

# Behavioral Health Planning Council Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2025  
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM CT  
Virtual via Microsoft Teams

## ATTENDANCE

**Members Present:** Melanie Gaebe (Chairperson); Andrea Hochhalter; Emma Quinn; Rich Smith; Tania Zerr

**Also Present:** Tami Conrad (Department Liaison); Janell Regimbal (Facilitator); and Pamela Sagness ND Behavioral Health Division Director and BHPC member)

**Absent:** Megan Indvik; Paul Stroklund; Kurt Snyder and Lorraine Davis

## AGENDA ITEMS

### Welcome and Call to Order

Chairperson Melanie Gaebe called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM. Roll call confirmed a quorum.

### Approval of Agenda

- Motion to approve the February 14, 2025, agenda was made by Andrea Hochhalter and seconded by Rich Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the February 7, 2025, meeting minutes was made by Andrea Hochhalter and seconded by Tania Zerr. Motion passed unanimously.

### Public Comment

- No public comments were received during the meeting.

### Review of Legislative Calendar Activities

#### Legislative Updates and Key Discussions:

- Chairperson Gaebe provided a brief update on legislative activity, highlighting that most bills are currently in committee work as legislators prepare for crossover.
- **HB 1030 (Drug Court Program to Treatment Court Program)** was reviewed. It passed the House and is scheduled for a Senate Judiciary hearing next week.
- **SB 2357 (Licensing Board Consolidation):**

- Emma Quinn reported that testimony at the hearing was overwhelmingly opposed, with major boards (psychology, marriage and family therapy, and addiction) testifying against the measure.
- The committee discussed the potential benefits of conducting a study on licensing efficiency rather than immediate consolidation.
- Action: The committee will not take a formal position but will continue monitoring the bill.
- **SB 2352 (Correctional Behavioral Health Services - Heart River Correctional Center Child Residency Proposal):**
  - The bill underwent significant amendment to focus solely on allowing children under 18 months to reside with incarcerated mothers at the facility.
  - The committee supported the amendment, emphasizing its alignment with early childhood development best practices.
- **HB 1468 (West Central Service Center Appropriation)**
  - \$16 million appropriation tied to a behavioral health service center in western North Dakota.
  - Tami Conrad noted that previous funding for similar centers in Williston and Dickinson was underutilized, raising questions about feasibility.
  - Action: The committee will review hearing testimony and track further developments.

**Pamela Sagness** provided **insights into the HHS budget process and behavioral health funding priorities thus far in the session**, noting:

- **HB 1012 (DHHS Budget Bill):** The House Appropriations Committee is currently reviewing amendments, with final votes expected by February 21.
- **Expected Budget Adjustments:**
  - Funding for South Central Human Service Center remodel may be reduced to cut costs.
  - Legislators expressed uncertainty about Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHPs) and youth crisis services, signaling potential funding risks. Ms. Sagness will prepare educational materials for legislators to clarify the need for PHPs and crisis services to increase their understanding.
- **Discussion on Regionalization vs. Centralization of Services:**

- The Senate committee appears to misunderstand the current regional model, mistakenly believing that a major shift is needed.
- Action: BHPC will assist with advocacy by clarifying the distinction between new service needs vs. existing infrastructure.
- **Major Behavioral Health Funding Bills (Total: \$92 million in proposed funding) outside of HB 1012:**
  - **SB 2200** – \$500,000 for **988 Crisis Line**
  - **HB 1468** – \$16 million for **west central ND inpatient expansion**
  - **HB 1337** – \$10 million for **mental health services in jails**
  - **SB 2096** – \$64 million for **regional acute and residential supportive housing statewide service expansion**
  - **HB 1425** – \$750,000 for **reentry services**
  - **SB 2036/2037** – Funding for **juvenile justice and competency remediation**.

#### **Action Items:**

1. **Emma Quinn** will continue monitoring **SB 2357** and provide updates.
2. **Rich Smith** will follow up on the **HB 1468 appropriation proposal**.
3. **Janell Regimbal** will distribute **budget amendments** to BHPC members when they become available.
4. **Chairperson Gaebe** will draft **updated legislative priorities** based on funding adjustments made.

#### **7. Scheduling Future Meetings**

- The committee scheduled its next meeting for **March 14, 2025, at 1 PM**, after crossover.

#### **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 PM by Chairperson Gaebe.

#### **Respectfully Submitted By:**

Janell Regimbal, BHPC Facilitator