

**ND Behavioral Health Planning Council (BHPC) Meeting
Video Conference
December 9, 2020**

Meeting Minutes

Council Members in Attendance: Brenda Bergsrud (Consumer Family Network), Chairperson; Kurt Snyder (Individual in Recovery, SUD), Immediate Past Chairperson; Sarah Bachmeier (Individual in Recovery-SUD); Rosalie Etherington (DHS Behavioral Health Service Delivery System); Brad Hawk (Indian Affairs Commission); Jennifer Henderson (Principal State Agency: Housing); Deb Jendro (Individual in Recovery, MH); Teresa Larsen (Protection and Advocacy Project); Carlotta McCleary (ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health); Dawn Pearson, (Principle State Agency: Medicaid); Amanda Peterson (Principle State Agency: Education); Lisa Peterson (Principal State Agency: Criminal Justice); Emma Quinn (Individual in Recovery-MH); Pamela Sagness (Principal State Agency: Mental Health); Mark Schaefer (Private Substance Use Disorder Treatment Provider); and Jodi Stittsworth (Family Member of a Child with SED).

Presenters and Staff: Tami Conrad (NDDHS, Project Manager); Nicole Berman (ND Department of Human Services); Bevin Croft (Human Services Research Institute); Daniella Rayel (Human Services Research Institute); Jennifer Faul (Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program); Kim Mertz (ND Department of Health); Kelli Ulberg (DHS, Behavioral Health); and Lisa Gustafson.

Facilitator: Greg Gallagher, The Consensus Council, Inc.

Call to Order: Chairperson Brenda Bergsrud called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM, CT, via video conference. BHPC members and presenters provided self-introductions via video conference sign-in. With a majority of BHPC members reporting present, Chairperson Bergsrud declared the presence of a quorum.

Chairperson Bergsrud transitioned from the position of Vice Chairperson to Chairperson, as provided for within the [BHPC Bylaws](#), with the recent resignation of Paul Stroklund from the BHPC.

Approval of Minutes. Chairperson Bergsrud called for the consideration and approval of the [October 7, 2020, meeting minutes](#).

CARLOTTA MCCLEARY MADE AND JODI STITTSWORTH SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 7, 2020, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. CHAIRPERSON BERGSRUD DECLARED THE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.

Approval of Agenda. Chairperson Bergsrud called for the consideration and approval of the [December 9, 2020, meeting agenda](#) prepared by the BHPC Executive Committee. Mr. Gallagher provided an overview of the flow of the agenda.

TERESA LARSEN MADE AND EMMA QUINN SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR THE DECEMBER 9, 2020, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. CHAIRPERSON BERGSRUD DECLARED THE APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

Review of BHPC Next Steps Summary: Greg Gallagher. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Greg Gallagher, BHPC Facilitator, to provide an update on the BHPC *Next Steps Summary*. Mr. Gallagher placed into record an updated BHPC [Recorded Next Steps](#) summary report, reflecting BHPC actions following the October 7, 2020, BHPC meeting. The *Recorded Next Steps* report provides a cumulative listing of identified BHPC priorities, outstanding activities, and Council assignments. The *Recorded Next Steps* provides a basis for the development of all BHPC meeting agendas and informs BHPC members of issues that may require specific consideration. No action was required by the BHPC membership.

Current Status of Behavioral Health Planning Council Membership: Tami Conrad. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Tami Conrad to provide an update on current BHPC membership vacancies. Ms. Conrad reported that the status of all [BHPC membership slots](#) is identified on the BHPC website and identified five dedicated slots which are transitioning for renewal or which remain to be filled, awaiting action from the Governor's Office:

- Healthcare Representative, Position Open;
- Consumer, Position Open;
- Mental Health America Representative, Position Open;
- State Agency: Social Service Representative, Position Open; and
- Family Member of an Adult with SMI.

Carlotta McCleary reported that the ND Mental Health America Board had selected a prospective candidate to fill their designated slot. Ms. Conrad stated that individuals interested in being considered for filling a designated slot must submit a [state application form](#), which will be considered by the Governor's Office, leading ultimately to an appointment by the Governor, if accepted. Mr. Gallagher thanked Ms. Conrad for her report.

Election Process for a New Vice Chairperson: Greg Gallagher. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Greg Gallagher to provide an update on filling the position of BHPC Vice Chairperson following the recent resignation of Paul Stroklund, former Chairperson, from the BHPC. Mr. Gallagher reported that with Paul Stroklund's resignation the BHPC must conduct an election to fill the Vice Chairperson's seat, as required by BHPC bylaws, Article V, Section 2. Mr. Gallagher recommended that the BHPC adopt the same process recently used to elect Brenda Bergsrud as Vice Chairperson, who has since moved into the Chairperson's position.

