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Kathy Slater-Huff, Deputy Secretary
Niki Kozlowski, Acting Deputy Secretary
Alanna Dancis, Acting Medicaid Director

Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: August 14, 2026 | Time: 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

New Mexico State Capitol Bldg., 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 322, Santa Fe, NM 87507

- **Welcome and Roll Call**

- Committee Members Present:

- Nick Boukas, Executive Committee Chair, *Behavioral Health Services Division Director at the New Mexico Health Care Authority*
 - Kathy Slater-Huff, *New Mexico Health Care Authority, Deputy Cabinet Secretary as proxy for Kari Armijo, New Mexico Health Care Authority Cabinet Secretary*
 - Alanna Dancis, *New Mexico Health Care Authority, Acting Medicaid Director*
 - Karl W. Reifsteck, *Director at the Administrative Office of the Courts Director*
 - Dr. Violette Cloud, *Behavioral Health Expert*
 - Dr. Stacey Cox, *Behavioral Health Expert (Virtual)*
 - Gerald P. “Jerry” Ortiz y Pino, *Behavioral Health Expert*

- **Quorum Confirmation**

- A quorum was established

- **Meeting Called to Order**

- The meeting convened at 8:32 a.m.
 - Chairman Boukas welcomed attendees.

- **Approval of Minutes and Agenda**

- Minutes from July 9, 2026, BHEC Meeting:
 - Dr. Cox moved to approve July 9, 2026, minutes.
 - Deputy Secretary Slater-Huff seconded the motion.
 - With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
 - Agenda for August 14, 2026, BHEC Meeting:
 - Chairman Boukas proposed reordering the agenda to move the regional plan presentations ahead of the Tribal funding discussion, in order to accommodate regional representatives who had traveled to Santa Fe for the meeting.
 - Hearing no objection, the amended agenda was approved without dissent.

- **Administrative Office of the Courts Update: Tribal Plan**

Presented by Pamela Trujillo, AOC Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act Program Manager

- Ms. Trujillo presented AOC’s written recommendation (dated August 6, 2026) for a formal process to govern submission and approval of Tribal Plans, which allow Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs) to access the Tribal set-aside directly from the state.
 - AOC reported that, to date, no Tribal Plan reviewed by AOC’s behavioral health consultants has identified a project falling outside the priorities of its associated regional plan.
 - AOC presented two process options for Committee consideration:
 - Option 1: The Nation, Pueblo, or Tribe submits its Tribal Plan directly to the New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA), copying AOC and the Accountable Entity; HCA routes the



