

**SOUTHERN REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, January 8, 2025

TIME: 8:00 a.m.- Adjournment

Meeting Location: Virtual - Online Only

This meeting held via teleconference at: Join Zoom [Meeting Login Link](#) (see full details in the notes section below). – check online and links at the bottom.

Full Agenda: <https://nvbh.org/southern-behavioral-health-region/>

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 8:00 am (Vice Chair Smith and Coordinator)

Members - Absent

Dr. Kevin Osten-Garner (Chair) – absent

Sarah Dillard - absent

Brenda O’Neill - absent

Chief Scott Lewis - absent

Attending

Stacy Smith (Vice-Chair)

Assemblyman Gregory Hafen II

Missie Rowe

Boonn Hem

Dr. Whitney Owens – left at 9 am

Lt. Harry Williams – came at 9 am.

Coleen Lawrence

Jaren Stanton

2. Public Comment: no comment

3. For Information and Discussion (Vice-Chair/Board): general board updates and announcements regarding events, information, and relevant communication and data.

Welcome Lt. Harry Williams to the board. Coleen Lawrence noted behavioral health clinic in Hawthorne closed with a change in leadership and services coming in from out-of-state. She reiterated the importance of keeping the behavioral health workforce growing in-state as a priority – State of Nevada has been good partner, and a group is still working on continuing services and other options if possible. Good discussion topic to keep as a priority during the legislative session.

4. For Discussion and Possible Action (Vice-Chair/Board): review and vote on approving the minutes for the November 13, 2024 meeting - <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5346>. Missie Rowe made a motion to approve the minutes, Jaren Stanton made a second, minutes approved.

5. For Information and Possible Discussion (Panel/Board): *panel discussion with input on the legislative process, lobbying techniques, ethics, providing testimony, and letters of support –*

Panelists Introductions and Overview:

- *Assemblyman Gregory Hafen II, District 36 - Pahrump (parts of Nye-Lincoln-Clark); legislative service since 2018 and Minority Floor Leader as well as member of Assembly of Health and Human Services and policy board member.*
- *Assemblymember Sarah Peters (Washoe) District 24 serving from 2018 until recently; HHS Vice Chair and other committees.*
- *Sarah Adler, Principal with Silver State Government Relations and consultant in various capacities and decades of experience.*
- *Blayne Osborne, President of Nevada Rural Hospital Partners supporting critical access hospitals in rural areas with experience with the Nevada Legislature since 2009.*

Non-Emergency Secure Behavioral Health Transportation Bill – AB31 -

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/11803/Overview>

Assemblyman Hafen opened the panel, started with introductions, and submitted documents as noted below.

Tips for Testifying Advocacy for Legislation: <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5406>

Testifying Before a Legislative Committee: <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5405>

Guidelines for Lobbying: <https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5404>

Assemblyman Hafen: Reach out to the chair of the committee(s) and talk about the bill, problems in the communities. Draft a One-Pager, front and back, with illustrations about the bill. This year, the contact is Assemblymember Tracy Brown-May (Contact: Tracy.BrownMay@asm.state.nv.us) There is a need to get a hearing and let them know about the bill within their limited schedules and time to listen. Hafen agreed to sit in on the meeting with board members. First action to draft and prefile the bill. Get it in front of the chair of HHS Committee to get the bill heard and explain the issues and move things forward.

Sarah Peters, Assemblymember gave a presentation (<https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5402>) and noted the need to get the bill on early for pre-hearing preparation. Phase One: establish core team, working group, data, and purpose, why are we doing this. Phase Two: establish meetings, informal or formal, should be strategic, have a message to get across to the right people, help them draft their support documents well, provide a story and expertise, have a one-pager and email, or communicate the summary. The first touch with the committee(s) that will work with the bill, pre-committee meetings and contact early and ongoing, attend advocacy meetings, present information, seek out professionals to do a video or meet in-person, find community members and stories, and attend community engagement events and meet with other supporters.

Phase Three: prepare organized presentation and do a rehearsal, make outreach, and conduct mock hearings, then brief legislators, and prepare testimony and finalize materials. They move through 1200 bills, 10 a day, according to Hafen, so limit time, says Peters. Organize, strategize, be tactical, have well-coordinated testimony for hearings that makes it more

impactful. Identify those who can tap in and out, on certain days. Coordinate testimony, have succinct talking points to provide to people, use technology or Chat/AI to assist with presentations.

Key Considerations: Ongoing communication, flexibility, documentation. Talk to everyone on the committee to move forward. Ways to Help: note advocacy and outreach, community engagement, professional expertise, and grassroots mobilization. Stay informed, open to feedback, track progress of bills, share regular updates.

Blayne Osborn, NRHP President: noted utilizing attaché' or legislative assistant or aide to assemblymember or senator and they have access to the legislator. Utilize research, political, and legal departments. Use this main point of contact as they hold power. The Nevada legislature is open and transparent compared to other states, but still has security with this access to legislators. Calls and incredible access are great benefits to citizens and advancing bills. Ideas can come from anywhere and anyone. Find a champion in addition to the legislators, find someone outside, dedicated EMS or other stakeholders in rural Nevada to be the face of this bill, and provide the rationale about why reimbursing the deadhead miles matter, or why it is important not to take ambulances out of service for hours at a time. Tell the story and why it matters. Utilize the Personalize Legislative Tracking (PLP) system to track up to ten bills or legislation - [Link](#). Assemblyman Hafen added that time is often limited, so they can walk and talk while making a pitch for the bill.

