

Nevada Association of County Human Services Administrators

**Minutes**

May 21, 2020

**Active Members:**

Mary Jane Ostrander, Carson City (phone)

Shannon Ernst, Churchill County (phone)

Niki Linn, Humboldt County (phone)

Shayla Holmes, Lyon County (phone)

Carla Hemmer, Mineral County (phone)

Karyn Smith, Nye County (phone)

Amber Howell, Washoe County (phone)

**Associate Members:**

**Affiliate Members:**

**Guests:**

Dagny Stapleton, NACO (phone)

Vinson Guthreau, NACO (phone)

Dena Schmidt, ADSD (phone)

Marla McDade, Strategies 360 (phone)

Melissa Laufer-Lewis, NV Medicaid (phone)

Tiffany Lewis, NV Medicaid (phone)

Phil, NV Medicaid (phone)

**Item 1: Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm by Shannon Ernst.

**Item 2: Introductions**

Shannon Ernst asked those attending the meeting to introduce themselves and introductions were made.

**Item 3: Public Comment**

Shannon Ernst inquired as to whether there was any public comment. There were none.

**Item 4: Verification of the Posting of the Agenda**

Karyn Smith verified the agenda had been posted according to NRS.

**Item 5: Review and Adoption of Agenda**

Shannon Ernst called for a motion to adopt the agenda as submitted. Nikki Linn made a motion to adopt the agenda as submitted. Amber Howell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Item 6: Review and approval of Minutes from the April 22, 2020 Meeting**

Shannon Ernst asked if there were any revisions or changes to the minutes from the April 22, 2020 meeting. There were none.

Nikki Linn made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2020 meeting. Karyn Smith seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Item 7: NACO Staff Updates**

(The recording started right here, so anything before that I don't know what was said) Dagny Stapleton stated that the one question they had going forward is whether we thought there would be an increase in the number of slots for the Home and Community-Based Waivers. The increases last session impact our assessments and Dagny is wondering if everyone expects an increase on those slots going forward. We weren't sure and wanted to ask Melissa. Melissa stated that currently the division always requested new waiver slots for the three waivers we operate. There has been a growing need in the community, but there is always a need for additional slots or those individuals. Dagny asked if those three individuals fall under the Home and Community-Based Waivers and they are apart of our assessment too? Melissa stated that yes, that is correct. The counties are assessed a portion of those clients depending on what level the individual falls within. Dagny stated that she will tell the consultant to project that based on past increases. Dagny asked if it was up to the legislature to grant them the slots. Melissa stated that, yes that is correct.

Dena Schmidt stated that she can send Dagny the data analytics projections for those caseloads if that will help. Last session, the legislatures funded the entire caseload plus the waitlist. We don't anticipate that happening this year due to our budget. The projections will help the caseload to grow. Dagny asked Melissa and Phil if there were any updates for the Long-Term Care Assessments. Melissa stated right now they are working with the Governor's Finance Office to determine any changes for FY 2021. Right now, that info is still being vetted and decisions are still being made. As soon as those decisions are made, we will schedule a meeting with NACO and the counties to update everyone on what those changes are and how they relate to the Indigent Program. Dagny stated she thinks we should be at the table before the decisions are made. She understands any discussion regarding the Governor's budget

are to remain confidential, but at the same time, with our partnerships, we ask to be part of the conversation prior to a decision being made. Melissa stated that she will touch base with the Director's office and see what they can do.

Shannon stated that there was a conversation about how many Medicaid contract amendments took place, based on a change of language. Quite a few haven't been turned back in, including hers. She had Phil and Tiffany come to answer any questions we might have so we can get those contracts in right away. Phil stated that they sent those out in February, and they are here to answer any questions so we can finish it up as soon as possible. Mary Jane stated she still went ahead and signed her contract, however year after year they've thought of taking out the language of pre-paying the June bill ahead of time. We as the counties have argued that several times and it is still in the contract. She went ahead and put it through because it is urgent but was wondering if we can request taking that out of the contract.

Melissa stated that historically the language has been there because of the timing the property taxes are received is August 5, so back in 2013 we added that language to the contract to allow the closing of the state fiscal year. I think it's a good time to regroup with NACO and the counties on what a potential alternative process would be for the next time. I'm up to discuss how we can meet both the state and county needs at this time. Mary Jane stated that the barrier we run through with having that is if we pay June ahead of time and the state owes us credits, we are not getting reimbursed until very late, if at all. They don't want to reimburse us until they do the Tru-Up and then you guys are unable to credit us because its from the last fiscal year. This has been a struggle for years for us.

