



**Utah Behavioral Health Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2026, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Utah State Hospital
Heninger Administration Building
Classroom 21**

Commission Chair: Ally Isom
Vice Chair: Tammer Attallah
Second Vice Chair: Kyle Snow

Commission Members:

Jim Ashworth	Adam Cohen
Mike Deal	Evan Done
Tracy Gruber	Elaine Navar
Jordan Sorenson	Josie White

	Time/Presenter	Discussion Topics
1	1:00 - 1:05 pm: Chair Ally Isom	Chair Ally Isom welcomed everyone to the meeting. Evan Done made a motion to approve the February 13, 2026 meeting minutes, Adam Cohen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
Workstream 1: Strategic planning		
2	1:05 - 1:45 pm: Jeremy Cottle, Binee Larsen; <i>(Co-Chairs of the Utah Suicide Prevention Committee);</i> Laura Summer <i>(Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute);</i> Michael Staley <i>(Department of Health and Human Services)</i>	Jeremy Cottle presented background information on the Suicide Prevention Committee and Coalition and their process of developing tactics for the Behavioral Health Commission strategic plan. Binee Larson presented the first recommended tactic: Continue the momentum of skill development. Build the capacity among Utahns to increase knowledge and skills of upstream suicide prevention, including lethal means safety. Key activities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a means safety module that will be incorporated into gatekeeper training and other research-based trainings and discussions. ● Implement a three-month follow up survey for gatekeeper trainings to determine use of knowledge and skills since the training (impact). Laura Summers presented on the second recommended tactic and the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute’s evaluation of Live On. The second recommended tactic is to continue the momentum

		<p>normalize conversations of mental health and suicide; reduce stigma; and change the culture, with the following key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably fund the Live On Utah suicide prevention campaign. • Intentionally share suicide prevention products and assets through all behavioral health networks. <p>Chair Isom asked if there is data on the reach of the Live On campaign, and Laura Summers indicated some data is available from the contractor who leads Live On. Chair Isom requested that the reach of the campaign be included in the strategic plan as a key measure.</p> <p>Michael Staley presented on the third recommended tactic to build data infrastructure that effectively informs suicide prevention and intervention.</p> <p>Vice Chair Tammer Attallah asked how much of the third tactic could be achieved through policy change versus additional funding. Michael Staley indicated that these changes are low-hanging fruit for policy changes and would not necessarily require funding.</p> <p>Dr. Ashworth asked how zero suicide programs within the University of Utah are connected to the Suicide Prevention Committee. The committee members stated that these entities are significant players in the suicide prevention community, and they support these programs in ensuring all individuals within the University of Utah receive suicide prevention training.</p> <p>Chair Isom asked whether safe harbor laws require additional campaigning focus, and whether Live On could pivot to focus on that issue. Michael Staley indicated that law enforcement are still not ready to fully implement these laws, and they would prefer to build safe harbor educational content into trainings.</p> <p>Mia Nafziger stated the Behavioral Health Commission will integrate these tactics into their strategic plan later in the year.</p>
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Workstream 2: Legislative recommendations

<p>3</p>	<p>1:45 - 2:15 pm: Dallas Earnshaw (<i>Utah State Hospital</i>)</p>	<p>Superintendent Dallas Earnshaw presented an overview of the Utah State Hospital's Master Plan, which envisions the future role of the State Hospital.</p> <p>Chair Isom asked how many state legislators have visited the hospital campus in the past five years. Superintendent Earnshaw</p>
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		<p>responded approximately 20 - 25.</p> <p>Chair Isom asked how many people are discharged from the State Hospital each year. Superintendent Earnshaw responded that the average stay is 90 days, but he does not have an exact estimate for the number discharged each year.</p> <p>Evan Done asked if efforts to move the State Hospital are likely to change in future years. Superintendent Earnshaw responded that individuals have been interested in moving the State Hospital since he first began working there in the 1970s. Director Tracy Gruber noted that the Department of Health Human Services (DHHS) does not have an official position on moving the location of the State Hospital, and they continue to have a dialogue with the developers. The Master Plan supports this dialogue.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>2:15 - 2:30 pm: Chair Isom; Mia Nafziger</p>	<p>Mia Nafziger presented a legislative briefing on the following bills.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HB 15S2 - Medicaid Amendments (Eliason) 2. HB 28S2 - Health and Human Services Sunset Amendments (Eliason) 3. HB 71S3 - Health Plan Provider Directory Amendments (Eliason) 4. HB 88S5 - Public Assistance Amendments (Lee) 5. HB 199S1 - Health Data Amendments (Thurston) 6. HB 399S1 - Prohibition Against Student Character Tracking and Grading Systems (Lee) 7. HB 453S1 - Unspent Funding Amendments (Matthews) 8. HB 471S1 - Social Services Amendments (Monson) 9. HB 552 - Behavioral Health Amendments (Eliason) <p>Tammer Attallah requested staff provide additional information on the trend of dollars available in the restricted account in HB 453S1 over the past five years.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>2:30 - 2:55 pm: Chair Isom</p>	<p>Committee members stated that HB 15S2 is crucial to the behavioral health safety net for Utah, given its impacts on Medicaid. Adam Cohen made a motion to support HB 15S2, Jordan Sorenson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>As the HB 552 implemented the legislative recommendations of the Behavioral Health Commission, committee members felt the bill is crucial to support. Adam Cohen made a motion to support HB 552,</p>

		Evan Done seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
Workstream 3: Data analysis		
		No items to discuss
Workstream 4: Communications		
		No items to discuss
Project management		
6	2:55 - 3:00 pm: Chair Isom	<p>Chair Isom reviewed meeting items to be discussed during the Commission’s March meeting, which she requested include a legislative summary of key bills, with materials sent in advance.</p> <p>Mia Nafziger stated the Commission could develop its process for 2027 legislative recommendations during its March meeting, and shared the Health Workforce Advisory Council has requested to present to the Commission in March. Staff also plan to present data dashboards to the Commission during this meeting.</p> <p>Evan Done reminded commissioners that the Rally for Recovery at the State Capitol will be on Thursday, February 26 from 4 - 6 p.m.</p> <p>Tammer Attallah made a motion to adjourn, Dr. Ashworth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
Next Meeting: March 19, 2026 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.		