



IBHC Meeting Minutes

Apr. 25, 2025

9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Location: Idaho Supreme Court, Lincoln Room (basement level)

Meeting Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/live/YiLY4Xgav78>

Members in Attendance: Sara Omundson (AOC), Jared Larsen (DHW), Judge Gene Petty, Bree Derrick (IDOC), Christine Starr (COPP), Rep. Rob Beiswenger, Dave Jeppesen, Ashley Dowell (IDJC), Rep. Brooke Green, Sen. Ali Rabe, Sen. Camille Blaylock, Commissioner Brent Mendenhall, Stewart Wilder

Staff in Attendance: Brandi Hawkins (AOC), Scott Ronan (AOC), Ryan Porter (AOC), Gina Westcott (DHW), Tina Transue (IDOC), Ross Edmunds (DHW), Dusty Orr (IDOC), Sharlene Davis (AOC), Heather Casady (IDOC), Katie Watkins (SDE), Sara Stover (Governor's Office)

IBHC Implementation Team Chairs: Scott Rasmussen (DHW), Eric Call (DHW), Erick Studebaker (Project ECHO Idaho), Marianne King (ODP), Brad Baker (DHW), Sandy Jones (AOC), Judge Michael Tribe (Court of Appeals), Tim Thompson (DHW), Laura Treat (DHW), Beth Markley (NAMI)

AGENDA

Actions taken in red

Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes.

Co-Chair Jared Larsen opened the meeting by introducing himself as the Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Chief at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, co-chairing the council on behalf of Director Alex Adams along with Sara Omundson Administrator Director of Courts.

After acknowledging a quorum, Co-Chair Larsen asked for a motion to approve the October 18, 2024 meeting minutes. **Dave Jeppesen motioned, Judge Petty seconded, and the motion passed** without discussion.

Introductions

Beginning with himself, Co-Chair Larsen asked for the members to introduce themselves in the room first and then online. The members introduced themselves and Co-Chair Larsen acknowledged the newest members: Christine Starr, Executive Director of Commission of

Pardons and Parole, Bree Derrick, Director of Idaho Department of Correction, Representative Rob Beiswenger, and Senator Camille Blaylock.

Review of IBHC Vision and Guiding Principles

Co-Chair Larsen asked Director Starr to read the council's vision statement. He then asked the members to take turns reading the guiding principles: Consumer and Family Voice, Cross-System Collaboration, Promote Evidence and Best Practice, Recovery and Resiliency Oriented, Equitable Access, Financially Sustainable, and Quality, Accountability and Outcomes.

About the IBHC

For the benefit of the new members, the co-chairs provided background information about the council and its role.

Co-Chair Omundson said that the council came about following an Idaho-hosted conference for Chief Justices from the western states and territories. The conference was focused on addressing mental health to prevent individuals from ending up in criminal or mental health proceedings in the courts. Staff from the Governor's office and IDHW attended the conference to discuss the current system. They discovered many great initiatives operating around the state without much coordination. Then IDHW Director Dave Jeppesen and Administrative Director of Courts Sara Omundson talked about bringing together the three branches of government to create a body to coordinate the work via a statewide strategic plan. The strategic plan would be action-oriented and time-bound for completion within the period of the executive order. The plan was effective, resulting in major investments in mental health across agencies and the courts. Now, we are beginning work under a new executive order to complete within the next three years.

Co-Chair Omundson clarified that the IBHC is not a super-agency or policy-setting body. The Legislature sets policy, and the agencies have autonomy. The council's role is coordination. She shared two flowcharts from the meeting materials – one for legislative initiatives and another for court rule changes. The purpose of these flowcharts is to describe the coordination process for cases where statutes or rules need to be updated. The council does not overrule decisions made by the IDOC or DHW or ISC. The process honors the independence of the agencies and the courts.

Co-Chair Larsen added that the Governor's executive order cycle created the council, but the Legislature passed a resolution, and the court adopted a proclamation in support. The legislative initiatives flowchart incorporates the executive branch process for agency legislation, though legislators and the courts have a different process. Legislators are in a unique position, and they are welcome to take up any legislation on their own. When council was formed, many groups wanted representation. However, they purposely left it small and included experts in public policy.

