



## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

February 25, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Region 5 Systems, 3600 Union Drive (hybrid)

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kenny Harre, Corrie KIELTY, Jill Kuzelka, Rachel Mulcahy, Laura Osborne, Kelsey Schwab, Michele Vana and Evette Watts

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Greg Janak, Paige Joseph, Rebecca Meinders and Gale Pohlmann

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dr. Anitra Warrior, Tami DeShon, Traci Cooney, Theresa Henning, Patrick Kreifels, Sandy Morrissey, Kim Michael, Erin Rourke, and Amanda Tyerman-Harper, Region 5 Systems

### **HOUSEKEEPING / ANNOUNCEMENTS / INTRODUCTIONS**

Mulcahy called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. followed by announcements and roll call. A quorum was present.

### **OPEN MEETINGS ACT INFORMATION**

Mulcahy noted that Open Meetings Act information is posted as required.

Notification of this meeting and information regarding availability of the agenda was provided through a legal notice in the Lincoln Journal Star, published February 11, 2026.

### **ADDITIONS / CHANGES TO AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Osborne made a motion, seconded by Kuzelka, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The Consent Agenda includes the 1/28/2026 BHAC minutes, the 2/9/2026 RGB minutes, and FY 26 Compliance Management Report. All present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

### **ACTION / PRIORITY ITEMS**

#### **Provider Contract Amendments:**

- Henning presented page 14, showing the current amendments. Kuzelka made a motion, seconded by Watts, to accept the contract amendments as presented and move to the Board for approval. All present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

#### **FY 25 Network Audit Monitoring:**

- DBH reviews a sample of Region 5's audits with providers annually. They issued a finding that Region 5 did not do unit audits with some expense-based services. Region 5 requested DBH reconsider its findings as

programs were reviewed with issued findings/plan of correction with the provider in question, CenterPointe. This appeal was denied by DBH; a plan of correction was submitted to DBH that documentation of the NFFS unit audits would be enhanced. The plan of correction was accepted by DBH. Osborne made a motion, seconded by Harre, to accept the report and move to the Board for approval. All present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

**OTHER UPDATES/INFORMATION:**

**Behavioral Health / System Coordination / Legislative Updates:**

- Legislative:
  - Kreifels mentioned there were lots of concerns expressed by the provider network regarding the changes to service definitions. One being more expectations of the provider have been added to the service definitions without increased rates. Public comment was to end mid-January, extended to the end of January, and now Region 5 is awaiting information from DBH on next steps. There is discussion of a possible redraft of the service definitions with another public comment review period, or they may make changes and roll the definitions out. As more information becomes available, Kreifels will keep members informed.
  - The budget adjustment bill is due March 6<sup>th</sup> from the appropriations committee to the full legislature. Kreifels stated Governor Pillen asked all divisions to decrease their budgets by 10%. DBH had found other efficiencies, such as not moving forward with the 1915i waiver. The Regions have not seen any decrease in their allocations. Page 16 provides more information on where those planned cuts will be made.
  - All states were guaranteed \$100 million from the Rural Health and Transformation Funds and could apply for an additional \$100 million each year for 5 years. Kreifels updated members that Nebraska applied for the \$200 million and was awarded \$218 million. Behavioral health priority areas for these funds are on page 17. Kreifels is asking DBH for an accounting of the funds that identifies the total being allocated to each program.
  - LB722 is the clean-up bill to allow Regions to use the Documentary Stamp Tax funds to be used for housing risk mitigation. This would allow funds to be used on damage and repairs to a rental property that was occupied by a client with substance use. This was previously only allowed for persons with serious mental illness. The Legislative Health & Human Services Committee all Senators voted to move it out of committee. During General File vote, no senators voted no. The bill will proceed to Select File for a vote.
  - All legislative committee hearings will be concluded by February 27.
  - LB1040 is to expand who is able to file a petition to place a Nebraskan on an EPC, to open it up to others in the community beyond law enforcement and county attorneys.
- Emergency System
  - Region 5 applied and was awarded a grant for Sequential Intercept Mapping to address the challenges with accessing beds at LRC. The goal is to determine the role of LRC in the Sequential Intercept Mapping process. Specifically, who should be going to LRC, people placed on a mental health board commitment vs being served in the community hospital or community-based treatment services as well as why are there so many competency restoration orders coming from the judges.
  - Kreifels updated members that page 22 has information on upcoming BETA trainings. Osborne stated that there is also a mini-BETA scheduled for April 17 in Nemaha County. This training is open for Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee and Richardson counties.
- Opioid Funds
  - Henning stated that Region 5 submitted a proposal for carryover funds from the SOR grant. We are still waiting on full confirmation/approval, we do know that DBH will not fund the Billion Pill Pledge, but they could fund lock boxes, medication safes, Narcan trainings, webinars for community education, and some additional funds for treatment. The funds are roughly \$100,000-\$115,000. Region 5 also submitted a proposal to fund the Nebraska Collegiate Prevention Alliance. They have a campaign they are working on

around Narcan stigma on campuses and lock boxes for campuses. DBH is also evaluating this request. For the upcoming fiscal year Opioid Remediation Settlement Fund priorities will include Mobile MOUD, substance abuse treatment capacity development, Billion Pill Pledge, and creation of a public dashboard for project outcomes.

