

Joe Lombardo  
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 Meeting Minutes

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023

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

### VIDEO CONFERENCE:

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_YTNjNWFkOTItMTFIYS00OTNjLTllMTMtY2M3MzRiYjI3N2M3%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22be58909a-421c-4f56-857e-c5f7d4ef6f7f%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YTNjNWFkOTItMTFIYS00OTNjLTllMTMtY2M3MzRiYjI3N2M3%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22be58909a-421c-4f56-857e-c5f7d4ef6f7f%22%7d)

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

**CONFERENCE ID:** 427 752 592#

- 1. Call to Order** – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas  
The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m.
- 2. Welcome and Introductions (Roll Call)** – DCFS Staff  
**Members Present by Video:** Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Dr. Joe Haas, Kim Abbott

**DCFS Staff:** Tracey Reuck, Elvira Saldana

**Public:** Holly Vetter

Roll call was taken, and it was determined a quorum was present.

Tracey Reuck, IT Manager III for the Division of Child and Family Services introduced herself.

Holly Vetter, CQI Business Analytics Supervisor for the Clark County Department of Family Services introduced herself.

- 3. Public Comment and Discussion**  
There was no public comment.
- 4. For Possible Action:** Meeting Minutes – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas

Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if there were any amendments or comments.

Kim Abbott stated she did not have an opportunity to review the meeting minutes.

Dr. Joe Haas stated he has a small correction on the last paragraph of page 3 where he commented, to state it sounds like a positive move to be addressing this issue.

Gwynneth Smith asked Elvira Saldana if the change could be made.

Elvira Saldana stated it can be made as long as it is noted for the record when the vote is taken that it is with the particular amendment.

**Action:** A motion was made by Gwynneth Smith to approve the minutes with Dr. Joe Haas's proposed amendment, seconded by Dr. Joe Haas, and carried to approve the minutes of December 6, 2022. Kim Abbott abstained.

**5. For Information: UNITY Upgrade Project – Tracey Reuck, Division of Child and Family Services**

- Provide an overview and update of the UNITY Upgrade project  
Gwynneth Smith stated the Children's Commission is a statewide multi stakeholder Commission which was established by the Supreme Court to oversee the juvenile dependency system and track different efforts to improve outcomes for kids in child welfare. There are several different subcommittees of the Children's Commission. The behavioral health committee is one of them. The committee's job is to focus on the issues in the child welfare population, i.e., behavioral health issues, interventions, how kids are doing, how to improve outcomes. The committee reports back to the full Commission. The full Commission is an important voice in the state of Nevada. It is an opportunity for the committee to not only inform the Commission but to try to use the Commission to help support important initiatives to improve the well-being of kids in foster care. Over the last year and a half, the committee has focused on the youth mental health crisis in the state. As a state they struggle to understand all the mental health needs of kids in the child welfare system and to be able to adequately address them. The state struggles with lack of services, lack of appropriate placements, lack of assessments, and understanding what kids need. Through the Children's Commission and other efforts Gwynneth Smith is involved in, she has come to the realization of the importance of data. Gwynneth Smith stated she was informed of DCFS receiving a substantial amount of money to start working on the UNITY upgrade and she thought it was important for the Children's Commission and the behavioral health committee to learn more about it. The committee would like to learn what the plan is, what the process will look like, the timeline, and how the committee can help and provide input.

Tracey Reuck stated she is very aware of youth mental health challenges and the crisis happening within the country. It is not being called an upgrade since it is not a technology uplift project. They are looking at it as a replacement project and they would like to replace all the existing business processes. They would like to have deep, immersive conversations with all the stakeholders in envisioning what the future of child welfare will look like in Nevada. It will be a multi-phase plan across several years. Recently, a governance model was established. Holly

Vetter is a member of the governance team. There is representation from the counties and the rurals. The governance team has three bodies of people. It was established for large projects which come through DCFS as an IT request. The multi-phase plan will have two phases, one will be a needs assessment and the other will be an implementation phase. Within the first phase there will be two Request for Proposals (RFPs) going out later this spring. The first one is for project management and organizational change management. The second is for the actual needs assessment and the vendor is being asked to come in and document the current business process flows. Once the existing business process flow is established, they would like to have deep conversations with all stakeholders to discuss what they would like for it to look like in the future. There are many constraints in the current system. There is a lot of new technology they would like to have. At the end of phase one, they will come up with a roadmap to get to the chosen solution. The second phase mentioned will be the implementation of the chosen alternative. The chosen alternative will take about eighteen to thirty-six months to implement. The needs assessment will take twelve to eighteen months.

Gwynneth Smith asked if it was fair to say the needs analysis has not started.

Tracey Reuck stated it is correct.

Gwynneth Smith asked what the timeline is for the beginning phase.

Tracey Reuck stated the RFPs were drafted in December. The RFPs are reviewed by the governance team members before they go out and they also have to go to the Administration of Children and Families. It takes sixty days for them to review the RFPs. Tracey Reuck is anticipating not getting them back until May and hopefully selecting a vendor in June to get started.

Gwynneth Smith asked if they are looking at summer/fall for the process of being able to provide input.

Tracey Reuck stated yes.

Gwynneth Smith asked what discussions and planning are happening now, if any, on the tracking of mental health or behavioral health related variables.

Tracey Reuck stated the discussion is happening at Dr. Cindy Pitlock's level.

