabled the vote due to no quorum present for the Substance Abuse Committee.

John Trouba informed the committee that there are four members whose terms will be expiring before the next meeting. Terms are three (3) years in length, with a limit of two (2) terms that can be served consecutively.

III. BG Planning-Priority Areas FFY 2024-2025

Linda Wittmuss, John Trouba, Betty Jean Usher-Tate, Danielle Wing and Zack Hicks presented “An Outlook on Consumer Trends and Needs for Priority Consideration in FY24-FY25...and Beyond”. The FY22 results of SAMHSA Block Grant’s priority areas were reviewed, as well as FY23 targets. It was noted that the current block grant priority areas are covered within DBH’s strategic goals as well. Comments and suggestions related to the priority areas were solicited from the committee, and received as follows:

- More focus on binge drinking, e-cigarettes, and opioid use.
- Increase efforts to address suicide, including youth and veterans.
- Improve data on accidental drug overdoses and deaths.
- Develop 988 mobile crisis outcome measures.
- Support efforts to facilitate housing stability.
- Target resources for services for people in shelters.
- Improve data on overall capacity across the state.
- Increase availability and use of diversion services.
- Increase early intervention trainings available to law enforcement officers.
- Increase access to and completion of opioid use disorder and medication-assisted treatments.

IV. Synar-Report & Coverage Study

Zack Hicks, DBH Epidemiologist, presented the FFY23 Annual Synar Results and Youth Tobacco Survey. The Synar program conducts annual compliance checks of a random sample of retail tobacco outlets, these are for tobacco-related products only; CBD items are not a part of this process. DBH contracts with the Nebraska State Patrol to conduct the annual random, unannounced compliance checks from May to September; checks are done year-round by other agencies as well. If a retailer is discovered to be selling tobacco products to a minor, law enforcement must cite an individual, (i.e. clerk, manager or owner) for the criminal violation. The Synar program has been successful in reducing youth access to tobacco-related products through retail sources. Increased retailer education is important to keep Nebraska’s violation rate low. The Nebraska Annual Synar Report is available at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/FFY%202023%20Nebraska%20Annual%20Synar%20Report.pdf> Discussion was entertained. The committees did not propose any recommendations.

V. Public Comment

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

VI. Break

VII. Governor’s Challenge on Veteran Suicide

Danielle Wing, DBH Prevention Administrator, and Michelle Nunemaker, DBH System of Care Administrator, presented the status of, and data on, the Governor’s Challenge on Veteran Suicide. The three priorities of

screening for suicide risk, promoting connectedness, and safety planning were discussed. Comments and suggestions were solicited from the committee, and received as follows:

- Phone apps for well-being and support could be additional resources for veterans.
- Collect additional information using surveys specifically for Nebraska.
- Survey analyses should include cluster and demographic breakdowns.
- Safety planning and lockboxes should be for medications as well as firearms.
- Expand opportunities to serve on planning committees to anyone interested in serving.
- Plans shared with the Regions should be distributed to providers as well.
- Try not to rely on the Veterans Administration, if possible, as their availability is limited.

VIII. Lunch

IX. Director's Updates

Tony Green, Interim Director of the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health (DBH), thanked members of the committees for attending today's meeting. Director Green has been covering DBH since early January and will continue to do so until the Governor appoints a permanent Director. The Division of Children and Family Services is also in an interim state, with CEO Dannette Smith serving in their interim director role. Recruitment effort for both positions is being conducted by an outside firm.

Nebraska Behavioral Health Convening—A meeting of interested stakeholders was held on April 12th in Kearney to discuss opportunities for behavioral health in Nebraska. Discussions identified needs in the areas of community, law, prevention, and treatment, with a focus on rural settings and needs and intentionally meeting rural service needs where they are at. The next meeting will be April 25th in Hastings, and then May 24th in Scottsbluff. Feedback from these sessions will be prioritized to form new workgroups or assign to existing workgroups.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Definitions—DBH and Medicaid have been working together to align service definitions and rates as much as possible. There will still be some differences in rates, based on the funding source. The review of substance abuse service definitions and co-designation is complete. The work for alignment of mental health service definitions is in progress. We are working with our criminal justice partners to share these same service definitions.

Opioid Settlement – The Nebraska Opioid Settlement Remediation Advisory Committee meetings have been on hold since October and will pick up again on May 15th. Members of the public are welcome to attend and provide comments at these meetings. The role of DBH set out in statute is to be the mechanism to disburse the State Bucket funding as identified by the committee and to provide support to the committee. Annual reports regarding the status of these funds will be provided to the Governor's office. To clarify, when this committee refers to regions of the state, these are geographic regions and not the behavioral health regions. More information, including a list of committee members, can be found on the Attorney General's website <https://ago.nebraska.gov/nebraska-opioid-settlement-remediation-advisory-committee> and the DHHS website <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>.

Medicaid Unwind from Continuous Enrollment – Medicaid is currently in the process of resuming annual Medicaid eligibility reviews of its enrollees. Reviews will occur during the month of a client's initial enrollment. Medicaid has been sending communications and advertising the importance of current Medicaid clients to prepare for and complete eligibility review. When Medicaid initially expanded, many individuals utilizing DBH funded services moved to Medicaid coverage. It is unknown if or how many individuals may lose Medicaid coverage and become eligible for DBH funded services.

X. Public Comments

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

XI. Break

XII. 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Michelle Nunemaker, DBH System of Care Administrator, presented the current status of 988 in Nebraska since its inception in July 2022. Data regarding calls received and their outcomes were reviewed. Since the transition to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline from the Suicide Prevention Lifeline, daily average increase of 76% in calls/day. Next steps for continued process improvement were outlined. Discussion was entertained. The committees did not propose any recommendations.

XIII. Meeting Wrap Up

The next Joint Advisory Committee meeting will be Thursday, August 24, 2023 at the Lancaster Extension Education Office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE. Members suggested informational items for the next meeting, including the behavioral health workforce need across Nebraska, Medicaid reimbursement processes, the Nebraska Continuum of Care manual's definitions of SPMIs and guidelines of care, regional center capacity, facilitating connections between supportive peers and law enforcement offices, and the Office of Public Guardian annual report.

XIV. Adjourn

The meeting agenda having been completed, Chair Heller and Vice Chair Bird declared the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.