



Administrative Office of the Courts

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Three members named to the state's Behavioral Health Executive Committee

SANTA FE – Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Director Karl Reifsteck today appointed three distinguished New Mexicans to a newly created committee to coordinate behavioral health improvements across the state.

Named to the Behavioral Health Executive Committee are:

- Dr. Stacey Cox of Silver City, chief executive officer of the Center for Health Innovation-New Mexico Public Health Institute.
- Dr. Violette Cloud of Albuquerque, senior project associate with Policy Research Associates, Inc., and an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation
- Former state Sen. Gerald "Jerry" Ortiz y Pino of Albuquerque, a lifelong advocate for effective social service delivery for New Mexico's children and families

"Each of these individuals bring years of experience and valuable knowledge to the task ahead of improving how New Mexico responds to people struggling with behavioral health issues," said Reifsteck.

"Dr. Cox has a history of assisting communities to bridge gaps in behavioral health resources, particularly in rural areas," Reifsteck said. "Dr. Cloud possesses extensive technical and subject matter expertise in New Mexico's behavioral health and criminal justice systems, including competency restoration and sequential intercept model mapping. Sen. Ortiz y Pino has worked tirelessly to rebuild New Mexico's behavioral health system. With decades of experience as a legislator, social worker and program administrator, the senator is an ideal choice to guide the executive committee on behavioral health policy and structure that will work for all New Mexicans."

The Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act – Senate Bill 3 in this year's legislative session – established the executive committee to review and approve regional plans for delivering behavioral health services and overseeing the implementation and funding of those plans. The executive committee is made up of the secretary of the New Mexico Health Care Authority, the directors of the authority's Behavioral Services and Medical Assistance Divisions, Reifsteck and the AOC director's three appointees.

“I am excited to bring the weight of my experience and enthusiasm to building behavioral health services and solutions to New Mexicans in a way that is strategic, measurable and meaningful to people’s lives,” said Dr. Cox.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino said, “I’ve been working with a great many others in the state to slow the steady stream of individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders brought before the courts who need help, not punishment. The success of treatment courts and diversion projects now underway is heartening. Our challenge is to find ways and resources to ramp those efforts up to full scale and to explore moving from pilots to policies.”

Dr. Cloud said, “I am fully committed to supporting the purpose and long-term goals of the Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act. This initiative is the culmination of sustained efforts by state agencies, governing bodies, and community partners, and its passage signals a shared commitment to move beyond fragmented approaches and toward a unified strategy that prioritizes access, accountability, and long-term impact. I look forward to contributing to the development of regional plans that produce lasting, meaningful change for individuals, families, and communities across New Mexico.”

Dr. Cloud is a member of the New Mexico Supreme Court’s Commission on Mental Health and Competency. Since 2021, she has worked for Policy Research Associates, a Troy, N.Y.-based organization that provides training and technical assistance along with research and evaluations for projects in a range of issues, including behavioral health and criminal justice. She earned a law degree and a doctorate in psychology from the University of New Mexico.

Dr. Cox has operated her own consulting business for more than a decade, and served as CEO of the Public Health Institute since 2022. She previously has worked as the interim executive director of the National Center for Frontier Communities and the United Way of Southwestern New Mexico. She received a doctorate in psychology from Saybrook University in California.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino served in the Legislature from 2005 to 2024, including as chairman of the Senate Health and Public Affairs Committee. Before his election to the Senate, he worked for several social services organizations and administered governmental programs, including the state Protective Services Division in the Children, Youth and Families Department and the city of Albuquerque Department of Family and Community Services. He earned a master’s degree from the Tulane University School of Social Work.

			
AOC Director Karl Reifsteck	Dr. Stacey Cox	Dr. Violette Cloud	Former Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino