

Region 7E Governing Board Meeting**MEETING MINUTES****July 27, 2026; 9:00am – 12:00 Noon**

Attendees:

Affiliation		Governing Board Members		Directors
Chisago County		Kelly Ihrke, 2026 Chair Jolene Thorsen		
Isanti County	X	Emily Hawkins, Fiscal Host & 2026 Vice Chair Alex Godeen		Jodi Donnay
Kanabec County		Katie Heacock	X	Chuck Hurd
Mille Lacs County	X	Jessica Andrich	Z	Char Kohlgraf
Pine County	Z X	Barb Schmidt Amy Tvedt		Becky Foss
Consumer Rep	X X	Stacy Johnstone Michelle Ochsendorf		
Region 7E Planner	X	Amanda Stevenson		

Other attendees: Marjorie McGowan

1. 9:04AM CALLED TO ORDER**2. ROLL CALL/QUOROM CONFIRMATION****3. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Agenda
- Additions to the Agenda
 - Uncompensated care request from Love the Journey
 - Regional housing request from Isanti County

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Stacy Johnstone: Approve the prior meeting minutes and the agenda as amended.	Jessica Andrich second	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES

- Stacy reported that the Chisago County labor strike had affected service coordination. Because the case managers assigned to the individuals she serves are from Chisago County, progress on several service-related activities had slowed or stopped.
Stacy continued meeting with the individuals on her caseload and maintaining contact while normal case-management activities were unavailable.
- Michelle- no update

5. 9:30AM ACTION ITEMS**A. Budget Review & Financial Actions****Budget Review**

- AMHI unallocated = \$57,770, this amount is expected to increase as additional program underspending is identified.
- Program underspending and planning
 - Recovery Innovations, a DHS approved training provider, was contacted regarding the possibility of bringing Certified Peer Specialist training to Region 7E.

- This would increase the number of qualified peer specialists in the Region.
- Support providers holding Housing Support agreements
- Strengthen the regional continuum of care
- If sufficient interest exists, the training may be possible before the end of 2026.
- The Board discussed establishing a system of reloadable laundry cards through Maytag laundromats. Locations were identified in Cambridge, North Branch, Princeton, Mora, and Pine City.
 - Cards could be distributed to counties.
 - A designated coordinator would request that funds be loaded onto individual cards.
 - Maytag would invoice the fiscal host.
 - Transportation to participating laundromats could remain a barrier.
 - The board discussed the need to confirm whether loading funds onto cards would meet DHS grant requirements and whether all funds would need to be used within the applicable grant year. The Board also discussed requesting year-end balances and limiting the amount loaded in advance.
- Additional Underspending
 - Certified Peer Specialist training lodging and mileage
 - Regional LAC Chair and county representative stipends and mileage
 - Administrative or meeting support
 - Growing Connections
 - Lakes and Pines
 - Transportation
 - Client flex funds for essential goods and services
- Overspending:
 - Regional housing fund, recommend allocating additional funds as flex fund requests considered at the meeting will increase the deficit
 - Rise housing is at 62% and is expected to reach its full allocation by September or October
 - The Mobile Crisis Services budget was reported as on target.
- Kanabec County expects to give notice in August which will leave underspending of approximately \$134,000 after outstanding invoices and contract wind-down expenses are paid. Chuck Hurd stated the Governing Board could move \$120K today.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Emily Hawkins to transfer \$30K from unallocated to BRASS 443-Regional Housing Subsidy/Flex Funds	Second by Michelle O.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Regional Flex Fund requests (exceeding \$1,000 or needing clarification):

Chisago County; household furnishings, Brass 443, for \$1,500 to purchase a complete set of furnishings for a one bedroom apartment. The individual would be permitted to retain the furnishings if they later moved.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Jessica Andrich motion to approve \$1,500 for household furnishings.	Second by Michelle O.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Isanti County; mortgage payment for two months in the amount of \$3,899.12, Brass 443. The individual has been hospitalized for mental health treatment, was participating voluntarily in a partial hospitalization program, and lost employment during

