

Meeting Minutes of the Full Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Wednesday, March 18, 2026, Approved

Attendees:

Council Members: Dr. James Berry, Dr. Michael Kilkenny, Dr. Stefan Maxwell, Dr. Garrett Moran, Dr. Lyn O'Connell, Chief Shawn Schwertfeger, Secretary Arvin Singh

Other Attendees: Shawna Chapman, Leah Cook, Rebecca Crowder, Olivia Fox, Bob Hansen, Deb Harris, Stephanie Hayes, William King, Dan McCawley, Kyle Miller, Dr. Lauren Miller, Christena Ross, Gail Swarm, Stephanie Thornton

West Virginia Department of Human Services: Acting Secretary Christina Mullins, Alex Alston

West Virginia Office of Drug Control Policy: Dr. Stephen Loyd, Jessica Smith

Marshall University: Dr. Deb Koester, Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Christina Mullins provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment. The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 3:02 PM and was conducted by Google Meet conference.

Agenda Items:

Approval of November 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Meeting minutes for November 19, 2025 were sent out via email to the Council prior to this meeting. Secretary Arvin Singh made a motion to approve the minutes. There was no further discussion, and the meeting minutes were approved with all in favor and none opposed.

Approval of the 2025 State Plan Quarter 3 Progress Report and 2025 State Plan Quarter 4 Progress Report

- Both reports were sent out via email to the Council prior to this meeting. Dr. Stefan Maxwell made a motion to approve the minutes. There was no further discussion, and both quarterly reports were approved with all in favor and none opposed.

Prevention Subcommittee Spotlight – Stephanie Hayes (Co-chair)

- Stephanie Hayes provided the following 2025 accomplishments and updates on behalf of the Prevention Subcommittee:

Accomplishments

- Coalitions have been trained on the Community Readiness Assessment Model.
- The Marshall University Center of Excellence has created a data dashboard for communities, and it can be found at <https://mucenterofexcellence.org/data-dashboard/>.
- The Subcommittee surveyed schools with over 1,400 responses.
- The Subcommittee hosted a variety of sessions to work on reducing youth access to alcohol, tobacco, and other substances. This included Prevention Day at the legislature on April 2, 2025 with 368 people registered.

- The Subcommittee developed the youth pipeline into prevention-related fields.

Barriers

- Barriers have stemmed from funding cuts and a lack of understanding around primary prevention. However, the potential usage of Juul settlement funds for prevention is promising.
- The Prevention Subcommittee's 2026 State Plan focuses on the following:
 - Continued learning and awareness events such as: Share the Vision, Pre-sessions for Prevention Day, Prevention Day at the Legislature, Prevention Ethics and others.
 - Developing and implementing standardized, evidence-based training guidance packages related to substance use, body safety, and suicide prevention for schools and community partners statewide.
 - Focusing on data to create a comprehensive statewide prevention baseline.
 - Increasing the number of youth actively engaged in youth-led and/or community coalitions.
 - Increasing training with providers and pharmacists on opioids and other controlled substances.
 - Strengthening West Virginia's prevention workforce.
- Council discussion related to Prevention included:
 - Dr. Stephen Loyd discussed evidence-based and student-led prevention programs that he learned about at the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conference in Washington DC.
 - Lyn O'Connell shared that West Virginia PRIDE survey data will be available for sharing as early as next month.

Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Spotlight – Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

- Stephanie Thornton shared the following 2025 accomplishments of the Courts & Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee:

Accomplishments

- The Subcommittee identified barriers to Naloxone access. A Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) policy update effective May 2025 ensured comprehensive Naloxone availability for individuals upon release without them having to ask for it.
- In collaboration with the Youth Subcommittee, they met with Aetna Better Health of WV to review findings and recommendations from their youth substance use disorder provider survey.
- The Subcommittee connected ODCP with the West Virginia Behavioral Healthcare Provider Association to increase awareness and completion by providers of the HEAL bed list.
- The Subcommittee organized and distributed lists of Medicaid-funded, residential treatment programs by ASAM level, gender, and special populations.
- In collaboration with the Recovery Subcommittee, the Subcommittee advocated for the establishment of a Family Peer Support Specialist credential with the certification board.
- The Subcommittee discussed how to spread awareness among mothers using drugs that they will not be criminalized while seeking prenatal care with the Public Education Subcommittee and the Pregnant and Parenting Women Subcommittee.

