# GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

with the DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (DPBH)

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

September 17th, 2026
9:00 AM to Adjournment

This meeting was held virtually.

**MEETING LINK**
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/227917209936922?p=jUCsVOGttlANcAcmiv

Phone Conference Number and ID:
+1-775-321-6111
667 171 796#

## 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:

- Braden Schrag, Chairperson
- Lisa Ruiz-Lee, Vice-Chairperson
- Dr. Lisa Durette, M.D.
- Nichole Schembre

Quorum was present.

Members Absent:

- Jasmine Cooper
- Dan Ficalora

Presenters:

Andrea Rivers (*DPBH*); Julie Lindsmith (*DPBH*); Susan Lynch (*DPBH*); Stephanie Africa (*DPBH*); Michelle Sandoval (*DPBH*); Bill Hammargren (*ADSD*); Gujuan Caver (*ADSD*)

Others in Attendance:

Cinthia Cruz (*DPBH*); Faythe Baltisberger (*DPBH*); Jennifer Spencer (*AG*); Marina Valerio (ADSD); Drew Cross (DPBH); Shannon Bennett (DPBH); Linda Anderson (Guest); Hailey Cornelia-Swift (LCB); Yadira Gomez-Guerrero (ADSD); Lisa Mariani (Guest); Leon Ravin (DPBH); Lea Case (Guest); Lea Cartwright (Guest); Brenna Hardtner (Guest); Jolene Zamora (Guest); Joseph Roche (DPBH); Valerie Cauhape (Guest); Mark Funkhouser (Guest); Kimberly Abbott (DCFS); Helen Byrd (DPBH)

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Chair Schrag noted here a brief clarification regarding Commissioner Mosby's participation in the previous meeting. It was discovered afterward that her term had expired at the time certain votes were taken. However, the board still had quorum without her, so all votes, motions, and actions from that meeting remain valid. This was shared for accuracy and future recordkeeping.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair opened the floor for public comment; none heard.

3. **FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: Review and possible approval of the minutes for the Commission on Behavioral Health Meeting July 16th, 2026**

The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/draft-7.16.26-cobh-meeting-mintues.pdf

Chair asked board members for any questions or concerns; none were heard.

Chair Schrag then called for a motion on the item.

MOTION: Ms. Schembre made a motion for approval.

SECONDED: The motion was seconded by Dr. Durette.

PASSED: Passed unanimously.

4. **FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ONLY: Agency Director Reports**

*Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS)*
The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/nnamhs-agency-report.pdf

A verbal report was presented by Julie Lindesmith, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Lindesmith reported that on August 18th a housing summit was held to recruit more individuals to provide housing for people with serious mental illness. Chair Schrag asked how many people attended and what the response had been. Lindesmith stated that about 200 people attended, and while no new providers have been licensed yet, she noted that licensing is a lengthy process and that attendee interest was encouraging. She highlighted that a panel featuring clients who have been successfully housed was especially impactful and well-received. Schrag praised the inclusion of client voices, noting that hearing directly from service beneficiaries can be powerful and motivating when done respectfully, and encouraged continuing this approach. Lindesmith said she was available to answer any further questions, and Schrag invited commissioners to respond.

Comments from Commissioners include:

Commenter: Nichole Schembre

Summary: Commissioner Schembre asked Lindesmith for more details about the construction project that had reduced program capacity to 50%. Lindesmith explained that the project began on August 10th and is expected to finish during the first week of November. She noted that the reduced capacity has resulted in slightly longer waitlists,



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primarily for uninsured individuals who are the program's priority population. The hospital-related waitlist has been about three to four people, and the diversion-program waitlist recently decreased to two. She emphasized that the team is managing the situation as best they can. Commissioner Schembre thanked her and noted the numbers were lower than she'd expected.

*Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (SNAMHS)*
The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/snamhs-agency-report.pdf

A verbal report was presented by Susan Lynch, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Susan Lynch reported on recruitment progress for her agency, noting that August was a successful month with 16 positions filled. Schrag asked Lynch what she thought contributed to the success. She attributed this progress to several factors, including strong HR staff expertise, streamlined processes, effective job fairs, partnerships with community organizations, and sustained recruitment efforts over time. She stated that these combined efforts have contributed to ongoing improvement.

*Lake's Crossing Center*
The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/lcc-agency-report.pdf

A verbal report was presented by Stephanie Africa, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Africa reported that the center has maintained a strong census and that its jail-based programming has been effective in keeping both numbers and waitlists low. She noted that collaboration with jails and community partners has been successful and that the program is operating well overall.

*Rural Clinic Services*
The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/rural-clinics-agency-report.pdf

A verbal report was presented by Michelle Sandoval, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Sandoval, speaking on behalf of Ellen Richardson Adams, reported that the rural clinics have recently experienced several retirements and staff departures due to promotions. Although this created vacancies, the clinics have been able to fill positions quickly, which she attributed to their strong reputation for providing a positive work environment. She noted an increase in clinical interns joining the clinics and expressed appreciation for that support. She concluded by saying the team is operating smoothly.

*Sierra Regional Center*
The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/src-agency-report.pdf


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A verbal report was presented by Bill Hammargren, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Hammargren stated he was merely filling in for Carolyn Wilson and Jessica Adams, noting that neither had additional updates beyond their written reports.

Comments from Commissioners include:

Commenter: Nichole Schembre

Summary: Commissioner Schembre asked about the "Peers for Young Adult Social Skills Program," wanting to know whether it was newly developed or modeled after an existing program, and whether it might be replicable elsewhere.

William Hammargren explained that the program is brand new and was created by the Sierra Regional Center's clinical team. It reflects a long-term goal of the agency manager, Carolyn Wilson, to expand group-based clinical services. Historically, SRC had few clinical group offerings, unlike other regional centers, so this program represents their first step in building out that area. He noted that more details should be available at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Schembre expressed interest in continued updates, and Hammargren agreed to share that request with Carolyn for future reporting.

*Desert Regional Center*

The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/drc-agency-report.pdf

A verbal report was presented by Gujuan Caver, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Caver provided an update on behalf of Desert Regional Center (DRC) and Michelle Klem, covering both ICF operations and Community Services. He shared that DRC continues to recruit and onboard new staff, with several employees currently in orientation. Recent interviews have been held for nursing and psychology positions, and he hopes those hiring processes will move forward soon. Caver also described major progress on DRC's long-running construction project. Three new buildings- a nursing and therapy building, a new administration building, and a combined residential/clinical home- are nearing completion or already occupied. Staff have begun moving into the new facilities, and the residential building will undergo an audit before clients move in. Lastly, he explained that waitlist data in the submitted report was outdated due to staff absence and asked whether to provide updated information now or at the next meeting. Schrag agreed it would be best to submit the updated data at the next meeting for clarity and consistency. Caver noted that this approach also simplifies the process on his end.

Comments from Commissioners include:

Commenter: Dr. Lisa Durette

Summary: Dr. Durette asked for an estimate of the current waitlist for adults (18+) with intellectual or developmental disabilities and co-occurring psychiatric needs- especially those with aggression- seeking safe, appropriate housing through Desert Regional Center.

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Gujuan Caver explained that the question has two parts. First, there is a waitlist for service coordination, which is required before housing or other support can be arranged. He said he could not provide a specific timeline and noted that his colleague in Community Services, Michelle Klem, would have more precise information. Second, regarding residential placement, Caver said the process depends heavily on triage. Individuals in hospitals, jails, or institutions are prioritized and can "jump the line" in terms of the waitlist. Service coordinators send referrals, also known as vendor calls, to supported-living providers, but because providers are private DRC cannot compel them to accept clients. They do their best to secure placement, especially for individuals with high-level dual needs.