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- plan to subject matter experts (SMEs) for review; HCA forwards the SME review to the BHEC for a vote to approve, conditionally approve, or modify.
- Option 2: The Nation, Pueblo, or Tribe submits its Tribal Plan to its Regional Accountable Entity; the Accountable Entity forwards the plan to HCA (copying AOC); HCA routes the plan to SMEs for review; the BHEC votes to approve, conditionally approve, or modify.
 - AOC described four pathways by which a NPT may currently engage with the Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act: (1) sign onto the Regional Plan as a signatory; (2) submit a Tribal Plan as an addendum to the Regional Plan; (3) both sign onto the Regional Plan and submit a Tribal Plan; or (4) elect not to participate at this time, with the option to participate later preserved.
 - AOC reported that its Tribal engagement staff, engaged since February 2026, has met individually with NPTs on a technical-assistance basis, and that 21 of 23 NPTs were reported as actively engaged in developing a Tribal Plan. AOC identified Ohkay Owingeh and Santa Clara as the two NPTs that had not yet engaged or submitted a letter of support.
 - AOC reported that three Tribal Plans had been finalized by Tribal leadership but not yet formally submitted, pending adoption of a process; AOC identified these as the Pueblo of San Ildefonso, Pueblo of Laguna, and Pueblo of Acoma.
 - Committee Discussion
 - Senator Ortiz y Pino raised extended questions about whether Tribes would be bound by earlier letters of support submitted before participation options were made explicit, and whether Tribal consultation—distinct from technical assistance—had occurred. AOC's Deputy Director Sarah Jacobs responded that letters of support submitted with regional plans reflected an intent to participate and did not limit an NPT's choice of pathway, and that an AOC Tribal staff member has met individually with the NPTs since her contract began in February 2026.
 - Members discussed whether the Tribal Plan submissions should route through AOC or directly to HCA, given AOC's role in developing the regional planning process to date. AOC indicated it does not consider itself to have a continuing statutory role in approving plans and could support either routing approach.
 - Dr. Cloud stated that she did not view the proposed process as changing prior commitments, but as establishing a process where none previously existed, and noted the process appropriately preserves Tribal sovereignty in decision-making regarding both identification of needs and plan implementation.
 - Dr. Cox noted the need for future guidance to be developed jointly by AOC, HCA, and the Committee, addressing how and when funding will be available to accountable entities so that planning is not based on funds that are not yet available.
 - Committee Action: Tribal Plan Process
 - Director Reifsteck moved to adopt AOC's recommended process under Option 1 (direct submission to HCA).
 - Dr. Cloud seconded the motion.
 - Dr. Cloud clarified for the record that the motion concerned the process by which Tribal Plan funding decisions will be made, not the underlying funding amounts, and that



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additional guidance would still be needed regarding participation timing for NPTs that engage later in the process.

- With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously to adopt Option 1 as recommended by AOC.
- AOC confirmed it would draft and disseminate a one-page process summary to Accountable Entities and NPTs following the Committee's adoption of the process.

- **New Mexico Health Care Authority Update**

Presented by Nick Boukas, Director of the New Mexico Health Care Authority's Behavioral Health Services Division

- Introduction of Joshua Swatek: Director Boukas introduced Joshua Swatek as the new Deputy Director of Behavioral Health Transformation and Innovation at HCA's Behavioral Health Services Division. He will continue the work previously led by Kristie Brooks.
- Early Access Funding: HCA reported that contracts are in place with all regions and that funds have been disbursed to eight of the thirteen regions. HCA is working with the remaining accountable entities to resolve outstanding invoices, noting that funds are released within a few business days of HCA's receipt of an invoice.
- Advance/Grant Funding Mechanism: HCA reported that, through work led by Cabinet Secretary Armijo, HCA Administrative Services Director Carolee Graham, and BHSD Deputy Director of Finance Ricky Martinez, in coordination with the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), HCA has developed a mechanism to disburse certain funds as an advance/grant rather than solely on a reimbursement basis. A formal written notification to accountable entities was described as forthcoming. In response to a committee member's question, HCA confirmed the associated disbursement would be a lump sum, subject to standard fiscal reporting and accountability requirements.
- Endorsement to Seek Re-Authorization of Expiring Appropriations: HCA requested Committee endorsement of a request to the Legislature to re-authorize certain SB3-related appropriations set to expire at the end of the current fiscal year, so that funds remain available to communities. A motion on this item was raised early in the meeting and postponed, at HCA's request, to allow staff time to prepare proposed legislative language; the item was revisited later in the meeting (see Tribal Funding Allocation discussion, below).

- **Regional Plan Presentations and Votes**

Presented by Director Boukas, with regional representatives as noted.

Plans were reviewed in the order submitted:

- **Region 5 (Chaves, Eddy, and Lea Counties)**
 - Region 5 submitted a plan totaling approximately \$9,600,000, organized around five priorities: (1) housing, transportation, and basic needs; (2) justice system service and support; (3) prevention, trauma, and prenatal health promotion; (4) increased access to behavioral health assessments and treatment; and (5) youth, family, and caregiver supports.
 - Committee members noted the plan's use of evidence-based practices and its inclusion of multiple access points, including crisis teams, peer support workers, and community health workers.
 - **Motion**: Dr. Cox moved to approve the Region 5 plan
 - **Second**: Director Dancis



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- **Outcome:** The motion passed unanimously
 - **Region 7 (Catron, Sierra, Socorro, and Torrance Counties)**
 - Region 7 submitted a plan totaling approximately \$7.5 million, organized around five priorities: (1) housing, transportation, and basic needs; (2) behavioral health service expansion; (3) community wellness, prevention, and stigma reduction; (4) youth engagement, mentoring, and school-based behavioral health services; and (5) workforce development.
 - Senator Ortiz y Pino asked about the status of the plan's reference to an allocation associated with the Alamo Navajo community, given that the Tribal set-aside methodology had not yet been finalized. Members noted the same question applies to previously approved regional plans that include Tribal allocations, and that funding formula changes made later in the meeting could have a ripple effect on those allocations.
 - Members also discussed that several regional plans, including Region 7's, describe spending by fiscal year, and that regions are already partway into the current fiscal year, which will require adjustment to spending timelines.
 - **Motion:** Dr. Cloud moved to approve the Region 7 plan
 - **Second:** Director Reifsteck
 - **Outcome:** The motion passed
 - **Region 11 (McKinley and San Juan Counties)**
 - Region 11 submitted a plan totaling approximately \$3.5 million (exclusive of Tribal set-aside funding), organized around five priorities: (1) housing, shelter, and transitional living; (2) diversion, specialty courts, and justice system integration; (3) coordination and system integration; (4) access and behavioral health infrastructure; and (5) prevention, community, and cultural supports.
 - Evan Williams, Executive Director of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, presented the plan and, at the Committee's request, described Region 11's proposal to establish the Navajo Nation and the Pueblo of Zuni as co-accountable entities alongside the Council of Governments. Mr. Williams stated the approach grew out of feedback that a direct government-to-government funding relationship, consistent with the State-Tribal Collaboration Act, was preferable to a structure in which Tribal partners would receive funds solely through the regional accountable entity.
 - Members asked what information HCA, AOC, and the Committee would need to operationalize the co-accountable entity structure, including how funds would be allocated and distributed among the co-accountable entities. Mr. Williams indicated these details remain to be worked out as the region moves from planning to contracting. The Committee's approval of the Region 11 plan reflected approval of the plan's priorities and the proposed co-accountable entity concept; it did not establish the specific funding split or contracting mechanics among the co-accountable entities, which remain undetermined.
 - Members noted that the plan, as submitted, reflects only the non-Tribal portion of Region 11's funding, and that a combined figure inclusive of the Tribal set-aside was referenced in discussion but was not confirmed as an approved or final amount.
 - Senator Ortiz y Pino raised the difficulty regions are experiencing in recruiting and certifying peer support workers, including the current requirement of three years of sobriety