Members expressed support for adopting the same process used in the recent officer election. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized the members' sentiments and requested that Mr. Gallagher prepare to conduct the election according to the previous process. Mr. Gallagher stated that he would invite member nominations via email, confirm the intent of all candidates, request a written statement of interest, and conduct the election under the supervision of the Executive Committee. Chairperson Bergsrud stated that this process was in keeping with established BHPC election procedures and should proceed.

Summary Report of ND Behavioral Health Strategic Plan and Future Activities, Bevin Croft, [Human Services Research Institute](#). Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Dr. Bevin Croft, HSRI, to provide an update on the status of the [state's behavioral health strategic plan](#). Dr. Croft introduced Danielle Rayel, an intern who will serve as a technical assistant for the project. Dr. Croft presented a [summary of recent activities](#) designed to advance the state's behavioral health

strategic plan, which sets the course for the state to engage in ongoing system monitoring, planning, and improvements in the long-term. Dr. Bevin revisited the Vision Statement and the 13 strategic plan aims adopted by the BHPC. Dr. Bevin stated that the principal role of the BHPC within this process is to oversee and drive the various systems improvement activities, including

- Providing advice regarding all project activities, including processes, plan development, and communications with the public;
- Approving the content in the strategic plan;
- Meeting quarterly with HSRI to review progress and determine next steps; and
- Committing the Executive Committee to meet monthly with HSRI.

Dr. Bevin provided an update on the status of designated team leads and BHPC liaisons who will guide the integration of the plan's various components, springing from the October 7, 2020, BHPC discussions. BHPC liaisons will coordinate oversight and channel support between quarterly BHPC meetings and work directly with DHS lead staff, who will provide administrative leadership. Current plans are to move the plan steadily forward, adjusting for impacts of the forthcoming legislative session. Dr. Bevin requested members to consider volunteering for the vacant liaison positions. Dr. Bevin stated that the state's developing [Asset Map](#) will be further refined as an operational guide in the management of cross-divisional programming.

Members participated in a Mentimeter survey to identify key terms to help identify the focus of the state's plan. Members listed the following terms:

- Improvement
- Education
- Person-centred
- Equity
- Innovation
- Informal Process of Change
- Community
- Action
- Accessibility
- Collaboration
- Transformational
- Implementation
- Growth
- Ongoing stakeholder input
- Efficiency
- Guiding Initiatives
- Transparency
- Services

Members discussed the merits of changing the name of the state's current plan title, *Vision 20/20*, to another title to best capture the plan's relevance. Members recommended that this discussion be addressed separately, perhaps by the Executive Committee, before bringing a proposal to the BHPC membership for consideration.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Dr. Croft for her presentation.

Behavioral Health Division Updates: Pam Sagness, Department of Human Services. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Pam Sagness, DHS, to provide the quarterly report on DHS activities. Ms. Sagness provided an overview of the DHS' current activities, principal accomplishments from the 2019 Legislative Assembly, anticipated 2021 Legislative Assembly initiatives, and a review of the DHS 2021-2023 Executive Budget. Refer to Ms. Sagness' [BHPC Report](#) for a summary of content.

Members reviewed the statutory authority, agency description, major accomplishments, executive budget recommendations, and categorical expenditures presented within the [DHS budget framework](#). Members discussed the anticipated benefits of the state's recently submitted Medicaid 1915(i) plan and considered how the addition of this plan might adversely reduce state spending in other crucial behavioral health areas. Additionally, members discussed the prospective impact of any increased support for the Substance Use Disorder Waiver at the expense of other areas. Final DHS budget details are expected to be released by the end of December.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Ms. Sagness for her quarterly report.

Chairperson Bergsrud announced a break for lunch and a reordering of agenda items following the break. The report on Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program will now precede the Mental Health Block Grant Report to accommodate presenters' availability.

Lunch Break. The BHPC stood in recess until 1:00 PM, CT.

Chairperson Bergsrud called the BHPC back into order at 1:00 PM, CT.

Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program, Project Update and BHPC Consultation: Kim Mertz, Department of Health; Jennifer Faul, PMHCAP Coordinator. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Jennifer Faul, Coordinator of the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program, for the program's quarterly report to the BHPC. Ms. Faul presented a summary of the PMHCAP's quarterly activities. Refer to Ms. Faul's [PMCHAP Quarterly Report](#) for a summary of content.

