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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
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Marla McDade
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Administrator

Washoe County Children's Mental Health Consortium Meeting Minutes 9/18/2025 **DRAFT**

1. Call to Order:

Chair Annie Zucker called the meeting to order at 10:07 am. Kristen Rivas, from the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), conducted a roll call, confirming that a quorum was established.

2. Introduction:

VOTING MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Annie Zucker, Ana de la Maza, Jessica Goicoechea-Parise, Vanessa Justice, Rebecca Arvans, Sarah Dearborn, Rhonda Lawrence, Mala Wheatley, Stephanie Brown, Natalie Sanchez, Sandy Arguello, Holland Schubach, Britt Young, Kristin Wilson, Misty Vaughan Allen

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Brenna Hardtner, Samantha Peman, Rosa Hall, Sara Velasquez, Kimberly Abbot, John Gracia, Linda Anderson, Marisa Nabong, Joleen Walker, Kristen Rivas, Fireflies notetaker Elyse, read.ai meeting notes, Monica Notetaker, Lisa Mariani, Nicole Schembre Sarah Hartzell, Karina Gamarra-Hoff, Luke FRPA, Julia Ratti, Kimberley Sarando, Megan Evans, Katie Metz, Rose Steffen, Sharron Karina- Hoff Gamarra, Lisa Mariani, Taylor Morgan, Maria Fernandez, Kris Wilson, Bojana Vujeva, Ashby Bellows, Monica Romero, John Etzell, Emma White, Krisann Taylor, Tara Burfoot,

3. **Public comment and discussion:** Brenna Hardtner, representing Youth MOVE Nevada, shared that September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. She shared that teens are actively engaged in conversations around mental talk about this in podcast. She also mentioned that they host a youth-inspired and youth-led podcast on Spotify. The platform explores topics related to mental health and youth-serving systems. Noteworthy episodes include "YMNV Episode 57- Voces for Change: Suicide Prevention Month. Members are encouraged to listen and share. For more details visit the podcast at. [Youth MOVE Nevada - Podcast - Apple Podcasts](#).

4. **For possible action:** Review and Approval of Outstanding Meeting Minutes - May 15, 2025
MOTION: Rebecca Arvans moved to approve the meeting minutes for May 15, 2025, as written.

SECOND: Natalie Sanchez

VOTE: Unanimous approval

- 5. For information only:** Family Voice: A time to hear from families and those in attendance who work with families about their experiences, successes, challenges and themes. **Britt Young**, representing Nevada PEP reported a detailed overview of current family concerns. Britt noted an increase in families seeking to switch schools at the start of the academic year, with many exploring charters and homeschool options. Families cited a lack of appropriate engagement from schools, ongoing bullying that they feel is not being properly addressed, and a general sense of staff burnout over the past year. These issues have led many to seek a fresh start for their students. Britt also reported that families continue to experience long waitlists for community-based services such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, PSR, ABA, talk and play therapy, and autism assessments. Access to these services remains difficult, especially for children who attend school full time, due to billing limitations, particularly with ABA therapy. Families are also facing barriers in finding providers who offer in-home options. On a more positive note, Britt shared that families have had encouraging experiences with wraparound services through Magellan and DCFS in Nevada. These services have provided consistent behavioral health support, helping children build trust and achieve treatment goals. However, families also expressed frustration with high staff turnover in some agencies, which has disrupted progress in their children's treatment plans. **Keeli Killian**, representing WCSD counseling, reported a positive update about middle schools. At Dilworth Middle School, counselors and mental health staff visited all 6th grade classrooms, introduced themselves, and had students fill out a short form about their strengths, challenges, and trusted adults. Staff meet one-on-one with students to build connections and make sure they have support. The district is focusing on helping students transition smoothly from 5th to 6th grade and 8th to 9th grade. Many middle schools are working hard to build relationships early, and it's paying off—students are joining clubs, sports, and other activities that help them feel like they belong. Even short programs like 6th grade cross country are making a difference. **Megan Evans**, representing WCSD, reported that several high schools have started implementing SOS lessons as part of Suicide Prevention Month. This is the second year the SOS program is being rolled out at the high school level. It's an evidence-based program that seventh graders are already familiar with. The goal is for all students to receive the SOS lesson at least once during high school. Staff are becoming more engaged and asking questions, which is encouraging. Megan also mentioned that the district is hiring four more clinical staff, three for Title I middle schools and one for Joshua Inspire, a short-term behavioral program. This will bring the total number of clinical therapists to around 16 or 17, with 12 or 13 already serving high schools. The expansion of clinical support is progressing and generating excitement.
- 6. For information only:** A presentation on current community services that will assist in achieving the WCCMHC Long term plan Objective 1B: Expand crisis and stabilization services to prevent out-of-home placements, was scheduled to be delivered by Char Buehrle, Chief Executive Officer of Willow Springs. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, Ms. Buehrle was unable to present at this time.
- 7. For possible action:** Review, discussion, and approval of recommendations for the Washoe County Children's Mental Health Consortium FY 2026 budget. Annie Zucker shared the FY 2026 budget with members. Kristen Rivas informed the chair that the spreadsheet presented was from the previous fiscal year. She offered to provide guidance and review the areas that

should be updated for the FY 2026 budget spreadsheet.

- 8. For information only:** Nomination and vote – New Treasurer for WCCMHC & Replacement Voting Member for WCCMHC - All members: Annie Zucker announced the retirement of Catherine Loudon from the Washoe County School District. The group thanked her for her years of service, especially her work with the Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium. She recommended Megan Evans to take her place as the voting member. **MOTION:** Jessica Goicoechea-Parise moved to approve Megan Evans as the new voting member.
SECOND: Rebecca Arvans
VOTE: Unanimous approval
- 9. For information only:** Consortium member announcements – To provide the voting members a chance to share any updates they may have, and to discuss important issues impacting children’s mental health such as upcoming events, services, legislation, and related community factors. Jessica Goicoechea-Parise representing Washoe County Human Services Agency provided a brief update on West Hills Behavior Health Hospital facility project. The first wall has officially been removed, marking progress. Due to building code limitations and the inability to be grandfathered into certain specifications, plans for a full acute hospital setting had to be scaled back. Tearing down the building entirely was not feasible due to funding constraints. The facility serves only children and adolescents, with no adult population included in the design. The estimated opening date is currently projected for late 2027.
- 10. For possible action:** Approval of next meeting date and agenda items. The next meeting scheduled is on October 16,2025 at 10:00 am.
MOTION: Rebecca Arvins motions to approve the next meeting date on October 16,2025
SECOND: Britt Young
VOTE: Unanimous approval
- 11. Public comments and discussion:** No Public Comments
- 12. Adjournment:** Chair Annie Zucker adjourned the meeting at 10:48 am