

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**SANTA FE COUNTY**  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**November 14, 2024**

**Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**1. A.** This meeting of the Santa Fe County Behavioral Health Leadership Council (BHLC) was called to order by Vice Chair Craig O’Hare at approximately 10:05 a.m. on the above-cited date at the La Cienega Fire Station, 37 Rancho Viejo Blvd., Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The meeting was held as a hybrid with people participating virtually and in person. Chair Barela was attended remotely and Vice Chair O’Hare presided over the meeting.

**B.** The following members were present:

**Members Present:**

Sylvia Barela [Webex]  
Craig O’Hare  
Nicole Ault [Webex]  
Michael DeBernardi [Webex]  
Kate Field [Webex]  
Jonathan Gordon  
Stacey Martin [Webex]  
Terry Sine [Webex]  
Kathleen Tunney [Webex]

**Member(s) Excused:**

Jorge Gonzales

**County Staff Present:**

Anne Ryan, CSD Director  
Alex Dominguez, CSD, Behavioral Health Services, Program Manager  
Chanelle Delgado, [Webex] CSD, DWI Program, Teen Court  
Jennifer Romero, [Webex] CSD Deputy Director

**Others Present:**

Catherine Lynch, [Webex] PIO 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Attorney’s Office

**D. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Sine moved to approve and Mr. Gordon seconded. That agenda as published was unanimously approved.

Vice Chair O'Hare reminded the council members that they had discussed this meeting being held as a three-hour planning session; however, because of today's location change it was not possible.

## **2. Welcome and Introductions**

Vice Chair O'Hare recommended that the members introduce themselves and what organization they represent.

Sylvia Barela: Director, Via Positiva, behavioral health consulting company and has worked over 20 years as a provider in New Mexico.

Alex Dominguez: Santa Fe County Behavioral Health, CSP

Terry Sine: Representing PMS.

Chanelle Delgado: Santa Fe County Youth and Family Services Division

Kathleen Tunney: Christus St. Vincent, Director of Community Health and Health Equity.

Michael DeBernardi: CEO of Life Link in Santa Fe.

Nicole Ault: City of Santa Fe Fire Department.

Jonathan Gordon: Board of Director with NAMI.

Stacy Martin: CEO, Santa Fe Recovery Center

Anne Ryan: Santa Fe County Community Services Director

Jennifer Romero: Santa Fe County Community Services Deputy Director

Kate Field, New Mexico Solutions Crisis Services Director

Catherine Lynch: PIO 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office

## **3. Approval of September 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Barela offered the following corrections:

- Jonathan Gordon volunteered to serve on the recruitment committee
- Page 2: The following sentence was deleted because it lacked clarity: ~~It was noted that transition care can raise a red flag because of the additional providers.~~
- Page 2: Ms. Ryan noted that Ramona Flores-Lopez will be serving as the coordinator/facilitator for this council ~~but~~ but was unable to attend today.
- Page 5: He mentioned that the council is governed by the Open Meetings Act which includes noticing meetings; subcommittees ~~are not~~ do not require notice.

Chair Barela moved to approve the September 12, 2024 meeting minutes as corrected. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Gordon and passed without opposition.

## **4. Updates**

### **a. AOT/Assisted Outpatient Treatment**

Ms. Ryan extended her appreciation to Ms. Lynch for participating in today's meeting.

Ms. Ryan reminded the council that at the July 18, 2024 Special Session, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) was awarded a little over \$3 million to implement AOT, a civil court

action and tool to ultimately scale statewide along with competency which follows a criminal court track. The County is focusing exclusively on AOT. There have been a series of meetings convened by the State's AOC and representatives of counties and stakeholders within the 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District hosted by Judge Biedscheid. The AOC has until June 30, 2025 to roll out the plan and expend the funds. The AOC has contracted with the Treatment Advocacy Center, an organization that has helped communities implement AOT throughout the nation, and they will be leading the process. Three new full-time positions will serve as program/project managers with two in Albuquerque and one in Santa Fe.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District which encompasses Rio Arriba, Los Alamos and Santa Fe counties has been meeting every other week to discuss and design what might work best for effectiveness.

