

# **Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Tuesday, February 11, 2025, Approved**

## **Attendees:**

**Subcommittee Members Attending:** Amber Blankenship, Stephanie Bond, Candace Facemyer, Sam Hess, Judge Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (chair)

**Members Not Attending:** Cindy Hill, Tom Plymale

**ODCP Staff:** Justin Smith

**Marshall University Staff:** Rachel Bledsoe, Bradley McCoy

**Guest Speakers:** Deb Harris (Jobs and Hope), Jamie Oates (Transition Reentry Liaison Jobs and Hope), Dan McCawley (Recovery Subcommittee)

## **Opening:**

Stephanie Thornton (Chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Tuesday February 11, 2025, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve the January 2025 minutes. Amber Blankenship proposed a motion to approve January minutes, Judge Rowe seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or changes. The motion passed with all in favor, and none opposed. The purpose of this meeting was to allow the guest speakers from Jobs and Hope to talk about their reentry services and the Recovery Subcommittee chairs to talk about their family peer support specialist certification efforts.

## **Agenda Items:**

### **Guest Speakers: Deb Harris and Jamie Oates (Jobs and Hope, West Virginia Schools of Diversion & Transition)**

- Deb Harris spoke about the importance of Jobs and Hope successes. Jobs and Hope has several programs available. They can assist in soft skills training, career development, trade training, and even assist in obtaining high school equivalency degrees and certifications. They serve 13 adult facilities across West Virginia.
- Reentry liaisons with the School of Diversion and Transition shares case management with 4 transition agents located across the state. Transition agents must have communication with all agents and students about upcoming reentry plans, in order to assist in finding solutions to barriers.
- Jamie Oates (Reentry Liaison) spoke to the Subcommittee about his role in supporting clients towards successful reentry along with prioritizing and addressing their barriers.
- Jamie Oates stated he helps them with enrollment in educational components; but, also assists in skills such as resume building and life achievements. Educational components can be short

programs or career development classes such as literacy, digital education, and basic skills management.

- Jamie Oates stated the jails have differing needs because stays are shorter and some clients transition into other facilities. They ensure all clients/students have immediate access to a transition agent upon reentry.
- Individuals with misdemeanors are offered short classes as there is potential for weekly career development (soft short programs offered by Jobs and Hope.)
- The reentry liaisons' function is to assist in outlining and goal planning with students'/clients' priority needs. They want to help facilitate successful transitions and communicate with all agencies and students about resources to their barriers.

#### **Jobs and Hope Data:**

- Currently, they have initiated a program focused on helping students establish a pathway to obtain their driver's license as this is one of the primary barriers.
- Since starting the re-licensure program, they have reinstated 2,029 driver's licenses. Two of four (50%) of clients successfully obtained their license while in the facility.
- Since March 2023, Jobs and Hope has assisted in 620 total cases with 236 active cases. A total of 35 students/clients have transitioned out successfully.
- Common barriers clients/students face in reentry are housing, transportation, unpaid fines, and employment.

#### **Co-Chairs Dan McCawley and Amber Blankenship from the Recovery Subcommittee**

- The Recovery Subcommittee's focus is on the treatment and recovery ecosystem and how to best utilize support while creating sustainability.
- The Subcommittee has currently created a Universal Informed Consent available for all managed care organizations (MCOs). The document needs final approval with meetings facilitated by the Office of Drug Control Policy.
- Amber Blankenship and Dan McCawley provided the Courts Subcommittee with an overview of their efforts in establishing a family support peer specialist certification. This stemmed from families asking what they can do to support their loved ones with substance use disorder. A curriculum to train can be developed. The role would support family members and integrate cultural competence for Appalachia. The Recovery Subcommittee has examined neighboring states that have been successful in implementing this certification. SAMHSA has also released some core competencies that align with discussions already occurring in West Virginia. <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/family-peer-support-pep24-08-009.pdf>
- Stephanie Thornton noted that after this is approved in the state, the Courts Subcommittee should assess the availability of family peer support specialists in family treatment courts.

#### **Adjournment:**

Stephanie closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet again on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 10 a.m.