- The Subcommittee provided the DCR Medical Director and Wexford Health with a statewide list of obstetric providers (from the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership, Drug-Free Moms and Babies Program) to support continuity of care and reduce stigma for returning pregnant citizens.

Barriers

- Barriers listed included gaps in youth substance use disorder treatment availability, lack of funding for family treatment courts, and the finalization of their social determinants of health checklist.

The Courts Subcommittee 2026 State Plan focuses on the following:

- Assessing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) tests and resilience levels among justice-involved adults with substance use disorder to guide provider training and treatment approaches.
- Collaborating with the Law Enforcement Subcommittee to analyze effective Embedded Peer and Police & Peers models and supporting statewide replication.
- Identifying and addressing gaps in medication access for (including Medication for Opioid Use Disorder) for citizens returning from carceral settings.
- Improving pathways for returning citizens to obtain State IDs.
- Mapping West Virginia’s reentry service providers—funding sources, services offered, geographic reach, training capacity, and long-term sustainability.

Council discussion related to the Courts Subcommittee included:

- A family treatment court conference is scheduled for next week.
- A new bill focusing on carceral settings issuing IDs upon leaving will be introduced during the first interim session.
- First Choice Services is working with Dr. Lyn O’Connell at Marshall University to provide county-specific reports on Sequential Intercept Mapping and identifying gaps.
- West Virginia providers are being trained on collecting social determinants of health.

2026 State Plan (Dr. Deb Koester)

- Dr. Koester provided an overview of the 2026 State Plan. There are 28 Goals, 50 Strategies, and 136 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Quarter 1 Progress Report is being finalized by Subcommittees in March. Community Conversation planning for late summer/early fall is already in its early stages.

Guest Speaker – Dr. Garrett Moran (Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Playbook)

- Dr. Garrett Moran shared his work from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Medications for the updated Opioid Use Disorder Playbook.
- The original playbook was published in 2019 with a revised version published in 2025.
- The purpose of the playbook is to be a practical guide for delivering medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in primary and ambulatory care settings. includes up to date guidance, tools, resources, and examples for effective MOUD implementation. It highlights proven strategies and ways to overcome common barriers to MOUD treatment. The playbook also emphasizes lifesaving, low-threshold, person-centered care.
- The revised version acknowledges shifts in drug use (from heroin to polysubstance use and stimulants) as well as shifts in medications used for treatment. The literature continues to be monitored with feedback and evaluation from the first version implemented in the publication of the newest.

- There is a wide intended audience for the playbook including:
 - Management, clinical, and other staff at a wide range of primary care settings
 - Smaller independent practices
 - Community health clinics like Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
 - Practices affiliated with larger health care systems
 - Providers who are new to prescribing medications for opioid use disorder (OUD)
 - Experienced providers who already provide medications for OUD
- The playbook is 180 pages in length and compiles information from approximately 10,000 articles.
- The website has an interactive design with flexible entry points. It is organized by key MOUD implementation domains.
- The website has the following modules:
 - Quick Start Guide
 - Principles of Person-Centered OUD Treatment
 - Pre-Implementation Planning
 - Training Providers and Staff
 - Implement Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder
 - Monitor Patient Outcomes
 - Avoiding Common Pitfalls
- The Quick Start Guide can be downloaded separately.
- User-testing is encouraging upcoming structural changes and training videos.
- The playbook can be found at the following link:
<https://integrationacademy.ahrq.gov/products/playbooks/moud-playbook>

Additional Discussion:

- None.

Adjournment:

Acting Secretary Christina Mullins closed the meeting at 4:35 PM by thanking all attendees for their attendance and participation. The Governor's Council will meet again on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 3:00 PM.