

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Tuesday, January 13, 2026, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Candace Facemyer, Coty Long, Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Amber Blankenship, Stephanie Bond, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Lori Lynch, Judge Jim Rowe, Tom Plymale

Guests Attending: John Bess

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

State Opioid Response (SOR) Staff Attending: Gwyn McGee

State Opioid Response (SOR) Regional Coordinators Attending: Christina Adkins, Barbie Masih, Jill Poe

Marshall University Staff Attending: Bradley McCoy

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, January 13, 2026, and was conducted by Google Meet conference. Stephanie Thornton approved the December 9, 2025 meeting minutes with the correction of "Medicare" to "Medicaid" and the correction of "sober living houses" to "recovery residences." The purpose of this meeting was to discuss implementation of the 2026 State Plan.

Agenda Items:

2026 State Plan

- Bradley McCoy provided an overview of the 2026 State Plan approval process. The Plan is still under review by the Governor's Council and Governor's office but for the purposes of the January meetings, Subcommittees will work from the most current version.
- Dr. Stephen Loyd discussed reentry as a top priority that will be addressed under this Subcommittee. Dr. Loyd will meet with Bob Hansen later this week to discuss this as well. He also discussed the need for synergy with funding bodies such as the West Virginia First Foundation.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1:** Stephanie Thornton is mapping reentry services. She will rely on Amber Blankenship with the REACH Initiative for contacts of those doing reentry work. The Subcommittee will look at overlap and identify areas of potential expansion.
- Stephanie Thornton continued to provide an overview of all Goal areas in the 2026 Plan including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and case management. She also provided an overview of historical Plan goals such as the Subcommittee's work in prison and jail naloxone saturation and investigating access to injectables such as SUBLOCADE.

- The Subcommittee would like to support the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to educate about the 1115 waiver and the continuity of care.
- The variation of regional jail release dates and capturing all types of parole can make it difficult to ensure a warm handoff but DCR has worked towards it in all case situations including out-of-state placements.
- DCR's reentry plans start on day one of incarceration because those incarcerated have access to resources on their tablets. Reentry coordinators work more with them upon six months prior to their release date.
- Stephanie Thornton is connecting Dr. Stephen Loyd with Dr. Kyle Miller at Community Care. They have three hub locations providing addiction services and he wants to work more closely with DCR to provide a continuity of care. They will identify a path for this in the future.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** Stephanie is reaching out to connections in Charleston about Police and Peers and reaching out to Lata Menon about the Embedded Peer Program.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 2:** Stephanie is inviting Kathy Szafran to speak at a spring meeting about ACEs.
- John Bess – DCR Program Manager, joining by proxy for Lori Lynch
 - John discussed vital records needs and barriers. In-state birth certificates are common and easy to obtain but out-of-state birth certificates are expensive and difficult to find contacts for since all states manage them differently. It costs case managers a significant amount of time. They have also had facilities pay for the certificate and the incarcerated person pays them back with in-facility employment.
 - The Subcommittee discussed the high rate of inmates who refuse help in obtaining a state identification (ID) or driver's license. DCR has recently started collecting reasons for refusal to better understand this issue. They will also look at the ratio of those entering carceral settings with a driver's license because it may be that many do not have it to begin with and would not need to renew it. The state generally has a low ratio of people with driver's licenses, and the Subcommittee discussed reasons for this such as an aging population and the high cost. Facilities also offer classes to reduce fines to get their license back.

Subcommittee Membership

- Coty Long is a Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS) who works with drug court. He will continue participating as a Subcommittee member.

Additional Discussion

- Family treatment courts still have significant funding needs.

Adjournment:

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 10:00 AM.