

Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2025

Via Zoom

Board Members/Proxy in Attendance

Ryan Delaware

Ellen Braden

Mary Perez

Cmdr. Gerard Bartlett/Sgt. Tinney

Chief E. Jaramillo/Chief C. Ortiz

Dr. Nicole Duranceaux

Bernice Varela

Robert Salazar

Coty Maxwell

Dr. David Ley

Jane Garland

Mariela Ruiz-Angel

MHRAC Co-Chair

Health, Housing, Homelessness

UNM Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

APD Crisis Intervention Division

Albuquerque Fire Department

APD Behavioral Sciences Section

Crossroads for Women

Peer Support

APD Crisis Intervention Division

NM Solutions

NAMI

Georgetown Law

Board Members Absent

Paula Burton

Rachel Biggs

Dr. Wayne Lindstrom

Wendy Linebrink-Allison

Introduction to MHRAC

The Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) was created by the Court-Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA). We've been around since day one and focus on three areas: resources, and resources being available to access different things within the city that APD and first responders can use as they impact homelessness and mental health issues. We are also involved in training and policy; training is one area where we have had a tremendous impact, particularly on the training that is offered. Policies are one of those things where the MHRAC is involved with assisting in writing, approving, and recommending policy as it relates to the narrow focus; we think narrow, but sometimes it gets pretty wide-focused on how law enforcement interacts with those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Attendance of Board Members

Mary Perez took the roll call; twelve of the sixteen MHRAC Board Members were in attendance.

Welcome First-Time Guests

Crystal Salazar – With CBCS. Here to see how MHRAC collaborates with the community.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

1st Motion – Bernice Varela

2nd Motion – David Ley

All the board members approved the minutes from the August 2025 meeting.

Public Comment

None

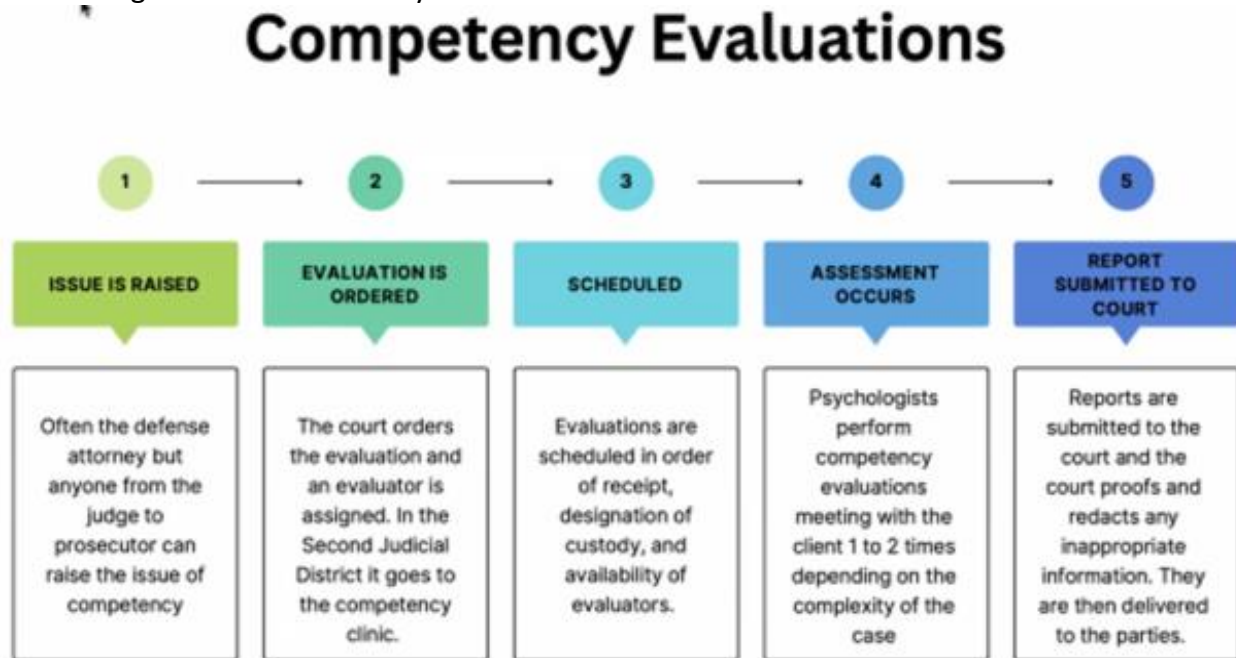
New Member Nomination (If any)

