BHASO Region 2 Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information:

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026
Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Updates and Announcements

The Behavioral Health Administration announced that Commissioner Dannette Smith will be retiring at the end of February, and the Governor is currently recruiting a new Commissioner.

Council Context Statement

This is the BHASO Region 2 Advisory Council. The council is designed to promote local community input pertaining to behavioral health service needs. The council advises the Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization (BHASO), in this case Signal Behavioral Health Network (Signal), for Region 2. The council is advisory only – meaning discussions happen during meetings and recommendations are made to Signal. It is then up to Signal's staff to consider council recommendations and figure out what is realistic or feasible to change. This council follows statutory requirements, meaning that the creation of the council and aspects of how it runs are determined by what the law says. The council has assigned seats for different perspectives (like safety net provider, experience with the criminal justice system, lived experience, etc.), and it is why the meetings are open to the public and there will be a public comment section at the end of each meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

The Regional Advisory Council members and council administrators introduced themselves, specifying their name, location, and shared how access to behavioral health services – whether easy or hard – impacted their life.

Network Adequacy

BHASOs are responsible for developing and maintaining care that is available for individuals across the continuum. Broadly, this includes crisis behavioral health, mental health, substance use disorder, and recovery support services. BHASOs are entrusted with the responsibility to offer an array of services that meet the needs of the community. Signal provided a presentation to the Regional Advisory Council about network adequacy; both what it means in the general healthcare landscape and what it means to the BHASOs in behavioral health.

Signal, with support from the BHA, is developing a network that addresses access, affordability, workforce and support, accountability, lived experience and local guidance, and whole person care. The goal is to have a network that is responsive and accessible with a focus on

individualized access to care. There is work to be done in building strong network adequacy and the Advisory Council will play a vital role in helping understand local needs and identify gaps in services.

Comments from the Advisory Council

- Workforce challenges remain an ongoing concern.
- In rural communities, telehealth is a good option but not always a good fit for all clients.
- Access to prescribers is a barrier.
- There is a lack of person-centered care.
- There is a lack of culturally-competent care.

Signal's Care Access Team

Signal staff provided information to the Regional Advisory Council about the Signal's Care Access Team and what communication strategies they are doing to promote this work. Signal's website, specifically the find care page, which was created with guidance from people with lived experience, was shared with the Regional Advisory Council. The webpage features ways in which people can reach out to Signal's Care Access Team, a short informational video explaining what the team does, and a list of frequently asked questions to further explain what people can expect when they reach out.

Signal shared information about the marketing strategies currently used to promote Signal's care access/navigation service. The Regional Advisory Council were asked for recommendations on other information or materials that would be helpful to share with their communities about the Care Access work. They were also asked for recommendations on how Signal can be most successful to reach everyday people to tell them about Signal's Care Access team and what to expect when they reach out.

Comments and Questions from the Advisory Council

- Does the Signal Care Access team only provide resources or referrals for Signal-contracted providers?
    - Answer: No. The Care Access team researches many different types of resources to address the needs of each caller.
- What if one of the resources provided to a person does not have availability?
    - Answer. The Care Access Team can warmly connect people to the resources provided. If barriers are identified, the team will provide additional resources and/or interim service recommendations.
- It is important to ensure resources and information are up-to-date and accurate. Having current information builds trust in communities.
- This is amazing and there is a huge need for this.
- In our community, there are convenings that would benefit from hearing about this service.
- Some communities have a bulletin board on Facebook pages where Signal could put up a post about this service.
- Recommendation to send Advisory Council members copies of flyers to distribute in their communities.

Public Comment

None.

Regional Advisory Council Members and Administrators:

Name	Seat	Attendance
James Kuemmerle	Expertise in BH needs of children/youth	☐
Laura DePrince	BH Safety Net Provider	☒
Heather Baier	Experience with Criminal Justice System	☒
Kristin Carpenter	Community Member	☒
Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally	County Commissioner	☐
Jack Devie	Lived experience with MH or SUD challenges	☒
Lucrecia Medrano	Lived experience with MH or SUD challenges (and am NOT a BH provider)	☒
Sarah Gales	Lived experience with MH or SUD challenges (and am NOT a BH provider)	☒
Alison Sbrana	Advisory Council Facilitator	☒
Kristy Jordan	Signal/BHASO	☒
Judith Tieku	Behavioral Health Administration	☒