

Steve Sisolak  
Governor



Richard Whitley, MS  
Director

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*



Cindy Pitlock, DNP  
Administrator

## Nevada Children's Commission Behavioral Health Committee Minutes

**DATE:** Thursday, January 27, 2022

**TIME:** 4:00 P.M.- Adjournment

**VIDEO CONFERENCE:** [Click here to join the meeting](#)

**TELECONFERENCE LINE:** 775-321-6111

**EXTENSION:** 381 842 045#

1. **Call to Order** – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas, Dr. Domonique Rice  
The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Gwynneth Smith.

2. **Welcome and Introductions (Roll Call)** – DCFS Staff  
**Members Present by Video:** Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Domonique Rice

**Members Absent:** Dr. Joe Haas

**DCFS Staff:** Dr. Cindy Pitlock, Elvira Saldana

**Public:** Lindsey James, Morgan Briscoe, Valerie Balen, Kendall Lyons

3. **Public Comment and Discussion**  
There was no public comment.

4. **For Possible Action:** Meeting Minutes from December 10, 2021

**Action:** A motion by Dr. Sheldon Jacobs was made to approve the minutes, seconded by Dr. Domonique Rice, and carried to approve the minutes of December 10, 2021.

5. **For Possible Action:** Workplan Committee Goals

- a) Review/discuss documents highlighting youth mental health priorities
  - Clark County Task Force Identified Goals (Nevada specific)
  - Prior Behavioral Health Subcommittee Letter re: Funding Priorities to Director Whitley (Nevada specific)
  - Surgeon General Youth Mental Health Report (national context)

- AAP Declaration of National Emergency in Youth Mental Health (national context)

Gwynneth Smith stated there are conversations taking place in different places regarding youth mental health, identifying priorities and trying to bring attention to certain priorities. Gwynneth Smith would like to use the meeting to make connections between all the different groups working on the topics. A couple of documents were circulated with the agenda with the goal of trying to facilitate a discussion around identifying priorities to present to the full Commission and with the voice of the full Commission advocate for them. Gwynneth Smith would like to get a better understanding statewide of what all the issues and priorities are before the committee moves to defining particular goals and taking it to the full Commission. Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if they think the committee needs to hear from more diverse people as part of this discussion before they nail down particular goals. The committee can also talk about the discussions happening in Clark County in conjunction with the state and the priorities they are working on. A draft letter from the full Commission was included which identified youth mental health priorities from a couple of years ago. Gwynneth Smith asked for input from committee members.

Kim Abbott stated she has been a part of different discussions. It would be nice if the committee could find some commonality between all the groups and have a good understanding of the priorities the groups are saying they should be. A lot of it is overlapping. If there are aligned goals, there would be more buy in and help.

Gwynneth Smith stated Kim Abbott articulated what she was trying to say. There are a lot of silos of work going on in different spaces. One of the suggestions Gwynneth Smith has is to use the committee as a repository of trying to gather list of goals or aligned priorities from different identified groups. Gwynneth Smith would like for the committee to be able to review the Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium report. Gwynneth Smith would like a better understanding of the experience and the needs of some other areas of the state, in the North and the rurals. Gwynneth Smith asked the committee members if there are any ideas of how to solicit the input or who they can reach out to. Someone could be identified and invited to the next meeting.

Kim Abbott stated it is her understanding the reason the Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium completed the report is due to statute and there is the same kind of entity in the North. Kim Abbott imagines the other consortium has the same requirement and probably preparing the same document.

Gwynneth Smith asked if the committee members have any other ideas of contacts for Washoe or the area who are knowledgeable about what their system is struggling with. The other groups or input Gwynneth Smith is hoping to hear from is diverse community members in Clark County. Gwynneth Smith asked Dr. Sheldon Jacobs what he thinks and how to better connect.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated it would be very helpful. Historically state government, county level, and city level have done a great job connecting with the providers. It is a great opportunity to partner, communicate more effectively, and listen to the ears and the voices of the community. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated he will be more than happy to connect.

Gwynneth Smith stated Dr. Sheldon Jacobs is uniquely positioned to help educate the group. It would be helpful to hear from parents, community advocates, and nonprofit organizations. It would also be helpful to have guests to come speak with the committee at the meetings so there is a diverse voice feeding into the discussion. Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if they have any ideas on the rurals.

Dr. Domonique Rice stated she could reach out to Karla Delgado, the Interim Deputy Administrator, over the rurals and identify if she is able to attend or appoint one of her staff to attend the next meeting.

Gwynneth Smith stated the question she would ask them to help the committee answer is what the greatest needs they are seeing in their communities and provide some concrete examples of how those needs are manifesting in situations not safe for kids.

#### Discuss role of Children's Commission in Advocacy

- Identify Priorities
- Identify effective means of advocacy for Commission

Gwynneth Smith stated she would like to discuss and think about going forward how the committee sees the role of the Children's Commission in advocacy, what are ways the Commission can be leveraged to bring more sustained attention to the issue of the crisis being faced in youth mental health. Gwynneth Smith asked Elvira Saldana if the letter Dr. Joe Haas previously drafted went out from the Commission.

Elvira Saldana stated if she remembers correctly, the letter was drafted however it was not sent to the Director.

Gwynneth Smith stated drafting a letter and trying to identify impositions of power to address is one avenue. Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if there are other ways the committee can request the Children's Commission to take a public stand on the issues, once the committee has identified what the key priorities are. As the committee moves forward, Gwynneth Smith would like for the committee members to think about what can be requested from the broader Commission and whose input the committee needs from the broader Commission to make sure what they are advocating for is clearly and strongly heard from the breath of the Children's Commission.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs asked what does advocating mean and what it looks like. Figuring out what it is going to entail can be a start.