treatment. Staff successfully obtained the documentation necessary to make payment directly to the mortgage company. The Board discussed the individual’s plan to seek new employment after completing treatment. Possible employment-law concerns related to the termination were also being explored.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Michelle O. motion to approve \$3,899.12 for two months of mortgage assistance.	Barb Schmidt second.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Pine County; Furnishing new household -Bridging, beds, and moving services not to exceed \$3,000; Brass 443.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Jessica Aldrich motion to approve up to \$3,000 for new household furnishings and moving services.	Emily Hawkins second. Barb Schmidt abstained.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: did not vote In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Pine County; back rent of \$2,000, staying at a motel, paying \$300 per week. The total balance as of July 24 was \$2,909.86. The individual has waiver case management and is SPMI. Does not have mental health case management. The Board requested additional information regarding the plan for paying future hotel costs, transitioning from the hotel, the individual’s ability to contribute, and the long-term housing plan.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Michelle O. motion to approve assistance for the hotel rent expense.	No Second.	Motion failed for lack of a Second.

Isanti County, August rent and late fee of \$1,377. Brass 443. The individual is participating in mental health treatment and is expected to begin employment in September. There are children living in the home and assistance was requested to preserve the household’s housing until employment began.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Chuck Hurd motion to approve \$1,377 for August rent and late fee.	Jessica Andrich second.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Pine received a uncompensated care request for Brass 452, adult outpatient psychotherapy for an uninsured client from January 31 through December 31, 2026. The individuals Medical Assistance ended January 31, 2026, they had reapplied but remained uninsured and was unable to afford insurance premiums. The outstanding balance of \$2,125 was billed for 17 therapy hours after MA ended. Continued weekly psychotherapy was recommended and the request includes anticipated services through the end of 2026. The Board discussed whether the individual could contribute toward the cost and what the long term payment or insurance plan would be.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Emily Hawkins motion to approve \$5,125 uncompensated care request.	Jessica Andrich second.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: nay and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: Chuck Hurd: aye; Stacy: nay; Michelle: aye; Emily: aye; Barb: aye;

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
		Approved by votes of 5 in favor and 2 opposed.

The uncompensated care policy and request form remain under review by the work group. Until revisions are formally adopted, providers and counties should follow the policy and form currently published on the Region 7E website.

B. 10:00 AM Policy/ Program/ Operational/ Governance Actions, *if any*

Item: Consumer Representative Position Advertising Funds

- Allocate \$2,250 to advertise the position. Approximately \$2,000 was spent during the previous recruitment cycle and the increased amount is expected to account for possible cost increases.
- Begin advertising in September
- Allow eight weeks for applications
- Conduct interviews in November and early December
- The board reviewed the existing position description and application. The current Consumer Representatives agreed that the duties described were generally consistent with their experience.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Jessica Andrich moved to allocate up to \$2,250 to advertise the Consumer Rep position.	Emily Hawkins second.	Online: Char Kohlgraf: aye and Barb Schmidt: aye In person: All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

6. NON-ACTION ITEMS (Information / Discussion)

- Budget Meeting- Open Meeting Law
 - Emily Hawkins read the rules regarding the circumstances under which a public meeting may or must be closed. Closed meetings are generally limited to labor-negotiation strategy, certain protected or nonpublic data, attorney-client privileged discussions, preliminary discussions of certain allegations against individuals and certain real or personal property negotiations.
 - Based on the research presented, the Region 7E Budget meeting cannot be closed solely to review or discuss funding proposals. The Board reached agreement that the budget meeting should remain open and that funding decisions should be made during that meeting while the information and discussion are current.
 - The Board also discussed revising its proposal review process. When substantial changes are requested, the provider should be asked to revise and resubmit the proposal rather than being required to negotiate significant changes during the meeting. The Board would then review and vote on the revised proposal.
- DHS guidance email: AMH-TCM billing
 - The Board discussed recently issued DHS guidance regarding uncompensated Adult Mental Health Targeting Case Management billing. The guidance was understood to apply beginning July 1, 20-26, rather than requiring changes to second quarter reporting.
 - Counties should bill uncompensated AMHTCM using the published Medical Assistance monthly "hit rate."
 - Counties should not bill the AMHI using the changing hourly SEAGR rate.
 - The group interpreted "published rate" as the full publicly posted rate, although the DHS communication did not clearly distinguish between a full or partial rate.
 - The monthly rate applies regardless of whether a county provides a small or large number of service hours during the month.