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- prior to certification, and suggested that HCA be asked to consider approaches (such as regional certifying bodies or a community college network) to expand certification capacity. Members noted this concern applies broadly across regional plans, not solely to Region 11.
- Deputy Secretary Slater-Huff noted that all regions should account for continuity of Medicaid enrollment and coverage for the populations they serve given ongoing changes to Medicaid.
 - Members noted that funding associated with the Navajo Nation's portion of the plan had not yet been submitted, and that Region 11's approval, and the associated commitment of funding, would extend to the Navajo Nation and Pueblo of Zuni consistent with the process discussed through AOC's Tribal Priority Plan, above, once their Tribal addenda are submitted.
 - **Motion: Director Reifsteck moved to approve the Region 11 plan**
 - **Second: Dr. Cox**
 - **Outcome: The motion passed**
 - **Region 6 (Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna Counties)**
 - Region 6, home to the Fort Sill Apache Tribe, submitted a plan totaling approximately \$7.9 million, organized around two priorities: (1) crisis services and stabilization, and (2) treatment and recovery service access.
 - Heather Edwards, Region 6 Behavioral Health Coordinator, presented the plan. In response to a question regarding the plan's proposed use of the Hope Haven facility for residential treatment rather than the previously licensed Tu Casa facility, Ms. Edwards explained that Hope Haven was already in transition to a residential treatment provider, while Tu Casa has been vacant since 2019 and was proposed instead as a regional hub.
 - **Motion:** Deputy Secretary Slater-Huff moved to approve the Region 6 plan
 - **Second:** Senator Ortiz y Pino.
 - **Outcome:** The motion passed.
 - **Region 9 (Curry and Roosevelt Counties)**
 - Region 9 submitted a plan totaling approximately \$6.6 million, with a single priority focused on crisis, acute, and higher-level-of-care infrastructure.
 - Region 9's Regional Behavioral Health Administrator, along with representatives of the City of Clovis and Community Bridges (the proposed crisis facility operator), presented the plan. Presenters described a planned crisis facility ("Horizon") currently under construction and approximately 80% complete, with early access funds supporting furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
 - In response to Committee questions, presenters indicated openness to exploring Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) certification, and confirmed the facility is expected to serve residents beyond Region 9's current boundaries, including former consortium partners and personnel associated with Cannon Air Force Base.
 - **Motion:** Senator Ortiz y Pino moved to approve the Region 9 plan
 - **Second:** Deputy Secretary Slater-Huff.
 - **Outcome:** The motion passed.
 - Acting Medicaid Director Alanna Dancis noted, without objection to any approval, that pregnancy and family housing needs did not appear to be substantially addressed



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across the regional plans reviewed to date, and asked that this be kept in mind in future regional planning.

- **Tribal Funding Allocation Discussion and Committee Action**

Presented by Dr. Violette Cloud, Behavioral Health Expert

- Dr. Cloud presented findings from her review of the regional funding formula the Committee approved on January 20, 2026, including that the formula's Native American allocation is derived by subtracting an Indian Health Service (IHS) service-population proportion from each region's already-calculated regional share. Dr. Cloud stated that this method produces a Tribal allocation in some regions with no Tribal government, no allocation in at least one region containing a Tribal government, and no established mechanism for dividing an allocation among multiple Tribal governments within a region.
- Dr. Cloud stated that the IHS Principal Statistician had advised in writing that the underlying IHS Service Population dataset measures federal service responsibility rather than population or behavioral health need and should not be used as a stand-alone measure of either. Dr. Cloud also noted a data error in which Eddy County's service population had been omitted from the original calculation.
- Dr. Cloud distributed a written proposal, dated August 10, 2026, recommending that a set-aside be calculated before the four-factor regional formula is applied, and dividing that set-aside equally among New Mexico's twenty-three Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs). Her written proposal recommended a ten percent (10%) set-aside of the \$110 million appropriation. This written recommendation reflects Dr. Cloud's proposal and is distinct from the motion the Committee ultimately considered and adopted, described below.

- **Motion:** Tribal Set-Aside

- Dr. Cloud moved to establish a Tribal set-aside, calculated before the four-factor regional formula is applied, against the current \$110 million BHRIA appropriation, leaving the specific percentage open pending discussion
- Senator Ortiz y Pino seconded the motion
- Extended discussion followed regarding the adequacy of Tribal consultation to date, including a December 2, 2025, formal Tribal consultation session and subsequent public comment on the funding formula; the statutory requirements for Tribal consultation; and concerns, raised principally by Director Reifsteck, about the effect of revisiting an already-approved funding formula on regions and accountable entities that had relied on it.
- Dr. Cloud restated the motion to establish the Tribal set-aside at nine and one-half percent (9.5%) of the \$110 million appropriation, a figure calculated to approximate the statewide Tribal share produced by the current (Jan. 20, 2026) formula. This 9.5% figure is distinct from the 10% figure in Dr. Cloud's written proposal, described above.