The Sequential Intercept Mapping that this body discussed at the previous meeting will be coordinated by Elizabeth Peterson, Santa Fe County Community Services Department, along with the AOC. The related stakeholders will be those struggling/living with serious mental illness and also those involved with the justice system.

## **5. Committee Updates**

Item b was moved to the top of the updates.

### **b. Recruitment**

Vice Chair O'Hare said he, Chair Barela and Mr. Gordon have been working on recruitment. Ideally, the council is to have 15 members and currently there are 10.

Chair Barela said the recruitment committee met once to discuss the five open positions. Representation from the indigenous population, youth, Santa Fe Public Schools, HPPC and perhaps someone from northern New Mexico is being sought. Council members are encouraged to conduct outreach and/or nominate or suggest individuals. The committee has done some specific outreach with Mr. Dominguez's help. Applications are anticipated from Brian Serna and Sandra Dransfield. Once five or more applications are obtained they will be submitted to the BCC for formal action. Outreach has occurred to SFPS and an application is expected. Vice Chair O'Hare said he sent a letter to the SFPS superintendent and board chair and Sue O'Brien the Director of the Office of Student Wellness was recommended by the superintendent.

Chanelle Delgado suggested Brian Martinez from the indigenous population. Ms. Lynch also had a suggestion.

Mr. Dominguez said he has been in touch with Mark Hayden, General Counsel with New Mexico Retiree Health Care and currently serving on the HPPC.

Ms. Ault recommended the new director of the City's Community Health and Safety, Henri Hammond.

Chair Barela said she did reach out to Dr. Cynthia Guzman from Tewa Pueblo and although she is interested in serving she is not currently living in New Mexico.

Vice Chair O'Hare noted that a council member is permitted to send a proxy in the event they are unable to attend a meeting. The proxy will not have voting rights. He encouraged the members to attend in person.

**a. By-Laws**

The by-laws were sent out during this meeting. Vice Chair O'Hare said he put the by-laws together and they mirror the resolution. He reviewed the purpose of the council as established in the resolution/by-laws is to act as an advisory body to the Community Services Department and the [added during discussion] Board of County Commissioners, and to provide recommendations concerning a comprehensive system of behavioral health services to better meet the needs of the residents of Santa Fe County. The resolution is referenced.

- The council shall complete an inventory of existing behavioral health programs and funding streams in Santa Fe County – that was completed a few years ago with the assistance of a consultant;
- Recommend behavioral health priorities and action steps to fund those priorities through use of pooled resources;
- Recommend ways for ~~provider alignment~~ integration and coordination of care [added during discussion] and reducing duplication of provider agreements for data sharing;
- Recommend ways for agencies to collaborate on common public health goals;
- Report annually to the Santa Fe County Health Policy & Planning Commission and to the BCC;
- Recommend ways to increase public education and awareness of behavioral health issues and available services to the general public not just to those who are currently dealing with either substance use disorder or a mental health condition.

Vice Chair O'Hare said the remainder of the by-laws outline the 15 voting members, define a quorum as 51 percent of the appointed members, provide information about the OMA, the code of conduct, meeting schedule and how vacancies are handled.

In the event a quorum is not achieved, Ms. Ryan said the meeting can be convened and no action can be taken.

Referring to #7, that an HPPC member will serve as a non-voting *ex-officio* member of the council, was based on the resolution. There was a question of why that individual would be a non-voting member. Ms. Ryan said the resolution serves as a starting point for the council and amendments can be recommended in the future. [The resolution states: A member of the HPPC selected by the HPPC shall be an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Council and periodically report to the members of the HPPC on the Council's actions.]

Chair Barela recommended removing #7 and allowing the HPPC member to serve as a voting council member. Ms. Ryan said the by-laws are the council's rules in which to govern;

however, the HPPC member cannot be a voting member until the resolution is amended by the BCC.

Ms. Romero said the idea behind including an HPPC member on the Council was to ensure that there would be cross-communication and collaboration between the two entities but not to fulfill a seat on the council. She offered to advise the HPPC at their next meeting of the opening on this council.

