

Behavioral Health Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2025
Conducted via Google Meet

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Invited Amanda Bialas Ben Kifer Caitlin Lyle Cassie Crumpton Christin Covello
C. Ivonne Chavez Donna Sedey Quarterman-Genoff, Emily Wayne Graves
Jim Cowser, CWCC Jessi Westling Katelyn Castandeda Bear Brantley Lana Mahoney
Andy Lemke Manhattan Jehlicka Thompson, Michele (WYVA Teacher) Shea Ward
Rebecca Reeves Rhianna Brand R. Doug Bebout Sherry Mercer Sheryl Foland
Taylor Stokes zerklejillian@gmail.com brentwvr@gmail.com Erica Mathews
Jessie Schaeffer ~~Brenda Stout~~ ~~Dustin Brown~~ ~~Kristie Gordy~~

Attachments 📎 Behavioral Health Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting records 📄 Transcript

Summary

The Behavioral Health Advisory Council, including Jessi Westling, Caitlyn Miles, Cassie Crumpton, Sherry Mercer, Taylor Stokes, Ben Kifer, Erica Mathews, Donna Sedey, Christin Covello, Lana Mahoney, Michelle Thompson, Jessie Schaeffer, Sheryl Foland, and Eva Koski, reviewed website updates, the Behavioral Health Redesign, and the 2025 Wyoming legislative session, noting the passage of few impactful behavioral health bills and concerns regarding firearm safety legislation (Senate File 29). Jessi Westling (Chair), Lana Mahoney (Vice-Chair), and Michelle Thompson (Membership Representative) were unanimously re-elected. Jessi Westling and Lana Mahoney will update the strategic plan, potentially holding a future meeting for council input.

Details

- **Meeting Start and Attendance:** Jessi Westling started the Behavioral Health Advisory Council meeting, taking attendance to ensure a quorum of 12 voting members was reached. They confirmed the presence of several members, including Caitlyn Miles, Cassie Crumpton, and Sherry Mercer ([00:00:00](#)). The quorum was reached, allowing the meeting to proceed ([00:06:42](#)).
- **Introductions and Spring/Summer Plans:** Members introduced themselves, stating their affiliation and sharing what they looked forward to during spring or summer. This included activities such as camping, traveling, attending rodeos, and completing a master's degree ([00:09:14](#)) ([00:17:39](#)).
- **Website Update:** Taylor Stokes and Jessi Westling discussed updating the Behavioral Health Advisory Council's website to improve accessibility and transparency ([00:29:53](#)). They planned to move content from a members-only section to the main public website ([00:32:10](#)).
- **Behavioral Health Redesign Update:** Ben Kifer provided an update on the Behavioral Health Redesign, a 2021 legislation prioritizing funding and care access to underserved populations ([00:33:18](#)). The update included the shift of funding to the Medicaid system and changes to the payment model ([00:34:19](#)). Erica Mathews reported that federal funding for the programs remained stable ([00:35:30](#)).
- **Officer Elections:** The council held elections for chair, vice-chair, and membership representative. Donna Sedey and Christin Covello nominated the current officers to continue their roles. The nominations were unanimously approved ([00:40:05](#)). The elected officers were Jessi Westling (Chair), Lana Mahoney (Vice-Chair), and Michelle Thompson (Membership Representative) ([00:38:54](#)) ([00:41:23](#)).
- **2025 Legislative Session Summary:** Jessie Schaeffer presented a summary of the 2025 Wyoming general legislative session, using data from the Wyoming Legislature website (wowleg.state.wy.us). They noted that 556 bills were filed, 377 died, and 178 passed ([00:45:30](#)). The governor signed 154 bills, allowed 9 to be enacted without signature, fully vetoed 9 (5 overridden), and line-item vetoed 3 ([00:47:43](#)).
- **Behavioral Health Legislation:** Four bills related to behavioral health were reviewed; all were deemed to have a low impact on the behavioral health division. These included amendments to the court-supervised treatment program, the Protecting Privacy in Public Spaces Act, the Emergency Assistance Immunity for Mental Health Services bill, and the K-12 Mental Health Program bill ([00:50:56](#)) ([00:53:00](#)).

- **Other Bills of Interest:** Two additional bills were discussed: Senate File 29 (Firearm Hold Agreement Limited Liability) and Senate File 30 (Wyoming's Investment in Veterans Mental Health). Senate File 29, while passed, raised concerns about safe firearm storage during mental health crises and will likely require further revision ([00:57:22](#)). Senate File 30, aimed at creating a loan program for veterans pursuing mental health professions, failed to pass ([01:01:29](#)).
- **Budget Update:** Jessie Schaeffer reported that no supplemental budget bill was passed this year, but this did not impact mental health and substance abuse programs. They anticipate a budget bill during the 2026 budget session ([01:02:27](#)).
- **Governor's Challenge:** Sheryl Foland mentioned working with the Governor's Challenge group on firearm storage during mental health crises, highlighting the lack of state legislation in this area and the need for further discussion and input from stakeholders ([00:59:02](#)). Eva Koski also noted the Wyoming Military Department's involvement in the Governor's Challenge and their efforts to address the firearm issue. They sought collaboration to improve future legislative proposals ([01:00:18](#)).
- **Legislative Update and Session Laws:** Jessie Schaeffer provided an update on the legislative process following the bill passage. They explained that bills become part of the 2025 session laws of Wyoming, offering more detail than the original legislation. These session laws include details such as agency rulemaking deadlines, not always present in the statutes themselves ([01:03:38](#)). The statutory changes are then reflected in the Wyoming state statutes ("green books"), and the process begins anew with the budget session slated for February 9th, 2026 ([01:04:51](#)).
- **Meeting Wrap-up and Future Plans:** Jessi Westling thanked Jessie Schaeffer for the presentation and informed attendees that the presentation slides had been sent out ([01:05:52](#)). Jessi also announced that she and Lana would be updating the outdated strategic plan and another meeting will be planned for the council to provide their input later ([01:06:39](#)). The meeting was adjourned after public comment and a motion to adjourn ([01:07:42](#)).

Suggested next steps

- ☐ Jessi Westling and Lana will work with Taylor to review and update the outdated strategic plan to provide the governor with a five-year outlook.