

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Youth Subcommittee Thursday, October 23, 2025, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Misty Atkins, Tahnee Bryant, Jo Anne McNemar, Amy Sadler, Elizabeth Shahan (co-chair)

Invited Subcommittee Members, Not Attending: Rebecca Crowder (co-chair), EJ Jenkins, Tiffany Pittman

Guests Attending: Jessica Whitmore

Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) Staff Attending: Rick Dempsey, Olivia Fox, Dr. Stephen Loyd, Jessica Smith

Marshall University Staff Attending: Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Elizabeth Shahan provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Youth Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Thursday, October 23, 2025, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. Co-chair Elizabeth Shahan approved the September 26, 2025 meeting minutes. There was no further discussion. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss planning for the 2026 State Plan

Agenda Items:

Community Conversations and the 2026 State Plan Planning

- The chairs, Elizabeth Shahan and Rebecca Crowder, will meet to develop draft key performance indicators (KPIs) for the 2026 State Plan. These will be finalized on the November meeting and then sent to ODCP for review and the Plan will be sent to the legislature in January. Additionally, there will be an in-person meeting of the Subcommittee chairs with Dr. Stephen Loyd on December 4, 2025 to present their sections of the 2026 State Plan.
- Elizabeth Shahan provided an overview of important topics she pulled from the 2025 Community Conversations Report.
- The Subcommittee discussed that public perception is that youth are sent out-of-state without proper vetting of the out-of-state programs. This means that there needs to be more public education to change this perception. West Virginia has a lot of facilities, but they are all full and have waiting lists. A solution discussed was more lower-level community resources that will keep youth from needing an inpatient level of care. People also do not realize that there are intensive outpatient programs.
- There are concerns about limited data that exists on youth and a lack of evidence-based practices for youth.
- Housing and transportation are a problem across the board.
- The state's healthcare and behavioral health workforce needs training on how to address youth specifically because their needs are different from adults' needs.

- There is a need for development of criteria and expected outcomes of youth treatment at a state level.
- The Prevention Subcommittee brought up that the legislature can request a study on a specific issue because they have done it in the past with domestic violence and assault. Youth treatment may be something to request from them if possible.
- There is an early diversion grant that already exists in the state where they are developing a youth Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). Kaitlyn Lucas at the Bureau for Behavioral Health is the contact for this. Maybe a KPI could be developed around informing providers about this work that is already being done.
- The Subcommittee discussed having a KPI around provider education on youth resources in general either through “conversations” or focus groups. They would also inform the Subcommittee about gaps seen by providers.
- Youth need a safe third space outside of the home/work that community centers used to provide but they require funding for their operations.
- School programs (Expanded School Mental Health) have existed where higher-level therapy is given by a local provider during the school day, but it requires an agreement between the county school system and the provider. There are complications with navigating this with state code. Tiffany Pittman is a state expert in this.
- “Zen booths” exist for privacy areas where children can participate in online therapy at schools, but they require funding.
- Next year, this Subcommittee would like a KPI around making their list of resources compiled in this year’s KPI into something digestible and accessible to the public with graphics. ODCP will have to partner with them to distribute this.

Additional Discussion

- Dr. Stephen Loyd discussed programs at the Elkins Mountain School (two locations) and the Fairmont Youth Academy that offer youth treatment, but they require the individual to have gotten in trouble and be placed there by a court system first. This only helps individuals who fall into a sweet spot of getting into trouble, but not so much trouble that they need more advanced care.

Adjournment:

Elizabeth closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Youth Subcommittee will meet again in November 2025. The date will be decided by the chairs soon since they are working to reschedule around the Thanksgiving holiday.