Melissa stated that is a very valid point and there is room for opportunity in being able to credit counties timelier. If you are experiencing a lag, please include me in the correspondence so that I can get that credit processed in a timelier manner. She still thinks there should be a further discussion of prepaying that final invoice. Mary Jane stated she understands why you all need it and she supports that, but this is what we run into. Shannon stated that if we are good with the contracts for now, then for next time we can sit down for next time and do a revision before next year. What are everyone's thoughts on doing work on this contract for next year. Mary Jane stated that she would help work on that.

Shannon asked Amber how she is feeling about the contracts. Amber stated that she is good with the proposed solution. Dagny stated that NACO would be happy to coordinate that, so everyone is part of that conversation throughout the state. Shannon stated that annually we meet with the director's office and different administrators and that would be a good time to have the conversation. Maybe we can schedule that roundtable again during that time. Dagny stated she is good with whatever works for everyone and just wants to help get it going so it is right the first time. Phil stated they welcome that conversation. Shannon stated they will plan to add that to our annual meeting. Dagny asked Melissa and Phil which counties haven't signed their contracts and if they needed any help. Phil stated that there's a couple counties and he will get that list sent out to the group. Shannon stated that Churchill is on the list and they will have their commissioners sign it and they will have it next week. Mary Jane stated that she is working on hers and will get it right to them. Shannon apologized to Phil and stated the counties wanted to be all on the same page before signing. Dagny offered if there were some stragglers, she will help chase them down.

### **Item 8: State Partner Updates**

Dena Schmidt stated that everyone is aware of our budget situation. We are just waiting for guidance to see what that looks like. We are trying to put together request for CARES ACT funding to support some of our programs. There has been an increased need for services especially around our older adult populations. Our Nevada Can Project has brought a lot of folks together and has been able to get us to connect with various community partners to meet the needs within the communities. We are looking to expand that process through CARES ACT funding and make it more electronic and not manual. We don't have a whole lot but are happy to answer any questions. We still have the emergency CARES ACT funding under the old Americans ACT and have not dispersed all that. Current grantees can ask for additional funds.

Amber wanted to thank Dena for her help in getting them much needed funding for their Senior Meals on Wheels and Congregate Care Programs, which was super helpful. If we have a need still, is it ok for us to submit another application or do we wait for another announcement. Dena stated that its an ongoing application, so you can submit an additional request. Amber stated that Dena's staff has been amazing. Dena stated they have been working hard and she appreciates that and will pass it along to them. Shannon stated that she wants to thank Dena also and they are rolling out the Technology Grant and it would not have happened without her team. She is trying to implement that into her clients to help prevent guardianship and make things easier for seniors, especially with technology.

### **Item 9: County updates on COVID-19**

Amber stated that not a lot has changed in Washoe County since Dorothy gave the update last month. We are trying to figure out how to reopen our Daybreak program and social distance at the same time. We are still doing the drive thru meal service and looking at whether we want to open congregate meals with 50% capacity. We have one contract with Well Care for 43 beds for individuals who are presumptive or positive and have an ability to add another 20. We've used 14 beds so far and not only do they provide the housing units, but they provide food and case management and has been a great partnership. We are excited our homeless project is opening June 8 and all the families will be moving in there. The buildings and staff buildings are looking beautiful. The women will move in August and we are excited to be done with this 4-year long project.

Amber stated that as far as the impact, we are very concerned with what will happen with our mental health funding from DHHS since there will be cuts and child welfare is also being looked at with having cuts. We are all in the same boat worrying about our monies. We are looking into having a meeting with welfare since there was a change to a kinship program with Child Welfare Families and the rural communities are the only ones to have access to that funding. This is a huge hit for Washoe and Clark counties since we didn't know it was happening. This funding is used to pay a family member for caring for children and we are cautiously optimistic we can work something out. We are implementing a long-term teleworking plan and policy that will help with efficiency, travel time and cars and utilities. If anyone is interested in a teleworking policy to look at, you can check ours out. We are increasing our testing which will bring more positive results. Shannon stated that she would love to see that policy if she wants to send it out to everyone.