Co-chair Omundson emphasized that the council endorses legislation, but it doesn't belong to the IBHC. Any proposed legislation would belong to the sponsoring agency.

Additional Business

Co-Chair Larsen announced that the **June 13th IBHC meeting is rescheduled to June 20th**.

2024-2028 IBHC Strategic Plan Implementation

Co-Chair Larsen turned the floor over to Cheryl Foster to introduce the implementation team chairs. Cheryl briefly explained the strategic planning process with the IBHC Advisory Board and workgroups developing over 200 action items, which were compressed into 30 broad recommendations. She shared the list of the 11 recommendations prioritized by the council for implementation and noted that they spanned the entire behavioral health system framework: Promotion, Prevention, Engagement, Treatment, Recovery, and Infrastructure. Each implementation team is empowered to translate the prioritized recommendation into specific action items to accomplish.

Workforce Development

Scott Rasmussen and Eric Call from the IDHW Division of Behavioral Health lead the Workforce Development implementation team, along with Mike Wraith who was not able to attend. Their implementation team consists of about 17 members who represent consumer advocates and professionals across the state. The strategic plan had many action items to consider, which they narrowed down to three: 1) To expand behavioral health training programs, they are going to do a gap analysis and work with agencies and universities to create internships; 2) Strengthen peer special recovery coaches and family and peer support workforce services, as it was an emphasis for the legislature; 3) Address rural and frontier workforce development gaps and see how they can support those areas.

Cheryl noted that each of these teams is in a different place in their planning and implementing. Each recommendation is sponsored by one or more of the agencies of the council, and Workforce is sponsored by IDHW.

Program Awareness and Reduction of Stigma

The Program Awareness and Reduction of Stigma recommendation is sponsored by the IBHC and lead by public member Dave Jeppesen. The team is addressing the lack of awareness of existing behavioral health services and how to connect people to services, and the additional work that needs to be done around reducing stigma. The team is still working through some of the initiatives. The team has representatives from most of the universities, public television, IDHW, a consumer voice, and many non-profits. They have four action items: 1) Integrate 211 and findhelpidaho.org to create a single definite list of resource services and programs across the state and create a “no wrong door” approach; 2) Reach middle school and high schoolers with program awareness and stigma reduction by implementing Sources of Strength or other programs; 3) Help educators, teachers, and parents to know what resources are available and reduce stigma. 4) Education programs tailored for rural Idaho to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and improve understanding of mental health, led by member Stewart. Dave Jeppesen thanked Eric Studebaker for his feedback on the action items and said they are incorporating changes.

Co-Chair Omundson asked Dave Jeppesen whether they had reached out to agricultural organizations such as the Idaho Farm Bureau. He said that they had not, but they had only recently narrowed their focus to the rural community. He thanked her for the suggestion.

Primary Prevention Programs and Protective Factors

The recommendation for Primary Prevention Programs and Protective Factors is sponsored by the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, the State Department of Education, and IDHW. It is led by Marianne King and Eric Studebaker.

Marianne King said that they also had a very robust and diverse group, as can be seen by the number of action items they have. She spoke about prevention in general, that it is now a mature field where they know what works and what doesn't work. Prevention means different things to different people – primary, secondary and tertiary, but the emphasis of this group is to get upstream as much as possible. Eric Studebaker described the specific action items: 1) Increase community connectedness, recognizing the need for positive community engagement and being purposeful in developing those opportunities, especially for youth; 2) From the department of juvenile corrections, work with law enforcement and increase crime prevention; 3) Engage evidence-based prevention strategies; 4) Study implementing an Idaho pediatric psychiatry access line, which is a resource aimed at rural primary care and Idaho is the only state in the country that does not have a state-funded resource of this type; 5) Address ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) in some of the programming, as the data says that these kids are most at risk, and turn ACEs into positive childhood experiences to mitigate the negative they have experienced; 6) Strengthen the Safe Teen Assessment Centers, serving an incredible volume of children and families in nine communities; 7) Collect data to allow evaluation of prevention programs to ensure they invest in programs that work.