Following discussion, it was determined to maintain #7 and hold off on by-law action until further contact with the HPPC has occurred with interested individuals, and the by-laws are emailed to the council members. Any revisions or recommendations to the by-laws should be forwarded to Mr. Dominguez and cc'd to Vice Chair O'Hare.

Regarding recruitment, an individual interested in serving should fill out an application and follow up with a letter of interest and résumé/bio.

The issue arose of a council member not attending meetings nor participating: Should there be a provision in the by-laws to remove that individual? Ms. Ryan said when she worked for Sandoval County by-laws included a provision that after X number of unexcused absences they were automatically removed. To resign, a member was requested to provide 30 days written notice. She supported including a provision to that effect in the by-laws. Vice Chair O'Hare noted that the resolution designates that the BCC removes members from the council with or without cause making it more cumbersome.

The term "provider alignment" was within the purpose of the by-laws and Chair Barela clarified that it refers to collaboration, alignment, coordination – providers working on behalf of the broader more comprehensive behavioral health needs in the community. Mr. Gordon said "coordination of care" is extraordinarily important. Integration and coordination of care is what the council should strive for because without the transition of care for the patient is completely lost. There was consensus to replace "provider alignment" with "integration and coordination of care."

Adoption of the by-laws will be included in the January agenda.

**6. Council Objectives**

**7. Resources Exercise Planning**

Vice Chair O'Hare said the three-hour January meeting will be for resources exercise planning to prioritize council objectives. It is important that this council be as effective as possible and be a good use of the participants' time. He noted that the purpose statement includes a great many tasks and he was concerned that meeting 1.5 hours every other month makes it unlikely those tasks will be achieved. Subcommittees may be the avenue and he asked the members to consider how much of their time they were willing to commit to the council.

Chair Barela said that the tasks appear very broad. Recognizing the vast expertise and experience on this council, she recommended identifying how best to effectively work together

to address gaps, develop solutions and work collaboratively together while taking advantage of the time available. She asked the members to consider how can this council be really effective, helpful and useful to the work that they are doing.

Ms. Ault said her concern is addressing where people are getting lost within the system. Identifying those “small gaps that create huge holes” and figure out a solution; who can pick those pieces up? Perhaps more navigators are needed.

Ms. Ryan said she fully supported reaching out to the Managed Care Organization/MCOs for the care coordinators to participate as interested parties with the council and work to fill some of the gaps that Ms. Ault addressed.

Mr. Gordon said the transition of care can be a huge drop off. He implored the Council to think about mental health care as a comprehensive system that is easily accessible to all people and patients who want to access it at any of those points for all of the participant leaders at the table. An affordable and accessible system for people in the community is missing. He offered that thinking at 30,000 feet at this point was a good idea rather than being too granular.

Mr. Gordon agreed with Vice Chair O’Hare that meeting every other month would not lead to success. He proposed meeting more frequently and having a program manager to keep the concepts flowing. Ms. Ryan said Mr. Dominguez as the Behavioral Health Services Manager is intended to dedicate some of his time to this. The contract coordinator, Ramona Flores-Lopez, is intended to serve this council in that capacity; however, she has not yet signed the contract.

Ms. Field said she hoped this council could be action oriented. At the previous meeting gaps were discussed and she felt they could be identified and the council could discuss positions/people to fill those gaps. Currently, there is funding available and she hoped with all the expertise on the council something tangible could be created.

Ms. Ault recommended exploring the capacity of the CONNECT network to fill the gaps. She lauded the network as beautifully conceived and executed.

As a behavioral health user, Vice Chair O’Hare said his interest is in increasing public education and awareness of behavioral health issues and services to the general public. A marketing and advertising budget, not unlike the DWI awareness budget, would be valuable.

## **8. Announcements**

- Life Link is holding a fundraiser gala: Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Scottish Rite Temple

## **9. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup> in the Plaza Conference Room at 100 Catron from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For an effective meeting, attending in person was recommended.

**10. Adjournment**

This meeting was declared adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Approved by:

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Sylvia Barela, Chair  
Behavioral Health Advisory Council

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Farrell, Wordswork

**D R A F T**

**SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**