Mary Jane stated in Carson City the Health Department has increased their testing. Human Services has not received a significant increase in calls for assistance and we are waiting for that to hit around June once the 90 days is up. We are looking at it as this is our new norm and how are we going to move forward under these circumstances and accepting this is it. Our homeless population in Carson has doubled in the last 2 months and are seeing a new kind of homeless. They are migrating from the Bay Area and northern California and we are seeing big mental health issues with this homeless group.

Niki Linn stated that they just had their 4<sup>th</sup> death from Covid-19 in Humboldt County. Our numbers are slowing down this past week. We did the community-based testing in the last week, with only 1 positive out of 721 tests. It was an exciting thing to hear. Most of our cases are centralized to a certain demographic. On our Health Board meeting this morning, our Health Officer is optimistic and hopefully we are in an upward trend. Niki loves Amber's teleworking policy and she would also love to see that. Humboldt County has been picking up with people requesting services and we are surprised with the amount of people moving here during this time. They are moving here with nothing and are needing assistance.

Karyn Smith stated that like Mary Jane, Nye County has been constantly changing. We just started looking at procedures when we start slowly opening to the public. We've been in our office and still dealing with the public, we have just been giving out food cards and having them stay in their cars while we help them. We haven't been getting any calls but there's been a lot of chatter about how they don't have to pay their rent or electric right now. My staff and I are preparing for when they do start lining up in June or July needing help. We are trying to figure out what to use our CSBG Cares monies for and getting ready to implement new programs. The county has done approximately 1630 tests with a total of 59 positives. Last week unfortunately we had our first death. 33 of those people are recovered. The Health Department is keeping track of these things. Our Senior Centers are doing the drive by food drop off and are looking at cooking some meals in Beatty.

Shannon stated that in Churchill we have never closed, we have just restricted the amount of staff and client contact by working electronically or through our drop box. We are back fully staffed in the office as of last Monday. As of May 7, Churchill was approved to do our own testing, so we launched our community wide testing which is done twice a week. It is going very smoothly on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the fairgrounds and we are going to add evening testing as well. As of yesterday, we were requested by the state to do the testing in our Long-Term Care Facilities. We are going to do encampments for homeless, our juvenile probation, assisted living and they all must be done by May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Churchill has 7 total positives, one death, five recovered and 2 that are quarantined for another 3 days. We are looking at the antibody tests and how we will put those out in the community without causing concerns for the community since we don't know when they were positive. We are working on purchasing 2600 antibody tests to do in our community. We are working with the state to get that done and would like to do that as soon as possible. We started discussions on how we will become a health district. Our office has been slow as well but once evictions start taking place, we will all get busy. Our Land Trust has gone to a halt during Covid, like many of our other projects. We are looking at a budget

reduction of 7% for the upcoming year and our current year is a reduction of 5% and trying to find alternative funding through the Cares Act.

Mary Jane stated that she didn't give the numbers for the quad counties (Storey, Lyon Douglas and Carson Counties). We did 1798 community testing for those without symptoms and only one came back positive. The total for all quad counties was 153 cases as of yesterday with 45 actives, 105 recovered and 3 deaths. It's going up and down in each county.

Shayla Holmes stated that Lyon County is back to our average community referrals. We are anticipating an influx, so it will be interesting to see since we are back to our normal services already. Like Mary Jane, we are seeing a shift in our homeless population but moving towards Carson. Folks seem to be shifting to more open areas and activity with services they can get. We are seeing a decrease in our homeless and increase in referrals.

Amber Howell stated that one thing she didn't mention which is very important, is the child abuse and neglect reports have decreased about 75%. It's been a big decrease in Clark County and the rurals. We all know that teachers are the biggest reporters, so less eyes on kids will mean less reports. We are concerned that the numbers are so low, people are inside and stressed financially or otherwise. Its something we should all be mindful for that the abuse maybe much more severe and chronic. We've done a ton of PR around having neighbors make sure they reach out, along with the FedEx, Post Office and UPS. I've never seen anything like it, and it makes me scared wondering what's happening to these children and they don't have anyone advocating for them right now.

Shannon stated that during the month of April we were doing a lot of Outreach for this and the state wouldn't engage with us because they are closed. We are closed, but still need to respond to the needs of our community. Mary Jane stated to Amber that if she has any media on this campaign, please send them out so each county can share the information. She'd be more than happy to help because she's heard the same in Carson City as well. Amber stated that she will send everyone the Facebook and Twitter feeds along with all the numbers statewide. CPS is never closed in Washoe since its an essential service, but the numbers are low.

