

Region 7E Governing Board Meeting
MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2025; 9:00am – 12:00 Noon

Attendees:

Affiliation		Governing Board Members		Directors
Chisago County	x	Kelly Ihrke, 2025 Vice Chair		
Chisago County		Jolene Thorsen	x	Robert Benson
Chisago County	x	Stacy Johnstone, Consumer Rep		
DHS Liaisons		Abbie Franklin, Andrea Abel		DHS
Isanti County	x	Emily Hawkins, Member & Fiscal Host		
Isanti County	x	Ashley Wright, Consumer Rep		Jodi Donnay
Kanabec County	x	Katie Heacock	x	Chuck Hurd
Kanabec County	x	Cassie Dahlberg		
Mille Lacs County	x	Jessica Andrich		Char Kohlgraf
Pine County	x	Barb Schmidt		Becky Foss
Region 7E Planner	x	Amanda Stevenson		

CALL to Order

- **Approval of the agenda**

- Approved

- **Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes**

MOTION: Chisago moved to approve the November GB meeting minutes with the understanding they will include an Addendum with excerpts from previous meeting minutes regarding the handshake agreement for counties financial responsibility at Willow Grove; and information from Canvas Health to be included in the Addendum, Mille Lacs second. All ayes, motion carried.

- **Director Update: Chuck Hurd**

- Director Rep for 2026 will be Mille Lacs Co, Char K.
- The Directors didn't have a December meeting.

- **Case Manager Rep Update**

- 2026: Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Isanti have case managers who have expressed interest. The Board will discuss whether this role is needed with the new member structure that will be adopted.

- **Consumer Rep Updates**

- Ashley; last meeting as her term has ended
 - Ashley shared her time in recovery with shoutouts to the counties and providers who have provided support along the way. She stated she enjoyed serving on the board.
 - Ashley was presented with a Certificate of Recognition
- Stacy
 - She asks the people she works with to share their biggest hurdle and is pleased to know that resources are available.
- New Consumer Rep for 2026: two final interviews completed last week, recommended Michelle O from Chisago County. Amanda will contact her after today's meeting. She will begin in January.

- **Budget Review and Budget Actions:**

- Budget Review:
 - 2025 Underspending before returns
 - AMHI: \$39,291.95
 - Mobile Crisis: \$52,782.48

- 2025 Amount Spent in BRASS 443- Housing Flex: \$36,855.18
- 2025 Amount spent in BRASS 418- Client Flex: \$13,992.53
- 2025 Amount spent in BRASS 416- Transportation: \$1,926.11
- Final budget review once returns are received. (February 2026)

- **Program and Service Provider Reports**
 - None to ensure other topics are covered.
- **Unfinished Business:**
 - **Item 1:** Changes to Bylaws were discussed. The Planner will make the changes and bring the document to the January meeting for approval.
 - Redefine the Governing Board member roster so Supervisors can meet with each other about the many aspects of their jobs without being in a quorum status for the Governing Board.
 - Each county will have two members of their choice, which may include the supervisor, director, or a case manager.
 - Each of the two representatives from each county will have a vote, whether they are a case manager, supervisor, or director.
 - Currently, a Quorum is four members; under the new structure it will be seven.
 - By January each year, each county assigns their two representatives. If one or both members are absent, the county may send a proxy.
 - Planner chairing the meeting. It was determined there will be two voting members to be chair/vice chair which will expand the Planner's resource network.
 - Historically, Isanti County has not been included in the rotation for Chair/Vice Chair because they've been the Fiscal Host. With the addition of new Board members to the roster, the Isanti County Supervisor felt they could now be included in the rotation.
 - Chair, Vice Chair, Planner for 2026:
 - Chair: Chisago
 - Vice Chair: Isanti
 - Beginning in January, the Vice Chair will become Chair, and the next county in alphabetical rotation will assume the Vice Chair role. Each position is a one-year term.
 - Case Manager Rep.
 - With the change of membership to the Governing Board to have two representatives from each county, it was determined that a specific Case Manager Rep is not needed.
 - Each consumer rep will have a vote.
 - The Record Retention Policy and the Data Request process will follow the policy of the fiscal host. Record retention is 7 years.
 - Director Rep. With the expansion of membership, a specific Director Rep is not needed. The Directors meet on the second Thursday of each month. A Director will send the Planner an update to read at the GB meeting if no director will be present.
 - The Planner and Admin will provide the agenda, previous month's meeting minutes, and any other necessary documents three business days in advance of the meeting.

- Once distributed to the Governing Board, changes to the agenda will be approved by the Planner in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.
- Budget Meeting Section: The document will outline that supervisors and directors should be present at the budget meeting and that this doesn't change the number of votes per county.
 - In the event of a tie vote, the motion fails.
- Conflict of interest: The Chisago County Director stated that Governing Board members should disclose any conflicts of interest. However, he believes a disclosed conflict should not automatically require a member to abstain from voting, similar to County Board practice. County Commissioners routinely vote on items that benefit their districts because they are representing their constituents, not personally profiting. In the same way, Governing Board members vote to advance mental health services across the region, which may benefit multiple counties, including their own. Therefore, a vote should not be considered a conflict simply because a county may benefit. Abstention should be reserved for situations involving **personal gain**. Clarifying this understanding would help avoid the standstill that occurred in past meetings, when members felt they could not vote because every county receiving funding was viewed as a conflict.