- The monthly rate may benefit counties for lower intensity cases, and the hourly method may be more favorable during high intensity months. Over several months, the monthly rate may balance out peaks and lower intensity periods and simplify county billing and reporting.
- The SEAGR unit remains necessary within SSIS for the applicable service code. However, the board agreed that counties would not be asked to separately total and report hours to the Region unless DHS requires that information at a future date.
- **AMHI Legislative Reporting Survey- Due August 21st, 2026.** Attachments to the Agenda included:
 - Email: AMHI Legislative reporting survey due August 21
 - Video: AMHI legislative reporting survey instructions
 - Word document: AMHI_Legislative_Reporting_Survey_word
- DHS distributed a survey to help prepare the next AMHI legislative report. The Board stated that the existing MHIS system is outdated and does not provide reliable or useful data. The survey reporting period covered July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026.
 - **Transportation:** The Board determined that the transportation gap stayed the same during the previous year. Some transportation options have been added, but their reach is limited.
 - **Housing:** The Board determined that the housing gap had worsened.
 - Increased demand for housing assistance
 - Longer waiting lists for income-based housing
 - Rising rental costs
 - Continued need despite Region 7E investing more funding than ever in direct housing assistance
 - Regional population growth
 - **Psychiatric Inpatient and IRTS beds:** The Board determined that the lack of psychiatric inpatient and IRTS beds had worsened.
 - Individuals remaining in emergency departments for extended periods
 - Individuals remaining in jails or other inappropriate settings because the level of care needed was unavailable
 - Loss of providers and beds
 - Billing and regulatory difficulties affecting provider viability
 - Hospitals being less willing or able to admit patients
 - Reduced availability and quality of IRTS programming
 - Documentation and licensing requirements taking staff time away from direct services
 - The Board also directed that the survey describe how frequently changing, unclear, and inconsistent DHS rules create barriers to providing services, administering grants, and spending funds appropriately. The completed survey is to be submitted by the deadline of August 21 and a copy will be shared with the Board.
- **Consumer Rep Stipends.** The Board discussed which meetings qualify for Consumer Rep stipends. The existing position description provides:
 - A \$100 daily stipend for Governing Board and Regional or Local Advisory Council meetings, for up to eight hours in one day.
 - Mileage reimbursement for attending individual LAC meetings
 - Compensation for no more than five additional special meeting days annually
 - Consumer Reps reported generally submitting stipends for regular Governing Board meetings and budget meetings but not for every LAC or short workgroup meeting.

- The Board discussed whether subcommittee and workgroup meetings should qualify for a half day stipend, potentially \$50, mileage reimbursement, and an increased number of eligible special meeting days. Members emphasized that lack of compensation should not prevent Consumer Reps from participating or having their voices included.

The meeting was interrupted by unauthorized and obscene content displayed by an unidentified remote participant. The host abruptly ended the virtual meeting and the meeting adjourned.

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

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timing
Confirm with DHS and fiscal/audit staff whether the proposed reloadable laundry-card system is allowable and how year-end balances must be handled.	Amanda	Report at the August meeting
Obtain additional information from Maytag regarding invoicing, card balances, loading procedures, and year-end reporting.	Amanda	August meeting
Continue exploring the feasibility, cost, and regional interest in Certified Peer Specialist training through Recovery Innovations.	Amanda and Becky Foss	Future meeting
Submit ideas for eligible uses of anticipated underspending.	Board members / county representatives	As soon as possible
Continue drafting a short-term or one-time housing assistance policy.	Workgroup and Lakes and Pines	Future meeting
Obtain a long-term payment and housing plan for the Pine County hotel-arrears request and resubmit it if appropriate.	Pine County/Barb Schmidt and staff	Future meeting
Continue revising the uncompensated care policy and request form.	Uncompensated Care Workgroup	Future meeting
Prepare and begin advertising the Consumer Representative position using the approved allocation.	Amanda	Approximately September
Submit the DHS AMHI legislative reporting survey and share a copy with the Board.	Amanda	Deadline: August 21, 2026
Clarify stipend eligibility for subcommittee, workgroup, and special meetings and determine whether the Consumer Representative position description should be amended.	Governing Board	Future meeting
Provide official notice and final projected spending regarding the Med Management contract being wound down.	Kanabec County	August