Shayla stated that they operate the Differential Response Grant for Lyon, Churchill, Pershing and Mineral. Referrals from DCFS and CPS are still operating, although their offices are closed to the public. Shannon stated that they tell us they still go when they are called out, but they are closed. The concern is when we do outreach things and engage, they are not able to participate in that and show the communities they are there. We kind of jumped back into that role to link them and make those referrals. Covid is different and something we've never been through before, but how do we work so those support programs are still there and remember that a lot of us are essential workers.

Shayla stated that they've gotten several referrals from them for Lyon County to do, some of those are like the lower level parenting classes and whatnot. For Churchill, we can take some of those referrals under the Differential Response for lower level programs. Shannon thanked Shayla. Dagny stated that there's a couple of us that are going to meet with the administrator at DCFS the first week of June. I wanted to see if Amber wanted to join that meeting and discuss the Washoe program that intersects

with the rural CPS programs so we can have more folks a part of that conversation. It will be a good opportunity to talk to the office regarding their operations during Covid and the outreach our communities need. Amber stated that just because an office is closed, doesn't mean the service goes away too.

#### **Item 10: Guardianship Partner Updates**

Shannon stated that guardianship continues to increase in Churchill, and they receive a lot of referrals. Shannon asked if Karyn or Shayla have heard anything as far as the statewide group. Shayla stated that she hasn't heard anything on that, and she hasn't received more referrals during this time. However, the impact under the assisted living facilities and the people in her care has been through the roof. The impact it's had on their behavior and mental health has been a lot. Karyn stated that Nye County has had an increase in guardianship. In the past week alone, she's been called in on two different people where the public stepped in. Major hoarding, no electricity, water or septic and big messes. We are trying to work with other county agencies to help and trying to figure out if they are mentally incompetent and need to go under guardianship. We have a hard time getting Adult Protective Services to come out and assess these people. In the last month we've had 8 new referrals, which is where we are getting hit the most.

Dena Schmidt stated that if you do have problems from not getting responses from APS, please get in touch with her so she can help move that along if they aren't responsive enough. Karyn thanked Dena and said it's a fine line, because when we call them up, they don't always see what we see with them being mentally incompetent. It takes about 24-48 hours for them to call us back, and if we are lucky another 24-48 hours for them to come out. Karyn stated that she appreciates that offer from Dena.

#### **Item 11: Approval of Treasurer's Report and approval of bills submitted for payment**

Mary Jane stated that she apologizes that she's lost track of time and couldn't get a report out. The verbal report is that the checking account has stayed the same at \$539.31. Our savings account went from \$0.07 interest to \$0.03, making the total at \$3,820.30. In the next week or so, I will send out invoices for our dues that are due on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Reminder that if there is any county that is unable to pay those dues, you can come to this board for a waiver on that. Otherwise, it is \$100 per county. I currently have no new invoices.

#### **Item 12: Scheduling of Next Meeting**

Shannon stated that in June we will still be in Zoom and wanted to know what date and time we are looking at. Shannon asked if everyone feels we should have the meeting and keep the communication going. Mary Jane stated she thinks we should keep the June meeting, since everything is changing so much. Karyn stated that she agrees and thinks its good to keep the communication open. Shannon stated that if we stay on track, the next meeting will be June 18, which is a Thursday at 2pm. Everyone agreed that June 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm is good for a Zoom meeting.

#### **Item 13: Future Agenda Items**

There were no suggestions on future agenda items, so Shannon stated we will stick to standard agenda items.

**Item 14: Public Comment**

Mary Jane stated that FYI, they have received a lot of pressure from our funeral homes to increase our rates. We have been at about \$550 for quite a few years. They have been asking us since about July last year requesting us to increase our rates. We haven't had a chance to discuss it since, but as of this week they have been refusing to cremate with the rates and said we need to find someone else to do it. We are moving that in front of the board and will most likely increase a small amount to show good faith. The reason I am saying something is because they want to hit Carson first, and then come after the rest of the state for increases. They are all working together, and she wanted to give a heads up. Its one funeral home right now but all the other ones are jumping on board.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the committee, Shannon Ernst called to adjourn the meeting at 3:11pm.

APPROVED:



Shannon Ernst, Chair  
Nevada Association of County Human Services  
Administrators



Tim Burch, Vice-Chair  
Nevada Association of County Human Services  
Administrators