Co-Chair Omundson recognized Dr. Studebaker as an original IBHC member. She also asked if they intended to work with Insight Idaho. Eric said they want to catalog the existing data, to get it in a location where it could be accessed to inform the efforts. She said that Director Dowell would be a good resource for this effort.

Foster Care

Laura Denner was not able to attend in person, so Cheryl Foster provided an update in her place. Their proposed projects are: 1) Mentorship opportunities for youth in out-of-home placements; 2) Opportunities to provide support to caregivers and family so they do not burn out; 3) Track the implementation of a faith-based resource platform; and 4) Identify opportunities to limit disruption to education for foster youth.

Co-Chair Larsen was able to provide additional information, noting significant investment from the legislature this year to the foster care system. They are adding 68 FTEs to the department who will work on prevention efforts to minimize disruption in this population. Former IDJC Director Monty Prow is now over child welfare, and they are working to replicate his success in prevention. Their wildly important goal is to improve the number and quality of foster homes,

the quality of outcomes and focus more on prevention. The platform for connecting faith-based communities is being led by former state representative Sage Dixon.

Diversion Systems

The Diversion Systems recommendation is sponsored by IDOC, IDJC, and the Idaho Supreme Court. It has a new Chair, Bree Derrick, who recognized her co-chair Scott Ronan and mentioned they have a wide array of people represented on the committee: local law enforcement, prosecutors, members of the various branches of government. She spoke about the team's objectives and those spearheading them: 1) The team members working in the juvenile justice system will review statutes on the age of detainment; 2) Scott Ronan described a proposed early intervention court for individuals with significant behavioral health issues in Canyon County, as well as three low-risk, high-need tracks for individuals with significant behavioral health issues. These projects are 90% developed and they want to move it forward as part of this plan; 3) Sheriff Sam Hulse is looking at the jails' ability to do some diversionary programs, including a program he has implemented called I.G.N.I.T.E. They'd like to do some evaluation around the program and look into its feasibility; and 4) Leverage the work from the Sequential Intercept Mapping workshops to get a systems-level view of the existing diversionary services in the state.

Help the Helpers

Judge Gene Petty explained that the reason for the large number of action items. On April 4th, they had an in-person summit where the team members in the room and a few online brainstormed and talked about the needs of our helpers. This list is a culmination of those discussions, and this afternoon they will meet again as a team to talk about which priorities to move forward. The team is made up of a variety of individuals from a lot of different backgrounds. It is sponsored by ISC and IDOC, but they have reached out to others who should be on the team. He read the list of 13 proposed action items.

Director Starr asked how they were defining helpers. Co-Chair Larsen responded by describing the public comment process where the members attended four meetings around the state. In Canyon County, they heard from a whole group of fire, law enforcement, and corrections workers, who they categorize as helpers. It was one of the more moving days of his career, and he is glad to see a robust list. He said it would be a good one for the legislative partners to look at, since they are asking for help and experience some heinous things on our behalf. Co-Chair Omundson said that there is also an impact on the children and spouses of first responders, and it was moving and eye-opening. Judge Petty responded that they would have that discussion this afternoon. They did a survey of the members on their priorities, similar to how the council prioritized its recommendations,

Co-Chair Larsen said that the EMS bureau is moving from IDHW to the Military Division on July 1 and asked if they are represented. Judge Petty replied that the team includes paramedics and the colonel heading up the behavioral health initiative for the Military Division.

15 MINUTE BREAK

Crisis Centers

Brad Baker from the IDHW DBH is honored to represent crisis centers, who help people when they are going through some of the worst times of their life. They have 22 members from across the state on their implementation team, many who work in crisis centers or other parts of the crisis system of care. Their four action items are: 1) Public awareness and understanding of crisis center services; 2) Expanding crisis centers for youth, particularly looking at the overlap between youth assessment centers and youth crisis centers; and 3) Improving utilization and operation, and 4) Sustainability.