○ **Item 2:** REVISED Data Collection and Invoice Requirements were distributed to the Board.

- **New Business:**
 - **Item 1:** AMHI/CSP Statewide Meeting Review
 - Behavioral Health e-Memo #25-35
 - DHS sent email guidance for appropriate use of AMHI grant funds and resent it this morning.
 - AMHI and CSP funds need to have SPMI diagnosis.
 - DHS provided uncertain guidance about copays and spenddowns, and said it could be our decision, with the understanding it may impact the client's income and benefit eligibility.
 - DHS praised the Region's uncompensated care policy for un-insured and under-insured persons, as it is aligned with Minnesota State Statute.

245.4661 ADULT MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE SERVICES.

 - **Subd. 2.** Program design and implementation.
 - **(5) utilize adult mental health initiative funding only after all other eligible funding sources have been applied.** Appropriations and all funds that are attributable to the operation of state-operated services under the control of the Direct Care and Treatment executive board are excluded unless appropriated specifically by the legislature for a purpose consistent with this section.
 - **All Uncompensated Care Requests must follow the below guidance:**
 - **Adult only (Age 18+)**
 - **Meet SPMI criteria, as defined by Minn. Stat. 245.462, Subd. 20, (c)**

- Be a resident of Region 7E.

Uncompensated Care Requests for services that are insurance billable shall follow the below guidance:

- Region 7E defines an uninsured adult as an adult without any form of health care coverage and has been denied or not eligible for Medical Assistance.

- Region 7E defines an underinsured adult as an adult with Medicare only or private insurance, with a service need that is not covered by their existing plan, and they are not eligible for Medical Assistance.

-Please note: Region 7E is unable to fund Medical Assistance copays or spenddowns, MinnesotaCare copays or premiums, Medicare copays or premiums, hospital level of care expenses, or care for incarcerated individuals.

○ **Item 2: Subcommittees/workgroups for 2026**

▪ **Current workgroups:**

- Bridges/Regional Housing Coordination – MLC and Isanti County
- Willow Grove- Chisago County

▪ **2026 Workgroups:**

- Data Collection Workgroup and include a couple providers.
 - The scoring sheet and funding application will be discussed in the Data Collection Workgroup.
 - Establish a meeting prior to the budget meeting to determine who does/doesn't need to present.
- Lakes and Pines Bridges/Regional Housing. Collaborate and communicate electronically between meetings. Continue monthly meetings but have more structured agendas.
- Crisis (quarterly at GB meetings). Recommendation to have a sub-group, which includes the provider, meeting every other month in the even months and work on specific issues to bring to the full board at the quarterly meetings. Agenda items for the subcommittee will be the RFP for 2027 and CMH preference.

○ **Item 3: AMHI Monitoring Visit Summary from 12/4/25**

▪ **DHS notes:**

- DHS noted attention to detail that is reflected in policies and procedures implemented, specifically the Regional Flex Fund and Uncompensated Care forms.
- Documentation for subcontractor monitoring process was well organized and thorough.
- DHS recommended focusing on ways to track outcomes in the future.
- Financial audit/reconciliation did not occur; DHS stated that ideally this would take place before the end of 2026, but capacity issues may prevent that from happening this cycle.
- Internal controls checklist was completed, and no deficits were identified.

▪ **DHS requested that we send out budget workbook/template that we use to track AMHI expenditures and monitor spending/funding.**

- DHS had specific follow up questions RE: RISE and the BRASS codes used for funding various materials/supplies such as software, office supplies, office space rental, etc.
- Feedback provided to DHS:
 - Request for technical assistance/more information on Open Meeting Law; DHS suggested Sierra Grandy as a potential resource. Shared the challenges it has presented, with current Board structure, for supervisors to meet as supervisors and group emails/voting between meetings.
 - Desire to see DHS liaisons return to AMHIs or be available to attend meetings. DHS stated that they are willing to attend special meetings or to provide guidance on a specific topic or issue.
 - Frustration/challenges presented RE: payor of last resort; we continue to work through as a Region.
- **Announcements/Updates:** (Upcoming events, deadlines, policy changes, etc.)
 - R7E AMHI Special Meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 12th, 2025, from 11am-1pm at Isanti County Health and Human Services, Conference Room A or via Microsoft Teams if necessary.
 - Mental Health Day on the Hill- 3/26/26
 - Pine's LAC always goes to Day on the Hill; is there any desire to create a region wide sign up and/or schedule transportation?
 - Pine's Mental Health Awareness Event
 - 5/21/26- Save the Date
- **Action Items for January's Agenda:**
 - Mobile Crisis RFP draft
 - Consumer Rep for 2026-2028
 - Bylaw review
- **Open Forum/Public Comment**
None
- **Adjournment**
MOTION: Ashley made a motion to adjourn, Stacy seconded. All ayes, motion carried.
Time adjourned: 11:36am

2026 Governing Board and Regional LAC Meeting Schedule

Governing Board Meetings: 9:00am – 12:00pm: 4th Monday each month except May and December

Regional LAC Meeting: 1:00-2:00pm – every other month as scheduled below

In Person at Isanti County Family Services, Conference Room A and virtual via Zoom

January 26 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting	July 27 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting
February 23	August 24
March 23 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting	September 28 - 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting
April 27	October 26
May 18 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting ONE WEEK EARLY	November 23 - 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting
June 22	December 21 GB ONE WEEK EARLY