Sarah Adler, Silver State Government Relations: also gave a presentation (<https://nvbh.org/pdf-preview?id=5402>) with verbal suggestions as follows - find your champion or team leader, create a two-pager, problem and solution with definitions and context, and preparation for hearings and communicate with members. How does this save money especially since this bill has a fiscal component? For whom does this save money, e.g., hospitals, local government, EMS and who is bearing the cost of this right now? If it saves money by placing people in treatment and avoiding more acute costs that Medicaid would be bearing otherwise, then make that case. Side A is the problem and solution, and Side B is the definitions and context (illustration), e.g., what is this kind of transport, who are the affected stakeholders?

Contact Chair Brown-May and invite her on a ride along to see the region and meet to see if they are willing to consider the bill. Develop a PowerPoint and find one individual who is a lead testifier to guide them through the problem and solution, solicit letters of support, outline impact and who will be served. Stay in touch with aides and contacts. Prepare the committee ahead of time with key questions and issues you would like to be brought out. The fiscal component and HHS Committee as well as the finance committee are all integral to the process as you find commitments for votes. Know the members, committees, and votes you will need. Bring real people who can tell their story in a short amount of time. Find new legislators but leadership will be key. Assembly Ways and Means will be the next phase to get into the budget. Some members are on both committees. Gather stakeholders and supporters and create a spreadsheet, e.g., Nevada Association of Counties (NACo), Nevada League of Cities, Nevada Rural Hospital Partners, Nevada Chiefs Association). What is in it for urban areas as well? Note the budget impact, the politics (stay non-partisan in this work), and work for the long haul and remain positive!

Assemblyman Hafen: noted the other handouts to be sent to the board, how the committee works, how to address the chair, how to have Q&A, and procedural issues.

Stacy Smith, Vice Chair facilitated questions and noted the fiscal component as an issue, the long-term cost benefit, address low hanging fruit in the process. Hafen noted to get other stakeholders to support the bill, get creative, who will this affect? Solicit help from the Trucking Association where truckers are at risk because ambulances are taken out of the region, and he reiterated the ride along option (note special issues like more remote areas near Tonopah) and add this to the one pager). Explain the bill, talk to them while they are driving, discuss scenarios, and make it real in context.

Coleen: working the collaboration and find enthusiastic rural partners and first responders to join the bill. Peters noted cost savings metrics and data, without this, we would be spending this much more, know about budgets, engage with state stakeholders who would implement the funding, (vendors). Ask who will manage this and work through any significant issues. Utilize people at public health, Medicaid, and work with legislators to provide rationale.

Adler: Medicaid will assign a point person to monitor the process and find out who they are along with the stakeholders, e.g., Nevada Public Health Association, Primary Care Association, NAMI, lobbyists, etc.. Form a working group or a group of stakeholders and bring together to align overlapping responsibilities, issues, or interests.

Blayne Osborn: be persistent and patient, this is a long process, utilize the 120 calendar, session ends June, and late May is a crunch time and watch holidays. Note the Economic Forum Report May first and projecting state budgets and fiscal notes that need to be reconciled. The Vice-Chair noted the timelines, and the input has been valuable.

6. For Discussion and Possible Action (Chair/Vice-Chair and Board): gather information for future updates on pending legislation known to affect behavioral health including possible action on letters of support.

Vice Chair Smith opened the item. Assemblyman Hafen noted the interstate compacts with the counselors and others, in addition to the policy boards and possibly the ability to reciprocate. The coordinator will follow-up with the Interstate Compact bills – pull that information, draft up mock letters, send those out and review for this for a vote at the February meeting. Hafen noted to reach out to Chief of Staff, Kevin McGee about the other interstate compacts, e.g., Occupational Therapy/Speech/Dental Hygienist, etc. Coleen added it would be good to look at ADA services and high needs children and track any related bills. The board will also address a working committee or task group and be thinking about commitments forthcoming: add and consider what role each board member will take. This will be added as an agenda item for November, according to Vice-Chair Smith.

7. For Discussion and Possible Action (Chair/Vice-Chair/Board): board discussion on Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) updates and possible action to vote on recommended changes to the Non-Emergency Secure Behavioral Health Transportation Bill – AB31 - <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/83rd2025/Reports/history.cfm?ID=66>

The coordinator just noted a possible future change to the implementation date of the legislation, as requested by Medicaid.

8. **For Discussion and Possible Action (Vice-Chair/Board)** – review and decision on dates for policy board meetings in 2025. *The board decided to continue meeting on the same date and time of the second Wednesday of each month.*
9. **For Discussion and Possible Action:** Discussion and Approval of Future Agenda Items (Coordinator/Board)
- a. **Board Opening:** “representative of residential treatment facility, transitional housing or other housing program serving persons with mental illness or who abuse alcohol or drugs. Section 3, subsection 8(b). Board appointed. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-433.html#NRS433Sec425> (ongoing)
 - b. **Informational:** Possible experts or additional input on LCB review and possible feedback related to legislative priority or bill on non-emergency behavioral health secure transportation.
 - c. **For Information and Discussion:** overview for potential provision of services for rural and frontier Nevada (Specialty Health, Silver Summit, Care Source, Others).
 - d. **For Information and Discussion:** Updates regarding the activities, resources, challenges, and scope of work of the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator – *Mark Funkhouser, Coordinator – February.*
10. **Public Comment:** no comment.
11. **For Possible Action:** Adjourned at 9:23 am (Chair/Vice-Chair)

Department of Health and Human Services Website:

https://dphh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board_Meetings/Meetings/ (here you can find the agendas and minutes for current meetings including an archive of previous meetings and a listing of board members).

Southern Regional Behavioral Health Website: <https://nvbh.org/southern-behavioral-health-region/>. Please refer to the Publications and Reports Section for more information.

For more information, contact Mark Funkhouser, Southern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator at mark@nrhp.org or (812) 449-4343.