- **Outcome:** The motion passed, with Chairman Boukas casting the sole dissenting vote. Chairman Boukas stated for the record that his dissent reflected concern about revising an adopted funding formula without completed Tribal consultation on the revision itself, notwithstanding his support for the underlying goal of clarifying Tribal funding.

- This action establishes the amount of the Tribal set-aside (9.5% of \$110 million). It does not establish the methodology for dividing the set-aside among individual PTNs;



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that methodology remained undetermined at the close of this agenda item and is addressed in the motion below.

- **Motion:** Population-Based Distribution (Failed)
 - Senator Ortiz y Pino moved, as a substitute approach, to distribute the Tribal set-aside among PTNs solely on the basis of population.
 - The motion did not receive a second and did not carry
- **Motion:** Development of Three Tribal Allocation Scenarios
 - Director Reifsteck moved to direct staff to develop three scenarios for distributing the Tribal set-aside among the twenty-three federally recognized PTNs, using an approach incorporating an equal base allocation and a proportional allocation, with a specific proposed dollar amount identified for each PTN under each scenario, for Committee consideration and vote at the next meeting.
 - Dr. Cloud seconded the motion. In discussion immediately preceding the vote, members confirmed that the directive to staff should also address how Tribal input would be obtained on the proposed scenarios.
 - Discussion touched on the appropriate standard for Tribal input on the scenarios (including whether formal Tribal consultation, which the Committee understood to require a defined process and approximately 60 days, would be required), and on the timeline pressure created by regions and PTNs awaiting a final allocation.
- **Outcome:** The motion passed, with one dissenting vote. The dissenting member was not clearly identified in the meeting record.
- ❖ **Additional Motions Raised (Not Adopted)**
 - Dr. Cloud moved that a Tribal government's set-aside share not be subject to repurposing under the statute absent the affected Tribal government's written consent. The motion did not receive a second and did not carry.
 - Dr. Cloud raised a proposal that would have required an accountable entity, where Tribal funds pass through it, to disclose in writing to the receiving Tribal government and to the Committee the availability and terms of direct government-to-government funding and any indirect or administrative charge to be taken against Tribal funds. Following discussion, Dr. Cloud did not press the motion to a vote and instead posed clarifying questions to Chairman Boukas regarding the government-to-government funding pathway generally.
 - Dr. Cloud raised the question of whether a Tribal government could serve as its own accountable entity for its set-aside share. Following discussion, this item was not brought to a formal vote.
- **Motion:** Endorsement of Request to Re-Authorize Expiring Appropriations
 - Returning to the item raised earlier in the meeting (see HCA update), Director Reifsteck moved that the Committee endorse a request to the Legislature to re-authorize any behavioral health appropriations expiring at the end of the current fiscal year, specifically to support advance/grant disbursement to regional accountable entities and to New Mexico's Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes for implementation of regional plan priorities under the Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act.
 - Senator Ortiz y Pino seconded the motion



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- A friendly amendment was accepted confirming that any request would retain the standard appropriations reversion language, under which unspent funds revert to the Behavioral Health Trust Fund.
 - **Outcome:** The motion passed.
 - **Next Meeting and Follow Up**
 - Director Reifsteck requested that a one-page overview of roles and responsibilities among HCA, AOC, the University of New Mexico (which provides regional technical assistance), and newly appointed HCA staff be prepared for the next meeting and expressed interest in a future presentation on juvenile behavioral health services statewide.
 - Dr. Cloud requested a presentation from the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) regarding funding mechanisms, including questions about early access reimbursement timing. Chairman Boukas responded that DFA may not be positioned to answer questions specific to individual accountable entities' procurement processes; the request was not adopted as a scheduled agenda item at this meeting.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2026.
 - **Adjournment**
 - Director Reifsteck motioned to adjourn the meeting.
 - Deputy Secretary Kathy Slater-Huff seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed unanimously.
 - Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.