*Rural Regional Center*

The written report can be found here:
https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/rrc-agency-report.pdf

A verbal report was presented by Bill Hammargren, along with the written report attached in the meeting packet. Points that were highlighted include:

Hammergren reported significant challenges with provider staffing in rural regions. Although funding was approved and new homes were authorized back in January, individuals still cannot move in because providers cannot find or retain enough staff to operate those homes. Several providers initially engaged in meetings with families and clients, but months later were unable to staff the programs they committed to. Hammergren also described ongoing difficulties filling internal rural positions. A psychology role has been open for nearly a year, and a psychiatric nurse position was briefly filled before the hire left. Recent recruitment attempts produced very few candidates, including interview no-shows. He emphasized that these staffing shortages hinder service delivery and asked that anyone aware of qualified candidates contact him.

5. **FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: Consent Agenda for Approval**

There were no items for consideration.

6. **FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ONLY: Discussion and Review of Current Commission Appointments**

Summary: Chair Schrag reviewed the upcoming expiration dates for several commissioners (see below) and encouraged everyone to track their commitments at both one year and six months in advance.

List of Commissioners' Terms:

a. Braden Schrag, Chair: 4/1/26 – 3/31/30
b. Lisa Ruiz-Lee, Vice-Chair: 7/1/26 – 6/30/30
c. Lisa Durette: 7/1/24 – 6/30/28
d. Jasmine Cooper: 10/1/23 – 9/30/27
e. Nicole Schembre: 9/1/24 – 8/31/28
f. Daniel Ficalora: 7/1/25 – 6/30/29

He then went on to describe current vacancies on the board, including positions for a clinical social worker, nurse, licensed psychologist, and a physician. Schrag asked DPBH Administrator Andrea Rivers for an update on a pending appointment and outlined ideas for statewide



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outreach to recruit qualified applicants. He proposed drafting a letter to professional associations and coordinating with DPBH staff to share announcements broadly. Rivers confirmed that the governor's office had not yet issued an official appointment but expected a decision soon. She explained DPBH can help distribute recruitment announcements statewide through its communication channels and social media. She agreed to collaborate with Schrag between meetings to circulate information and connect interested candidates with the Governor's office. She also verified that the vacancy descriptions match statutory requirements for commission membership. Dr. Durette suggested expanding outreach beyond licensing boards to include professional associations such as the Nevada Psychological Association, Nevada State Medical Association, and other statewide medical organizations. She recommended also notifying university programs- referencing nursing schools and psychology departments at UNR, UNLV, and Nevada State College- to reach potential applicants. Durette offered to provide contacts to support Schrag's outreach efforts. Schrag thanked Durette and confirmed he would reach out for contact information. He reiterated plans to draft a recruitment letter and asked staff to help identify appropriate organizations for targeted communication. He said he hoped to complete this outreach within the next week.

7. **FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: Discussion and Review of the Commission on Behavioral Health Bylaws and Roles and Responsibilities of the Commission's Members**

Summary: Schrag began by noting that the bylaws already describe excused and unexcused absences clearly and emphasized the importance of follow-up and professional commitment to attending meetings. He then addressed term limits for Commission leadership, suggesting that the Chair and Co-Chair should serve no more than two terms to support continuity and fresh leadership, also mentioning bylaws language allowing a former chair to fill in if both current leaders are absent. He invited additional thoughts from Commissioners on leadership term limits- for example whether term limits should be consecutive or not- as well as potential limits for regular members.

Vice-Chair Ruiz-Lee expressed support for these ideas but voiced concern that some members with valuable input were absent, suggesting the discussion be revisited when more members are present. Schrag agreed, proposing to add notes for future reference and table the item until a fuller group is available.

Schrag also briefly discussed adding clear timelines for member replacement and reappointment processes such as one-year and six-month reminders, notices at six and three months, and submission of reappointment paperwork 30 days before term expiration. He took responsibility for a previous delay in his own paperwork and emphasized setting a good standard going forward. He closed by asking staff to include this topic again in the next meeting so all Commissioners can participate in the discussion.

8. **FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ONLY: Discussion and Review of Development of the Governor's Letter for 2027**

Summary: Schrag suggested keeping the current format of their letter but expanding it to include input from additional regional boards to ensure broader representation and stronger foundations for their recommendations. He also proposed that commissioners engage with Southern, Northern, and Rural Nevada boards, gather insights from local experts, and



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incorporate that into the process. He invited commissioners to share thoughts on using this approach to accelerate and enhance the work, similar to efforts made in the early 2000s.