Gwynneth Smith stated Dr. Sheldon Jacobs is right and the committee will need his brain power in thinking about the myriad of ways the Children's Commission can use its voice. There are Children's Commissions in other states who are very prominent and kind of public advocacy organizations which get a lot of attention. They need to understand with the broader Commission how the Children's Commission can be a louder voice than it has been historically, in the issue of mental health. Gwynneth Smith would like to solicit input on who the committee needs to

hear from to identify what the priorities are. Once the priorities are identified, think about how the Children's Commission champions them.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated a few meetings ago the committee talked about a few areas the committee wanted to focus on and one of the things discussed was some of the kids in the child welfare system they are struggling with treatment and placement. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated he feels strongly there needs to be some conversation and attention geared towards that population and issues that pertain to that population.

Gwynneth Smith stated Dr. Sheldon Jacobs' point is well taken and is correct. Gwynneth Smith asked Dr. Sheldon Jacobs what he thought about asking the Ackerman Center to be present at one of the broader Commission meetings to present on their work and any recommendations they have.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated it is a great idea.

Kim Abbott commented not only what they do and how they can help, even to give the broader Commission a general understanding of the way FASD impacts the children. Before they talk to the Commission about the need for services or how important it is, Kim Abbott thinks there also needs to be a component of the practicalities.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated in their meeting last week with them they talked about placements, the best placement for a kid with FASD, and what it would look like. The recommended placement is a home setting with a lot of structure and wraparound supportive services, where there is maybe one other kid. Unfortunately, we do not have that in our community, and they need to find a way to devise homes or programs that fit that sort of model.

Dr. Domonique Rice stated part of the other issue is billing and Medicaid reimbursement.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs asked Dr. Domonique Rice if it is due to FASD being looked upon as not a true diagnosis.

Dr. Domonique Rice stated she struggles with that thought, with mental health and intellectual disabilities as a whole. It is a huge area which is misunderstood and not given the attention it needs even if it is identified. The other aspect is those who are trained in mental health are not familiar with intellectual disability and are strictly trained for mental health. It is an area where education will always be needed.

Gwynneth Smith stated she appreciates the recommendation, taking FASD as an example that a first important step would be to first educate the Commission as to the disorder using the experts to educate the Commission and have the experts make the recommendation as to what is needed, then making the link to priorities and funding.

Dr. Domonique Rice stated in the urgency of it, the earlier there are interventions involved with the family and youth, the more successful of a rate of them recovering and overcoming a lot of the issues they experience and building resilience.

Gwynneth Smith stated it could be an effective avenue to take. In thinking forward to eventually proposing the Commission highlight particular priorities, one priority Gwynneth Smith has heard in several discussions is the question of funding and Medicaid and how to make the structural system support the interventions the kids need. The committee needs to help educate the community and the Commission as to why it is needed. Gwynneth Smith intends to keep the committee on a monthly meeting schedule. Gwynneth Smith asked Dr. Sheldon Jacobs if he would communicate with the Ackerman folks and see if they could participate in the full Commission meeting.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs asked what meeting date is.

Elvira Saldana stated the full Commission meeting is March 18th at 10:30 a.m.

Gwynneth Smith asked Elvira Saldana what the process is for them to be added to the agenda.

Elvira Saldana stated she would bring it up to the Co-Chairs to see if they could be added to the agenda.

Gwynneth Smith asked Dr. Domonique Rice to assist with making a connection with the folks in the rurals to see if someone can come to the next committee meeting to educate the committee as to their experience.

Dr. Domonique Rice asked if the committee would like Washoe present.

Gwynneth Smith stated, if possible, it would be great.

- 6. For Possible Action:** Discuss and Decide Upon Next Steps – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas, Dr. Domonique Rice
- Assign Tasks to Committee Members (if needed)  
Dr. Sheldon Jacobs to communicate with the Ackerman Center for a future presentation.  
Domonique Rice to make a connection with the rural area folks to attend the next committee meeting.
  - Specify Agenda Items for the Next Meeting  
No recommendations were made.
  - Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time  
A meeting will be scheduled in a month.

**7. Public Comment and Discussion**

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she would like to put the concept of first episode psychosis program on the committee's radar. It is a big gap for the state of Nevada. Dr. Cindy Pitlock would love if some experts could be pulled together to talk about what a first episode psychosis program might look like. In order to bring a true System of Care to the state of Nevada, the Medicaid issues have to be addressed. Seeing the

needs from the whole state perspective, respite is a big one. The respite issue is, in order to get the respite reimbursement, it requires the foster home to be licensed. The prudent parenting concept is one utilized across the country. Foster families not being trusted to choose appropriate healthy respite for their families is an issue that needs a little more work in the State. Dr. Cindy Pitlock thanked the committee for letting her sit in and listen to the conversations. Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated she is thrilled to go forward very humbly and together hopefully bring some change and move the dial.

Gwynneth Smith thanked Dr. Cindy Pitlock for her participation. Gwynneth Smith agrees with all three points Dr. Cindy Pitlock emphasized the first episode psychosis program and Gwynneth Smith would like to come back to discuss it. If the committee members have knowledge of the program or people the committee should hear from, Gwynneth Smith asked to send the names to her.

## **8. Adjourn**

A motion was made to adjourn by Gwynneth Smith, seconded by Dr. Domonique Rice, and carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.