Gwynneth Smith stated the two areas she feels they struggle with are the case-by-case level of tracking data for children with complicated mental health histories and understanding the aggregate.

Tracey Reuck stated the first data point Gwynneth Smith described is also happening in the adoption area. A lot of it is still on paper. It is called out in the RFP; they want it electronically scanned and, in the system sooner. Regarding Gwynneth Smith's second point, there is a need for richer reporting where they can dive into the information.

Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if they have any questions or thoughts.

Dr. Joe Haas commented from years of working with the system, the Medical Passport was developed. Dr. Joe Haas asked if it would be a reasonable request to query the Medical Passport.

Tracey Reuck stated if it is in there, it should be reportable. It should be something they can develop, however at this time the effort to do it is unknown.

Dr. Joe Haas asked if it would be a reasonable query to ask how many kids are in residential treatment by county.

Tracey Reuck stated yes.

Dr. Joe Haas asked if UNITY talks with Avatar or if Avatar is still being used with the treatment wing of DCFS.

Tracey Reuck stated Avatar is still being used and will go out to RFP in 2025.

Gwynneth Smith asked what Avatar is.

Dr. Joe Haas stated Avatar is the data system the treatment wing of DCFS utilized and maybe adult mental health utilized it at some point.

Holly Vetter stated if it is in UNITY in a structured data field, those are usually easy for them to get a hold of to pull data, pull aggregate, or person or case specific data in most cases. With the data extraction and analytics application they use, each of the child welfare jurisdictions have their own account and system therefore the information could vary between Washoe County and Clark County.

Gwynneth Smith asked if it is good that different regions use different systems.

Holly Vetter stated she does not know if it is good or bad. There are pros and cons to it. There is potential for variance which could be confusing for people who are not familiar with how the system is extracting data. Washoe County is beginning to build their system for extracting data.

Gwynneth Smith asked if the issue is the system itself or how the data gets put into the system.

Tracey Reuck stated what Gwynneth Smith is describing is business process reengineering and what they are hoping to get to. The issue is how the data is getting in the system. In response to Dr. Joe Haas's question, Tracey Reuck stated currently Avatar is separate from UNITY, there is no integration.

Holly Vetter commented some of what is being described, the things they would like to see in the new system ideally would be to eliminate some of the things they are concerned about. There can

be ways developed for different systems to communicate with each other, collect information needed, copy or deposit in different locations for it to become available for users.

Gwynneth Smith stated it would be great if they could go into UNITY, type the child's name, and have a dashboard print out of all the relevant information for the child since they have been in agency custody.

Kim Abbott stated she is with the Children's Attorneys Project at the Legal Aid of Southern Nevada and they represent every child in foster care in Clark County. They do not use UNITY or have access to it; however, their clients are the subject of UNITY. When they request discovery through the District Attorney's office, UNITY notes are printed out for them which have to be redacted by the secretary. Kim Abbott asked if with a new system, if there could be redaction without having someone review and redact information. Kim Abbott also asked if in the process of information gathering and plans moving forward, if there will be discussions about who has access to what is available and if there will be different levels of access for users.

Tracey Reuck stated they are definitely looking for granular security for portions of a person's record. Part of the scope in the needs assessment and requirements is to look at the granular level of security, what is needed, or what they would like to have. They should be able to find software to help with redaction.

Gwynneth Smith stated she talked with Holly Vetter about the idea of the future version of UNITY potentially being able to interface with other child serving data systems in the state. Gwynneth Smith recalls from the conversation with Holly Vetter there is an acronym for it.

Holly Vetter stated Gwynneth Smith is referring to API. There are certain API already developed and in place with UNITY for certain things.

Tracey Reuck stated UNITY has more than twenty integrations, one of them is to Medicaid and pulls data from Medicaid to create reports. There are data sharing agreements with the schools and the Department of Education for sharing data. In the needs assessment they have asked to look at every one of the integrations and see how they can make it better.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs commented UNITY has been a struggle and is not the most user-friendly system. Using UNITY is a challenge at times, creates more work and can be a barrier.

Dr. Joe Haas asked if with the interface between Medicaid and UNITY, if it would be a reasonable ask to take the current child welfare population in UNITY and request the number of children in that population who have been treated for mental health diagnosis via Medicaid.

Tracey Reuck stated she has staff who create reports. There are reports available today which have Medicaid data. Tracey Reuck stated she would provide what is available.

Dr. Joe Haas stated it would be an overall report which would provide a mental health status.

Tracey Reuck asked Dr. Joe Haas if he is looking for more of a statistical type of report of how many kids.

Dr. Joe Haas stated he is not asking for anything specific at the moment.

Gwynneth Smith stated it is the core of what the committee is trying to understand, what can be done today with what is available and what is needed. Gwynneth Smith asked how the Commission can continue to be involved with the project and share ideas.

Tracey Reuck stated when they begin the needs assessment and identify stakeholders, the group will be identified as stakeholders to participate.

Gwynneth Smith stated she appreciates being included.

**6. For Possible Action:** Discuss and Decide Upon Next Steps – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas

- Assign Tasks to Committee Members (if needed)  
Tasks were not assigned.
- Specify Agenda Items for the Next Meeting  
Agenda items were not identified.
- Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time  
A meeting will be scheduled at a later date.

**7. Public Comment and Discussion**

There was no public comment.

**8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.