None

Competency and Diversion Plans, Dr. Bronwyn Neeser

Drneeser@gmail.com

- Dr. Bronwyn Neeser presented on competency evaluations, explaining the legal process and challenges in New Mexico's system



- Competency is a legal question, not a clinical one, focused on the defendant's ability to understand proceedings and assist in their defense
- NM has higher rates of people found not competent (60%) compared to the national average (20%)
- Challenges include a lack of restoration programs for lower-level offenses, the need for more evaluators, and data collection issues
- Recent HB8 legislation allows competency reports to be used for civil commitment, raising privacy concerns
- In Custody evaluations are prioritized, and outside of refusal to participate, occur timely
- Out-of-custody evaluations take substantially longer to schedule

Competency FAQs

Frequently asked questions or conflated facts

THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH EVALUATORS: PRIOR TO FY26 THERE WERE OVER 22 EVALUATORS PROVIDING SERVICES ACROSS THE STATE. FOLLOWING HB8 WE HAVE LOST 5 EVALUATORS OUT OF THE SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT. HOWEVER, BERNCO HAS FUNDED A BH CLINIC WITH 2 SALARIED EVALUATOR POSITIONS SO THIS SHOULD INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY SIGNIFICANTLY.

PEOPLE ARE LANGUISHING IN JAILS WAITING TO BE EVALUATED: ALL INCUSTODY EVALUATIONS ARE PRIORITIZED DUE TO CIVIL LIBERTIES. THESE EVALUATIONS OCCUR QUICKLY UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL REFUSES THE EVALUATION.

EVALUATIONS CAN BE USED FOR TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: PRIOR TO HB8 THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. CST EVALUATIONS WERE FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING COMPETENCY. NOW, IF EVALUATORS DETERMINE THE DEFENDANT NOT COMPETENT THEY ASSESS FOR CIVIL AND AOT CRITERIA AND PROVIDE TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND THESE REPORTS CAN BE USED FOR CIVIL PURPOSES.

HOW CAN SOMEONE BE MENTALLY ILL AND COMPETENT? COMPETENCY IS A LEGAL CONCEPT, IT CONSISTS OF 3 PRONGS AT THE STATE LEVEL A) DO YOU HAVE A FACTUAL AND RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS, B) CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR ATTORNEY WITH A RATIONAL DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING, AND C) COMPREHENDS THE REASON FOR PUNISHMENT AND CAN ASSIST IN THEIR OWN DEFENSE. IF THEY MEET THIS CRITERIA EVEN WITH MI THEY ARE COMPETENT.

Encampment Policy Discussion

- MHRAC can provide feedback on implementation/operationalization of policy, not policy itself
- Most recent version from December 2024 to be confirmed as current
- Topic to be discussed further at the upcoming subcommittee meeting
- Ellen will confirm if December 2024 is the most current version of the encampment policy and provide the latest version with MHRAC
- Subcommittee to discuss encampment policy implementation at 9/22 meeting (this meeting had to be cancelled the morning of)

Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) Update

None

Gateway Center and Health, Housing, & Homelessness Update, Ellen Braden

- Women's shelter expanding from 50 to 92 beds
- A new men's housing and treatment navigation program with 42 beds is being added
- Young adult program (18-24) also opening soon
- City Council approved funding for these expansions

APD, CIU, and BSS Update, Commander Bartlett and Sergeant Tinney

- Improved collaboration with DA's office after HB8 passage
- 568 referrals processed in August, with 112 assigned and 63 referred out
- Ongoing cadet training on mental health response
- Assisting with the National Guard 40-hour CIT
- RFP going out, BSS is looking for a therapist to work with APD Personnel

Training and Infoshare Sub-committee Update

- David was on vacation, but the committee was able to meet, and they had another productive meeting.

MHRAC Final Discussion

- Ryan to reach out to New Day and other juvenile shelter providers for future presentation at an MHRAC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 pm. Meeting Minutes taken by Mary Perez

The next MHRAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Recording of this MHRAC meeting is available upon request; email bvigil-gallegos@cabq.gov.