

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Recovery Community Subcommittee Wednesday, October 1, 2025, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Amber Blankenship (co-chair), Ardella Cottrill, Joe Deegan, Rajan Masih, Dan McCawley (co-chair),

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Brandy Blatt, Trenton Clem, Elly Donahue, Paul Shimer

Guests Attending: Mary Argento, Stephanie Thornton

Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) Staff: Olivia Fox, Dora Radford

SOR Regional Coordinators: Christina Adkins

Marshall University Staff: Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Amber Blankenship (co-chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Recovery Community Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, October 1, 2025, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. The co-chairs, Amber Blankenship and Dan McCawley approved the September meeting minutes. There was no further discussion. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss key performance indicator (KPI) updates and discuss the 2026 State Plan.

Agenda Items:

Key Performance Indicator Updates

- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** There was a meeting with Jessica Whitmore from the Office of Health Facility Licensure & Certification (OHFLAC) and they approved of the informed consent document. There will be an additional meeting with Stephanie Thornton about legal requirements regarding informed consent followed by another meeting with internal state agencies for legal review. The goal is to have an editable document for all intervention providers.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 2:** Provider education on informed consent will be a focus of next year's Plan. Project ECHO (Extensions for Community Healthcare Outcomes) does provider trainings so ODCP could try to get this curriculum added to provider training.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 3, 4, and 5:** These all require a finalization from OHFLAC.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** This KPI is complete because the Certification Board is using the nationally recognized curriculum and exam. It should be in place by November 1.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 2:** The group would like to invite Jaime Cantley and Chuck Mullins to a future meeting to discuss the certification.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 3:** Family treatment court already has champions so this would be a good place to start.
- **Goal 3, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** This is complete because Stephanie has attended the meetings.
- **Goal 3, Strategy 1, KPI 2:** This KPI may no longer be needed because a letter of support for funding is no longer necessary if the state is already prioritizing reentry funding.
- **Goal 3, Strategy 2, KPI 1:** This KPI was completed in Quarter 2.
- **Goal 3, Strategy 2, KPI 2:** This KPI was completed in Quarter 2.

- **Goal 3, Strategy 2, KPI 3 and 4:** The Subcommittee discussed how these KPIs regarding reentry funding may no longer be necessary now that the West Virginia First Foundation has released their target areas for the Momentum Initiative Grant and reentry was included. These KPIs have rolled over from a time when reentry was not prioritized and there were little to no funding sources. Dr. Stephen Loyd, however, still wants a written plan of how these stakeholders will work together, as stated on last month's meeting. The Subcommittee discussed how they could get all the reentry grantees from the West Virginia First Foundation together as a think tank. It is also important that whoever is awarded the needs assessment grant by the First Foundation is informed of all the existing reentry and recovery infrastructure.

Community Conversations

- There were 77 attendees at the Logan Community Conversation organized by Amber Blankenship. Stigma and transportation were brought up; however, the conversation was also very youth-focused. Dr. Stephen Loyd discussed with attendees how breaking the cycle by treating parents is a form of youth prevention by preventing additional trauma. Amber complimented the work of PRSSs who have worked with pregnant and parenting women in the area to lower rates of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) in their community.

2026 State Plan Planning

- The Subcommittee discussed focus areas they would like to be included in the 2026 State Plan. The chairs will meet to discuss potential KPIs and finalize them with the Subcommittee at their November meeting.
- The following were identified as priorities:
 - Identifying funding sources
 - Identifying champions from family treatment court.
 - Education around informed consent for providers.
 - General provider education of what a Peer Recovery Support Specialist is and their role in a system of care.
 - Peer supervision training and employment sustainability
 - Dan McCawley has a packet of evidence-based training that will be available in February 2026.
 - The difference between a case manager, counselor, and Peer Recovery Support Specialist should be clearly defined in every organization. Even people who currently work in this space need trained on the differences and tools to utilize each.

Additional Discussion

- The Subcommittee discussed a meeting with Jerod Thomas, the CEO of Kentucky's Shepherd's House. He contracts with local employers near his recovery residences so that they have first-chance employment with companies that are waiting for them. This is an interesting community-building model around sober living homes.

Adjournment

Amber closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The full Subcommittee will meet again on November 5, 2025, at 2:00 PM.