Ms. Faul presented proposed 2021 first quarter activities, including:

- Begin working with Elbowoods, Coal Country Community Healthcare, Center for Family Healthcare at UND Bismarck;
- Utilize the animated MN Trauma screening tool at the Family Healthcare Clinic;
- Begin statewide on-call Child Adolescent Psychiatric, Psychology and LAC Consultation;
- Continue to build relationships and rural outreach; and
- Develop and promote the new ECHO sessions of 2021 with a CA psychiatrist – pursuing MOC 4 credits for this.

Members expressed an interest in learning more about the PMHCAP's model of screening and how any screening tools or protocols might be shared for use in other programs, such as Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT). Ms. Faul stated that she would look into providing this information to the BHPC at a future meeting.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Ms. Faul for her presentation.

Summary Report of ND Mental Health Block Grant, Nicole Berman, DHS. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Nicole Berman, DHS, to provide an update report on the ND Mental Health Block Grant. Ms. Berman presented a summary report overviewing the states MHBG and the duties assigned to the BHPC from requirements specified in the MHBG. Refer to Ms. Berman's [MHBG Report](#) for a summary of content.

Members discussed the various spending categories itemized within the MHBG and considered if expenditures within the various categories properly represented state priorities. Members inquired if certain funds were completely spent down or turned back to federal HHS. It is expected that some funds, accounting for less than 10% of the allocation, will be turned back because of program impacts brought on by the pandemic and certain program activity restrictions, such as applying funds for Free Through Recovery, which could not be covered under the funds terms. The state will not be held out-of-compliance regarding any program operations. Members observed that the BHPC has an opportunity to review and rebalance any program priorities and budget allocations, as provided under its role as a DHS advisory council. The 2021 MHBG spending authority began on October 1, 2020. Members requested that the BHPC receive a copy of the MHBG 2021 budget. Members considered exploring program improvements concerning suicide prevention, transportation limits, telehealth options, among other items. It is permissible for the DHS to amend the MHBG budget within constraints defined by HHS. Pam Sagness offered to provide 2021 budget details to the MHBG, at a time agreeable with the BHPC, to conduct a review of program priorities and budget allocations.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Ms. Berman and Ms. Sagness for their presentation.

2021 Legislative Assembly Preparation: BHPC Membership. Mr. Gallagher opened discussion on BHPC preparations for the 2021 Legislative Session. Mr. Gallagher referred members to the [2021 Legislative Calendar](#), listing the various session deadlines. Members focused attention on establishing clear communication channels to inform members, coordinate group discussions, and manage BHPC designated priorities. Teresa Larsen offered, in keeping with past Protection and Advocacy initiatives, to provide periodic updates to BHPC leadership and members including a comprehensive table of bill status reports and narrative updates on important legislative committee activities, especially actions regarding the DHS Executive Budget. Members expressed appreciation for the work of Protection and Advocacy, with specific acclaim for Ms. Larsen's efforts, to provide these materials, oftentimes recognized as seminal resources. Members stated that any legislative recommendations taken by the BHPC should represent a clear consensus of the BHPC membership, and any testimony provided on behalf of the BHPC should present a clear, balanced message and tone representative of the BHPC's mission and diverse membership.

Members discussed the current plans of the Legislative Council, still in the final stages of formation, to manage the flow of the session, under restrictions defined to accommodate the state's emergency public health standing. Currently, there are no notable behavioral health bill drafts which have emerged from the various interim legislative committees. With the absence of specific bills, the BHPC stands in the position to advance broad policy and funding proposals that advance the articulated aims of the state's behavioral health strategic plan.

Members agreed that the BHPC Executive Committee, joined by selected members, should act as the principal BHPC Legislative Committee, charged with managing the broad goals of the BHPC.

CARLOTTA MCCLEARY MADE AND KURT SNYDER SECONDED A MOTION THAT THE BHPC SHALL ESTABLISH A BHPC LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHARGED TO (1) IDENTIFY PROSPECTIVE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES ALIGNED WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE BHPC; (2) MONITOR LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS; (3) COORDINATE COMMUNICATIONS WITH BHPC MEMBERS AND FACILITATE EFFECTIVE BHPC INPUT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS; (4) SOLICIT THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF BHPC MEMBERS; (5) DRAFT LEGISLATION THAT MIGHT ADVANCE THE AIMS OF THE BHPC AND THE STATE'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN; AND (6) EMPOWER THE BHPC LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, WITH FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE BHPC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TO TRANSACT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE AIMS OF THE BHPC. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BHPC LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHALL INCLUDE BRENDA BERGRUD, KURT SNYDER, EMMA QUINN, TERESA LARSEN, AND CARLOTTA MCCLEARY. THE BHPC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MAY ACT INDEPENDENTLY, ON BEHALF OF THE BHCP, TO ACHIEVE THE STATED GOALS OF THE BHPC.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. CHAIRPERSON BERGRUD ANNOUNCED THE PASSAGE OF THE MOTION AND DECLARED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BHPC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AND THE APPOINTMENT OF ITS DESIGNATED MEMBERSHIP.