Criminal Justice – Continuum of Care

This recommendation is sponsored by the ISC, IDOC, and IDJC. Sandy Jones represented the group on behalf of herself and co-chair Wally Campbell from IDOC. Their group looked at the different places across the spectrum of the criminal justice system where behavioral health services could be accessed or approved. They identified four basic high-level action items. 1) Professionalizing and expanding peer recovery services and developing a system of oversight for the recovery centers around the state; 2) Funding for independent assessors and other resources of individuals preparing to release from custody; 3) Expanding MAT (medication for addiction) and MOUD (medication for opioid use disorder) across the system; and 4) Multi-agency partnership for screening court processes, case management, alternative placement and PV options where initially they will look at helping judges understand clinical assessments and the rider program.

Treatment Courts

Judge Michael Tribe leads the Treatment Courts implementation team, a group from around the state, which picked five items: 1) Gap analysis for potential expansion of mental health courts; 2) Adequate funding for the treatment courts; 3) Look into options for individuals in rural areas to participate in mental health court without having to move to the city where the court is; 4) Try to get people into treatment courts within 50 days from their arrest or PV; and 5) Transition individuals on a rider into the community in a treatment court model, which they plan to implement later.

Director Derrick noted that several groups are interested in the rider program. She wanted everyone to know that the Idaho Criminal Justice Commission is taking on an evaluation of the rider program. They know the outcomes are not great, so they want to look at alternative options.

Competency Restoration

The competency restoration recommendation is sponsored by ISC and IDHW. Tim Thompson is representing the team on behalf of co-chair Jennifer Burlage. He said that there is a lot to talk about in this area and that Idaho isn't the only state with challenges. They've divided the recommendation into adult and juvenile action items. Tim spoke to the he adult action items and deferred the juvenile items to Laura Treat.

For the adult items, they will look at 1) collecting and analyzing the available statewide data for each phase of the competency to stand trial and restoration process; 2) Review best practices

from other states; 3) Gather input from stakeholders on their policy and system review, and 4) Address workforce, facility, and program capacity.

Laura Treat said that they would take a similar approach to reviewing the juvenile statute and processes. 1) They will gather and analyze data on the competency process; 2) Obtain stakeholder feedback on the existing process, especially families and youth who have gone through the process; 3) They will also look at national best practices or successful models used in parts of Idaho that can be replicated.

Supportive Housing

Beth Markley from NAMI, chair of the Supportive Housing team, said that before fleshing out the action items and objectives, they spent quite a bit of time getting the right people at the table. They now have a robust workgroup of about 25 people from different agencies who have been working in this space. They first spent some time honing their vision and mission for the group. They decided collectively that the focus is on those who might otherwise lack access to housing or be unable to live independently by leveraging resources from IDOC and IDHW and otherwise fostering interagency collaboration for data-driven, scalable, supportive housing solutions.

Their top three action items include 1) Support expanding HART homes and other supportive housing by collecting data about the gaps in services and impact on other systems; and 2) and 3) Addressing the needs of those exiting incarceration and the state hospitals through collaboration across agencies to increase their housing options and educating tenants and property management companies about housing vouchers.

Cheryl noted that Insight Idaho is already working on identifying folks from IDOC and the state hospitals, as that was an item previously submitted as a part of a larger research proposal. The idea was to identify the “frequent flyers” who cost the state a lot of money in repeat stays at the state hospital or IDOC.

She also noted that what was presented today was only a summary of each implementation team. As soon as they are completed, each team will have a project charter listing their team members and action items on the IBHC website. Then everyone can track their progress.

Co-Chair Omundson noted that team chair Beth Markley is from NAMI, not a state entity. NAMI is a great nonprofit that provides support for folks, and we are happy to work with them and other community partners. And we appreciate other groups stepping up when we are not able to take on an initiative, such as the hospitals did during the last process.

She stressed the importance of the work thanked the attendees for being part of it. The next meeting will be in June when they can check the status of the implementation efforts.

Adjourn