

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Prevention Subcommittee Friday, April 24, 2025, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Tahnee Bryant, Tammy Collins, Lori Garrett-Bumba, Katelyn Fowler, Stephanie Hayes (co-chair), Nancy Hoffman, Jenny Lancaster, Elizabeth Shahan

Subcommittee Members Not Attending: Jaime Cantley, Greg Puckett, Gig Robinson, Amy Saunders (co-chair)

Guests Attending: Teresa Mills, Sarah Sanders, Jeremy Truman

Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) Staff Attending: None

State Opioid Response (SOR) Staff Attending: Renee Harris

State Opioid Response (SOR) Regional Coordinators Attending: Barbra Masih, Raj Masih

Marshall University Staff Attending: Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Stephanie Hayes provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Prevention Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Friday, April 24, 2026 and was conducted by Google Meet conference. Stephanie Hayes approved the March 19, 2026 meeting minutes and there was no further discussion. The purpose of this meeting was for Sarah Sanders and Raj Masih to present overdose data.

Agenda Items:

Guest Speaker – Sarah Sanders (Bureau for Behavioral Health Epidemiologist)

- Sarah Sanders provided some background on her approach to data presentations. Information given is dependent on the audience's background and previous knowledge so presentations are tailored to those who work in prevention science versus the general population. Other factors include internal versus external data reports, information complexity, context, purpose, and looking at trend data over time versus one specific moment in time.
- For West Virginia, there were 212 fatal overdoses in 2001, and 1,537 fatal overdoses in 2021. Preliminary analyses show 820 fatal overdoses in 2024. This gradual decline is attributed to the impact of naloxone, changing toxicology, consequences of prevention, and mediation strategies.
- Adult data is used as a proxy for youth data.
- Sarah provided graphics with breakdowns of overdoses by substance. Something of note is the interaction between heroin overdoses decreasing with meth overdoses increasing or staying the same.
- Sarah discussed risk factors versus protective factors for substance use disorder (SUD) and sexual violence/abusive intimate relationships. These have a complex nature in that one will lead to the other and it can look like a "chicken or the egg" situation when trying to decipher the issue.
- As a trend, higher education and more income results in higher prevalence of drinking alcohol and as an inverse, lower education and less incoming results in higher prevalence of cigarette smoking and higher risk of an overdose.

- The Subcommittee discussed the context around this demographic data such as the high rates of cannabis use by those who have never been married may be because they are usually younger.
- The Subcommittee discussed the prevalence of young people with immediate family members experiencing an overdose in West Virginia.
- The most recent data reflects that 50% of high schoolers have used a vape, 13% use it frequently, and 10% use it daily.
- Sarah presented comparisons of West Virginia data to the national average for variables such as education level, income, disability, and unemployment and the Subcommittee discussed these in relation to SUD and prevention.
- The presentation is not available for dissemination yet but will be soon and will be shared with the Subcommittee.

Guest Speaker – Raj Masih (State Opioid Response Regional Coordinator)

- The role of the SOR Regional Coordinators is to track overdoses as they are happening with raw data and utilize outreach teams. They also use a predictive model with regression analysis to send spike alerts.
- Raj Masih compiled 2025 Youth Overdoses in West Virginia using Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Data. He created a PowerPoint that broke overdoses down by region and then by county. Overdoses were additionally broken down by age range of 12-14 years old, 15-18 years old, and the total number of youth overdoses.
- Teams follow up with youth overdoses to understand qualitative elements. For example, binge drinking at a high school football game would be addressed very differently from a heroin overdose.
- Next steps would be for the Subcommittee to look at the number of youth in each county's population so there is additional context for the counties with highest numbers of overdoses.
- Additionally, youth overdoses often involve different substances than adults as they prefer cannabis, cough syrup, and alcohol. The substances used make it difficult to apply for specific funding streams that only target opioid prevention.

Additional Discussion

- The Share the Vision Conference was held on April 14-16, 2026, in Huntington, West Virginia. Jenny Lancaster is producing final numbers and compiling evaluations now and they will be available soon.
- On June 22, 2026, there will be a Prevention Ethics training at Stonewall Resort. Registration is open now.
- Katelyn Fowler is sending the youth asset mapping survey out next week. The survey is for any program in the state working with youth and prevention. The survey will collect baseline information and assess their training needs for the future.
- The West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services (WVFRIS) is producing videos explaining digital sexual extortion. Nancy Hoffman will inform the Subcommittee about upcoming webinars in June.

Adjournment:

Stephanie Hayes closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet again on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 9:00 AM.