Commissioner Schembre thanked the chair for helping the Commission gain access to a long-awaited shared folder; however, she explained that she still hasn't been able to open the folders as the system appears to require state employee credentials. She raised the issue in case others are experiencing the same access problem. Commissioner Durette noted that she is experiencing the same issue accessing the shared folder and believes it may be related to using a Mac PC. She explained that a workaround has been requesting PDF versions of the documents directly, which avoids using the shared drive and seems to work better. She also mentioned that another Mac user commissioner has had similar issues and invites them to share any additional solutions- the commissioner, Ruiz-Lee, indicated that she is also still experiencing similar issues. Schrag suggested that staff consider arranging one-on-one consultations with state IT, as was done several years ago, to explore potential workarounds for the ongoing access issues with the shared folder, especially for Mac users, and noted that the problem is intermittent for him as well. He recommended that commissioners experiencing issues provide staff with specific details and error messages so they can escalate the information and begin the troubleshooting process.

Schrag then transitioned back to the agenda, asking to add the governor's letter to the next meeting and noting interest in revisiting a commissioner's previous input.

9. **FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ONLY: Update on Behavioral Health Programs from Aging and Disability Services**

Presenter: None

Summary: The item was skipped as no presenter was present.

10. **FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ONLY: Update on Seclusion and Restraint/Denial of Rights from Desert Regional Center**

The written report can be found here: https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/drc-seclusion--restraint-report.pdf

*Note: Due to technical issues this item was presented after item 12.*

Presenter: Gujuan Caver, Agency Manager (*DRC-IFC*)

Summary: Caver reported that the issue was caused by a planned power outage and related to their construction project, adding that their systems functioned properly with generators. In reviewing the Desert Regional Center's ICF restraint data for June through August, he noted a decrease in the number of individuals involved in restraints- 2 in June, 4 in July, and 2 in August. He attributed this improvement partly to moving one individual to a different home, where they are now doing better. He also commended his team for their active treatment efforts that helped reduce restraint use.



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11. **FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ONLY: Update on Seclusion and Restraint/Denial of Rights from State Adult Mental Health Services**

The written report can be found here: https://www.dpbh.nv.gov/siteassets/boards/cbh/meetings/2026/9.17.26/state-seclusion--restraint-report.pdf

Presenter: Susan Lynch, Agency Director (*SNAMHS*)

Summary: Lynch noted an increase in restraint use in June, which was due to a small number of unique patients with multiple incidents; the numbers have since decreased. Other metrics remained stable, with median lengths of stay at 25 days for NNAMHS and 26 days for SNAMHS. She concludes by offering to answer any questions.

Schrag asked Lynch to share what practices or approaches are currently working well across the board, noting that he likes to understand which successes might be worth replicating.

Lynch explained that their success comes from using a strong team-based, multidisciplinary approach to patient care. When patients have repeated incidents, they increase case conferences involving not only the treatment team (i.e. psychiatry, social work, nursing) but also quality improvement staff, patient advocates, the patient safety officer, and pharmacy. The team will review care plans, medication, behavior support strategies, and provide staff education. She emphasized that this comprehensive, collaborative process helps identify what's working, adjust what isn't, and maintain progress despite natural fluctuations in incident numbers.

12. **FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: Recommendations for future agenda items.**

Schrag noted there are no additional action items but mentioned a few recommendations, including adding Commissioner Schembre's earlier follow-up request and carrying over previously requested agenda items to the next meeting. He explained that the Commission is currently one meeting short due to a past quorum issue and must schedule an additional meeting before year-end to meet statutory requirements. He proposed using a scheduling tool like SurveyMonkey and asked staff to coordinate setting a date that ensures quorum. Schrag then asked if there were any other agenda items to add for the next meeting; none were heard.

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair opened the floor for public comment; none heard.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Schrag adjourned the meeting at 10:03 AM.

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