- Two years ago, a pool of flex funds were created. The pool started with \$75,000. More funds were requested and at the end of year one, we had utilized \$125,000. Year two we asked for \$125,000 and as of right now, the funds are almost depleted.
- Prevention
  - Morrissey stated that the prevention team is wrapping up their block grant and preparing for the next fiscal year grant.
  - Partnership for Success will have carry over funds of \$10,000. March 6 is the deadline to request to use those funds.
  - Legislative day allowed 6 prevention/coalition members to meet with legislators.
- Housing
  - HUD housing program continues. No updates on the injunction that had been filed.
  - Surveys recently completed participants, landlords, system partners, and referral sources with mostly positive feedback.
  - CDS and EBS are in the process of changing how the regions enter information and invoice DBH.
  - DBH maintained some case management with DOJ, waiting to hear what their role is.
- NABHO Lobby Day
  - There will be seven Region 5 employees attending on March 6.

**Potential Adjustment to EPC:**

- Region 5 currently contracts with Mary Lanning Hospital in Hastings. Mary Lanning provides EPC beds when needed by law enforcement from four counties on the west side of our service area. Region 5 also contracts with Methodist Hospital in Fremont. Methodist provides EPC beds when needed by law enforcement from two counties on the north side of our service area. Methodist recently let Region 5 know they no longer want to contract for this service as of July 1, 2026. Region 5 reached out to Methodist to find out what they would need to renew their contract. Region 5 will review their response and keep members updated.
- DHHS is negotiating with Bryan Medical Center and CHI (Freedom Spirit) to utilize housing assessment funds for people placed on EPC and to offset expenses. Some hospitals will receive an increase in funding over the next several years. In Omaha (R6), CHI – Lasting Hope, is being asked to self-fund with these funds vs DBH paying. CHI and DBH are continuing to negotiate. Bryan Medical Center currently covers individuals on EPC if MHCC is full or if there are physical morbidities. The potential negotiations are that Bryan will keep the individual to finish out treatment if they were inpatient Mental Health Board commitment or the person voluntarily wanted to stay. The fund would provide about \$1.7 million to allow the hospitals to self-pay those claims.

**Rural Transformation Updates:**

**Nursing Home Pilot**

- Funds would be used to help with persons with major mental illness and co-morbidities needing transitioned to a nursing home. DBH will contract with the Nursing Home Association to create a tiered reimbursement system for an added benefit payment to take the person. Then the Nursing Home would contract Behavioral Health Solutions from out of state. They would help nursing homes receive and maintain the identified person with the goal of helping meet the person’s needs and ensure compliance with nursing home standards with treating behavioral health morbidities. Kreifels stated that Behavioral Health Solutions has providers and prescribers to help the nursing home navigate helping that person, consultations with staff and navigating regulations.

**Avel Crisis Response**

- DBH is moving forward with a contract with Avel, a virtual provider for eCare Crisis Care for law enforcement 24/7, as the gap filler for crisis response and follow-up care across the state. Tyerman-Harper mentioned the concerns shared were officers knowing who to contact. Providers have stated concerns on why this remote company is being used when there are local crisis response resources in-state already. Tyerman-Harper mentioned there is a possibility that maybe this will be used more in the western part of the state.

#### **RideCare**

- Tyerman-Harper stated this is a new contract DBH will issue to assist law enforcement with transporting people to crisis stabilization or hospitalization. There is some evaluation needed to determine if this could be used for people placed on an EPC or only for people voluntarily willing to seek treatment.

#### **Budget Plan Process and Timeline:**

- Tyerman-Harper stated that provider's budget plans are due by the end of business on February 25. Region staff plan to review the plans on February 27.
- Region 5 has submitted the first portion of the budget plan to DBH. The remainder of the budget plan is due March 13.

#### **FY 26 Attendance Log:**

- For your information.

#### **FY 26 Terms of Service Summary:**

- For your information. Osborne asked if this committee needs more members. Kreifels stated yes and that he envisions a member from all 16 counties at some point but understands that may not be possible.

#### **FY 26 Capacity Utilization Summaries:**

- For your information. DeShon updated members that Region 5 is currently at 61% in mental health and 62% in substance use. Region 5 should be at 58% at this point in the fiscal year.

#### **Housing and SMI:**

- Region 5 was notified that DBH will be doing some site visits with the Rental Assistance Program. They will be onsite and review at least 5 units to ensure that people on vouchers are living there and that the funds are being used accordingly.
- Public Policy is also conducting a study on housing assistance. Tyerman-Harper will continue to provide information as it becomes available.

#### **VCRC Report:**

- For your information.

#### **SquareOne:**

- Kreifels stated that sometime between April and June, it is anticipated mental health respite beds will open. This is the last service that Region 5 has contracted that hasn't started yet. The facility has 6 beds, 3 male and 3 female. There are also places for families to go for resources and basic needs. Kuzelka stated that she was part of a planning group that met monthly regarding SquareOne but hadn't received any communication for a period of time. Kreifels will try to get more information on those meetings and report back at the next meeting.

#### **SIM Summit:**

- Stepping Up –
  - Staff are in the planning stage. The summit is tentatively scheduled for June 30 and July 1, 2026. This event will also discuss what legislative policy changes that should occur that are getting in the way.

#### **Region 4 Jail Pilot Project:**

**January 28, 2026**

**Behavioral Health Advisory Committee Minutes**

**Page 5 of 5**

- Region 4 Administrator has had many meetings with DBH, jail, Sherriff administrator, Attorney General's office, and the Governor's office. Between jail standards and behavioral health standards, this may not work the way intended.

**Training Plan:**

- For your information.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

- March 9 – 10:15 a.m. – RGB Meeting – Apace, 4433 S. 70<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE (hybrid)
- March 16 – 9:00 a.m. – Network Provider Meeting (via Teams)
- April 1 – 10:00 a.m. – BHAC Meeting – Region 5 Systems, 3600 Union Drive, Lincoln, NE
- April 13 - 10:15 a.m. – RGB Meeting – Apace, 4433 S. 70<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE

**ADJOURN**

- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.