



J. Kevin Stitt  
Office of the Governor  
State of Oklahoma

March 5, 2025

Via Hand Delivery

The Honorable Cindy Byrd  
Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector  
2300 North Lincoln Boulevard, Room 123  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

**RE:** Audit request of Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Dear Auditor Byrd:

In response to troubling facts brought to light by Commissioner Allie Friesen, I hereby respectfully request a special audit of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) pursuant to the powers vested in me by Article VI, Section 8 of the Constitution and Section 212(C) of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

In a letter dated March 5, 2025, attached, Commissioner Friesen disclosed to me that the department's previous chief financial officer (CFO) had engaged in a sort of "shell game" to conceal ongoing mismanagement of the agency's funds. The letter acknowledges the seriousness of preliminary findings of an internal investigation that have "potential to significantly disrupt the delivery of services to Oklahomans if left unaddressed[.]" I share Commissioner Friesen's concerns.

Therefore, I am requesting a special investigative audit of the books and accounts of ODMHSAS that looks into the financial management of ODMHSAS over the past 5 years. Specifically, I request the audit investigate and address the concerns raised in Commissioner Friesen's March 5, 2025 letter including the potential misallocation of State appropriated funds within the behavioral health program of the State Medicaid Program.

I look forward to reviewing the findings of this special audit and appreciate the State Auditor and Inspector's assistance with enforcing the rule of law and safeguarding taxpayers' hard earned dollars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Kevin Stitt", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

J. Kevin Stitt  
Governor, State of Oklahoma



Governor Kevin J. Stitt

March 5, 2025

Governor Stitt,

As your appointed Commissioner leading the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, I write to you to report unfortunate and disappointing information that I and my staff have uncovered.

Beginning on December 6, 2024, I made several personnel changes to the leadership of the department, including the former CFO of over 10 years. This decision was made when I had barely a fraction of the information I do now. I then appointed an interim CFO who at my direction began an immediate review of the Department's finances. During this time staff was encouraged to bring forward their concerns if they had not done so, whether they be financial or otherwise – we must have full visibility of all issues to ensure comprehensive restoration of this Department.

On February 21, 2025, a staff member of the finance department brought forth concerns that they now felt authorized to disclose. This disclosure triggered an investigation into the specific concerns of the whistleblower. A few days later on February 26, the results of the investigation were preliminarily confirmed, and the Department began to escalate these findings to key executive and legislative stakeholders.

My staff has uncovered serious concerns regarding the allocation of State appropriated funds within the behavioral health program of the State Medicaid program. To wit, we have discovered that for at least the past five years the Department has a structural budget deficiency that I believe was intentionally created by the previous administration. We cannot fulfill our financial obligations under the State Medicaid program because this department has historically paid for prior years' debts with present years' money – a shell game, as it were.

Due to the seriousness of these preliminary findings and their potential to significantly disrupt the delivery of services to Oklahomans if left unaddressed, I am therefore requesting that you use your authority pursuant to 74 O.S. 212(C) to call upon



**ADDRESS**

2000 N Classen Blvd, Ste 2-600  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106



**PHONE**

1 (800) 522-9054



**WEBSITE**

[oklahoma.gov/odmhsas](http://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas)



OKLAHOMA  
Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse



## SERVICES WITHIN REACH

Allie Friesen | Commissioner

Kevin Stitt | Governor

the State Auditor and Inspector to examine the books and accounts of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

I am and will remain committed to the transparency and accountability that Oklahomans deserve and will work alongside the State Auditor and Inspector to deliver it.

Best regards,

Allie Friesen, Commissioner



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