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# 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, June 7, 2022

**TIME:** 1:00 P.M.- Adjournment

**VIDEO CONFERENCE:**

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_ODVhNzhkYzItMjBkNi00Zjg5LWWEyNjMtMWM3ZTZmYjk1NzYz%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_ODVhNzhkYzItMjBkNi00Zjg5LWWEyNjMtMWM3ZTZmYjk1NzYz%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:** 334 960 802 #

- 1. Call to Order** – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas  
The meeting was called to order at 1:02 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. Joe Haas

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

**Public:** Lea Case, Marianne McKown, Megan Comlossy, Vanessa Dunn

- 3. Public Comment and Discussion**  
There was no public comment.
- 4. For Possible Action:** Meeting Minutes from April 12, 2022  
Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if there were any corrections to the minutes.

There were no recommendations.

**Action:** A motion by Kim Abbott was made to approve the minutes, seconded by Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, and carried to approve the minutes of April 12, 2022.

- 5. For Information:** Behavioral Health Workforce Development – Megan Comlossy

- Provide an overview of the Nevada Health Care Workforce and Pipeline Development Workgroup and its work

Megan Comlossy stated she is the Associate Director of the Center for Public Health Excellence within the School of Public Health at UNR. They are working on several different initiatives to improve public health in Nevada with funding from the Division of Public and Behavioral Health. One of the initiatives they were tasked with is improving the public health workforce. After conversations with several people, it became apparent health workforce is a bigger issue, not just public health. They decided to create a statewide working group to discuss health care workforce issues and pipeline development. The Nevada Health Care and Pipeline Development Workgroup was established. The advisory committee to that group has been meeting monthly since February. The advisory committee is made up of stakeholders representing health care, public health, behavioral health, primary care, workforce development, K12 and higher education, minority health and equity, and community-based organizations throughout the state. The idea is to bring everyone together to have a conversation to figure out how to improve, grow, and diversify Nevada's workforce and workforce pipeline. They are focusing specifically on public health, behavioral health, and primary care. The idea is to break down some of the silos. There is so much great work happening in workforce development across the state however a lot of folks are not talking to each other, a lot of folks do not know others exist or what they do. Their goal is to connect dots and ensure people know who is doing what and leverage the experience and expertise that exists in the state. They are working on facilitating information sharing, making connections, creating opportunities for cross sector collaboration, and maximizing resources. The advisory committee initially talked about the challenges and opportunities they are facing. They are focusing on everything from K12 through vocational training, higher education all the way to existing workforce. If there is not early introduction, engagement, and outreach to young students then they may not know about their professional opportunities. The advisory committee informed them retention and turnover are huge issues. They have been looking at models in other states. One of the models, the advisory committee has been influenced by is the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska, which Dr. Sara Hunt at UNLV is a proponent of. The model has interventions, and it has established programs and activities throughout the pipeline for getting kids, adults, students, and existing workforce into behavioral health workforce. It is a super comprehensive program which addresses a lot of the points in the pipeline. The group is looking at it as a model to think about how they may be able to develop something similar or help it influence what they end up doing. They have held themed meetings which include informational presentations from key stakeholders. Subcommittees of the workgroup have been developed. There is a committee for public health, behavioral health, and primary care. The subcommittees are delving into what needs to happen in terms of workforce pipeline development in public health, behavioral health, and primary care, who they need to have at the table, and what kind of conversations they need to have. The goal is to develop a workforce pipeline development plan for each sub sector. The first meeting to start drafting the plan is this Thursday. By connecting the dots and getting the right partners to talk to each other and know the others exist, they can make a difference in workforce pipeline development. They are getting close to finishing a statewide workforce pipeline development survey. The results will be compiled, additional research will be conducted, and workforce pipeline development asset maps will be developed for public health, behavioral health, and primary care. The maps will be analyzed and gaps and areas for improvement and opportunities

for collaboration will be identified. There may be opportunities for collaboration between the workgroup and the behavioral health committee.

Gwynneth Smith thanked Megan Comlossy. Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if there were any questions.

Kim Abbott asked if there are representatives from the Clark County School District and Washoe County School District in the group of stakeholders. They are struggling to fill some of the behavioral health positions, and they have been raising concerns about licensing and the things which are becoming barriers.

Megan Comlossy stated they have had representation from the state Department of Education more than the specific school districts. They would love for the school districts to be part of the conversation and to get recommendations as to who to include. They have heard about the challenges filling behavioral health positions and it has been a topic of discussion. They have also connected with the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environment.

Dr. Joe Haas stated Megan Comlossy mentioned the retention issues at present and is interested in where the energy and focus fits in, in regard to this issue. They are hearing even when positions are hired, depending on where the position is in the structure of the agency that sometimes people leave within the same agency. There are HMOs with provider panels in which there are not enough slots amongst the providers. Dr. Joe Haas asked if it falls within their purview and if it may triage to the top to get the existing workforce happy, working, and staying.

Megan Comlossy stated they have had conversations to look outside of Nevada to bring folks in, grow their own, and at the same time they need to keep those they have. In terms of retention, some of the things they are talking about is looking at career advancement opportunities and pipeline development opportunities.

Marianne McKown commented Vitality Unlimited runs four of Nevada's Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers. One of the biggest issues they have is when they try to recruit people to Nevada, they run into erratic licensing times.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated he sits on the Marriage and Family Therapists and Clinical Professional Counselors Board and in the past, there were issues around people getting licensed in a timely manner. It has changed significantly in the last three years. They have been meeting more regularly as a board and some regulations have been changed to help with getting people licensed quicker. A lot of clinicians are also moving to the private sector.

Megan Comlossy stated her background is health policy. Prior to her current role, she worked for the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau and worked on health and human services issues. Licensing is always an issue. Megan Comlossy agrees some significant improvements have been made in recent years. It is still an issue they face across the boards.

Gwynneth Smith asked Megan Comlossy to talk about the behavioral health subcommittee focused on workforce development, who is on the subcommittee, what they are working on, and thoughts about how the Nevada Children's Commission Behavioral Health committee can help them.

Megan Comlossy stated most of the folks on the subcommittee are not specifically engaged in workforce pipeline development. They are folks who care about behavioral health in Nevada and want to improve it. They have identified if they want to have good behavioral health services in Nevada, they must have the workforce. The subcommittee is an opportunity to come together and bring diverse perspectives. Sarah Hunt, Eric Schoen, the Chairs of the Regional Behavioral Health Policy Boards, Dr. Megan Freeman, Jose Melendrez, and Jeanine Ward are members of the subcommittee. To have one or more of the committee members participate would be an opportunity to provide a new perspective.

Gwynneth Smith commented she will be attending the meeting on Thursday.

Kim Abbott commented Megan Comlossy is right when she said "unique or different issues" when it comes to kids in foster care. A lot of the services they are receiving are more public sector and the public sector has a much harder time competing in the open market for those positions. Kim Abbott stated she is pleased to hear there is someone on the committee related to minority or diversion since it is another issue which impacts the clients they serve. A goal or focus moving forward needs to be, to not only give people access to services but give them services they are comfortable with, and they can engage with and relate to.

Megan Comlossy stated they are focusing on minority health and equity, however having the real-life explanations and stories of how it impacts specific populations and people is important. Having those specific voices in the subcommittee conversations are key. When Kim Abbott said there are unique issues related to foster care because the public workforce is being used, it is something they have heard over and over. There are many reasons the state has a hard time competing with the private sector to get folks into the workforce, however there are some things they can do and some low hanging fruit.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs commented there was a time when people wanted to work in the public sector within the clinical space however there have been changes, i.e., longevity taken away, the length of time it takes to get hired, hours, and advancement. Also historically, people that get selected for committees are policy people and not boots on the ground who are in tune to what is going on in their respective communities. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs is happy to hear the workgroup is open to bringing diverse ideas to the committees.

Megan Comlossy stated she appreciates the comments and agrees. One thing they wanted to be different about the initiative is they want to be community focused and have the boots on the ground. The advisory committee started as the more high-level state people to get some direction. Now as they build out the subcommittees, they are excited to bring the right people into the conversation. Megan Comlossy welcomes any suggestions.

Gwynneth Smith stated if any of the committee members are interested in attending the workgroup to please email her.

**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  
No recommendations were made.
- Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time  
A meeting will be scheduled in late July.

**7. Public Comment and Discussion**

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated they are all things American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) across divisions and with all the stakeholders. They are working collaboratively to move the dial on children's mental health. The Interim Finance Committee (IFC) meeting will be held on June 21, 2022. The crisis stabilization centers, emergency funding for crisis care, and emergency staffing tenancy improvements for Desert Willow Treatment Center will be heard at the June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The rest of the buildout they are working on will be heard at the August IFC meeting.

Gwynneth Smith thanked Dr. Cindy Pitlock for the update and for the work she has been doing.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock stated it has been a collaborative effort. As an administrative body they need to lean in on the support of colleagues and stakeholders to come up alongside with the portion of the ARPA request. It will be a continuing partnership.

Gwynneth Smith stated she looks forward to updates.

Dr. Cindy Pitlock requested a few minutes of public comment for July to ensure they all clear on the big bulk of the ARPA request going forward.

Gwynneth Smith stated she thinks it is appropriate to do. Gwynneth Smith asked Elvira Saldana to please help the committee remember for the July agenda.

Elvira Saldana stated she would make a note of it.

**8. Adjourn**

A motion was made to adjourn by Dr. Joe Haas, seconded by Kim Abbott, and carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.