Teresa Larsen reported that the Protection and Advocacy Project will begin its weekly meetings of behavioral health and disabilities stakeholders on the first week of January to begin discussions on legislative issues. These stakeholder meetings will be held every Friday afternoon throughout the legislative session. All BHPC members are invited to attend. Additionally, the Protection and Advocacy Project will sponsor Saturday morning conversation sessions for interested stakeholders, including discussions with legislators to assess the progress of legislative initiatives.

Members identified certain emergent issues that may require the engagement of the BHPC, including the building of a new state hospital, the continuation of Medicaid Expansion, and protecting the state's investment in the state's behavioral health strategic plans' goals. Members requested that (1) Rosalie Etherington prepare a short summary on the case for building a new state hospital and (2) the newly formed BHPC Legislative Committee meet with Dr. Etherington in December to prepare a BHPC response regarding the proposed new state hospital.

Members discussed the importance of going on record supporting crucial behavioral health initiatives and placing a stated agenda before the BHPC Legislative Committee for its management.

Medicaid Expansion. TERESA LARSEN MADE AND CARLOTTA MCCLEARY SECONDED A MOTION THAT THE BHPC PROVIDE TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM, WITH SPECIFIC SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. CHAIRPERSON BERGRUD ANNOUNCED THE PASSAGE OF THE MOTION AND ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS MANAGEMENT TO THE BHPC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE.

Selection Process for Executive Committee Membership. Mr. Gallagher raised for the consideration of the BHPC a provision within the BHPC Bylaws which defines the size and membership of the BHPC Executive Committee:

Article VI, Section 1: Executive Committee shall be made up of not more than five (5) Council members which must include the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Immediate Past Chairperson, a consumer or family member representing mental health services, and a consumer or family member representing substance abuse services.

Pursuant to BHPC Bylaws, two additional Executive Committee members, representing consumers or family members, were required to fill the required membership of the Executive Committee. During the October 7, 2020, BHPC meeting Andrea Hochhalter, indicating a currently heavy schedule, expressed a conditional interest in filling a slot at a future time. The Executive Committee assumed responsibility for setting forth a process to fill the two required seats on the Executive Committee, in keeping with the requirements specified in the BHPC Bylaws. Members previously expressed support for this proposal.

Tami Conrad stated that the following members are eligible for consideration to fill the two selected slots:

- A consumer or family member representing substance abuse services: Sarah Bachmeier and Kurt Snyder.
- A consumer or family member representing mental health services: Emma Quinn, Deb Jendro, Andrea Hochhalter, Jodi Stittsworth, and Carl Young.

With the forthcoming election of a new Vice Chairperson, Mr. Gallagher raised the prospect that the selection of the two designated slots be delayed until following the Vice Chairperson election, allowing any of the identified select candidates to run for the Vice Chairperson position. Members also raised the possibility of delaying the filling of these Executive Committee positions until more BHPC member vacancies are filled, providing additional candidates.

Following further discussions regarding available options, Chairperson Bergsrud stated that the selection process for these two slots should follow that of the election of officers, including seeking nominations, informing members, and proceeding with an election. Members expressed agreement with this process. Mr. Gallagher will proceed to manage the selection process.

Setting BHPC Meeting Dates for 2021, Tami Conrad, DHS. Chairperson Bergsrud recognized Tami Conrad to provide a report on proposed 2021 BHPC meeting dates. Ms. Conrad placed before the BHPC four proposed meeting dates and times to conduct quarterly BHPC business meetings. Members agreed to the following BHPC meeting dates and times:

- Wednesday, February 17, 2021, 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM, CT;
- Wednesday, April 28, 2021, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, CT;
- Wednesday, July 21, 2021, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, CT;
- Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, CT;

Members proposed that future meetings include discussions on the Juvenile Justice Act, crisis response, and the IMD inclusion. Until further notice, all future BHPC meetings will be conducted via video conference.

Public Comments. Greg Gallagher opened the floor for any public comments. No members of the public came forth to provide comments. Greg Gallagher closed the period for public comment.

Adjournment. Having completed all item of the approved agenda and hearing no further comments from the BHPC members, Chairperson Bergsrud entertained a motion to adjourn.

KURT SNYDER MADE AND CARLOTTA MCCLEARY SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

CHAIRPERSON BERGSRUD DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:31 PM, CT.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Gallagher
Facilitator,
The Consensus Council, Inc.