

# **Meeting Minutes**

## **Treatment, Health Systems, and Research Subcommittee of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment**

### **Thursday, November 20, 2025, Approved**

#### **Attendees:**

**Subcommittee Members Attending:** Shawna Chapman, Candace Facemyer, Jennifer Fields, Ken Fitzwater, Constance Harvey, Emalene Heaton, Keith King, Heidi Life, Anita Mallett, Tori Swain, Brienne Taylor, Josh Titlow, Lisa Zappia

**Invited Subcommittee Members Not Attending:** Rebecca Alley, Thomas Bailey, Constance Harvey, Dr. Garrett Moran, Amy Proffitt, Victoria Swain, Timothy Watson, Jessica Whitmore, Danielle Woods

**Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) Staff Attending:** Rick Dempsey, Olivia Fox

**Marshall University Staff Attending:** Deb Koester, Bradley McCoy

#### **Opening:**

Bradley McCoy provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Treatment, Health Systems, and Research Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Thursday, November 20, 2025, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. The purpose of the meeting was to reconvene the Subcommittee with new invited members and inform development of the 2026 State Plan.

#### **Agenda:**

##### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Bradley McCoy provided a brief introduction and explanation of his role at Marshall University, Division of Community Health as an academic partner to the Governor's Council. He is responsible for planning and hosting meetings so if people have questions related to that, they can reach out to him. Rick Dempsey provided a brief overview of the role of the Governor's Council and its Subcommittees. All attendees then provided brief introductions.

##### **Overview of Subcommittee History**

- Deb Koester, Director of the Division of Community Health at Marshall, provided a brief overview of the Subcommittee's history since its inception. Bradley McCoy had already shared a document of previous State Plans by email before the meeting for their review. The Treatment and Research Subcommittee previously combined with the Health Systems Subcommittee. Past Plan priorities have included but were not limited to naloxone distribution, Quick Response Team (QRT) development, collecting data, developing strategies for access to treatment, workforce development, peer recovery support specialist (PRSS) education, and medical assisted treatment (MAT) education. There have also consistently been Goals in the plan related to infectious disease (i.e., hepatitis C and HIV).

## Open Discussion about Subcommittee Future and 2026 State Plan

- Attendees discussed current work to identify areas for collaboration and avoid duplication in the 2026 State Plan.
- Shawna Chapman is working on a project to map all current substance use disorder treatment resources in WV with a timeline of completion for January 2026. Due to the changing nature of treatment resources, this will be a living document that is regularly updated. Deputy Secretary Christina Mullins is leading the project and will provide guidance on how this information will be disseminated. Others shared that the Cabell County Forum Steering Committee is trying to do the same with Bob Hansen. Shawna will follow up with them on this.
- Ken Fitzwater with Pretera reviewed the current State Plan and offered edits and priorities he sees for the future based on work currently being done at Pretera.
  - Contingency management and trust programs.
  - Utilization of mobile units.
  - A five-year workforce grant is being continued into its sixth year with sustainable funding from Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) providing vocational case management.
  - Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training is a priority. Dr. Koester shared that there are opportunities to partner with Chief Shawn Schwertfeger and the Law Enforcement Subcommittee on this as they are including it in their 2026 Goals and Strategies.
  - Trends showing increased meth use continue.
  - MAT stigma continues to be identified as a priority, with need for training specific to this. The Public Education Subcommittee, which provides stigma training for all Subcommittees, will be made aware of this.
  - Outreach coalitions addressing homelessness and their specific needs exist, especially in Huntington and Charleston.
  - Another priority is reentry in relation to the 1115 waiver in 2026.
  - Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) such as homelessness, reentry, employment, transportation, and digital literacy, continue to present significant challenges to be addressed.
  - Stigma is a consistent problem, even in the healthcare community as well as among corrections and courts. There are opportunities to partner with Dr. Lyn O'Connell and the Public Education Subcommittee on this.
  - Attention to the anticipated increases in uninsured and underinsured individuals with anticipated policy changes requires attention.
  - Lack of consistency in the implementation of QRTs in counties exists. There is opportunity to consider curriculum development and a standardized approach for optimal outcomes.
  - Workforce retention among the behavioral health workforce.
- Jennifer Fields discussed stigma in the OTP setting, the importance of offering all treatment options as choices among individuals, and promotion of resource fairs and panels at meetings/conferences.
- Candace Facemyer discussed Methadone being the most researched form of MAT and continuing to be stigmatized. In addition, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's (SAMHSA's) guidelines for take-home medications are very structured and can create barriers, especially for those returning to the workforce for example. She also emphasized the need to utilize available data.
- Keith King provided an update on the 1116 waiver and what will be implemented in January and July 2026 related to PRSSs.
- Dr. Koester will develop the first draft of the 2026 Plan for the Treatment Subcommittee and send out prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. Bradley and Deb will accept suggestions and edits through the first week of December. The draft document will also be presented on December 4<sup>th</sup> at an in-person meeting of Subcommittee Chairs, Dr. Loyd, and ODCP.

**Adjournment:**

Rick Dempsey closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance.  
The Subcommittee will schedule a meeting date for the beginning of December by email.