

# **Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Monday, August 4, 2025, Approved**

## **Attendees:**

**Subcommittee Members Attending:** Stephanie Bond, Judge Jim Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

**Subcommittee Members Not Attending:** Amber Blankenship, Candace Facemyer, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Patrick Mirandy, Tom Plymale

**Guests Attending:** Lyn O'Connell

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

**SOR Regional Coordinators:** Jessica Martinez, Jill Poe, Jamie Styons

**Marshall University Staff:** Bradley McCoy

## **Opening:**

Stephanne 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 Monday August 4, 2025, and was conducted by Zoom conference. The June 3, 2025 and July 8, 2025 meeting minutes were approved via email on July 30, 2025. A motion was provided by Judge Jim Rowe by email, which was seconded by Amber Blankenship. A total of three Subcommittee members replied to support the motion. With no further comments/discussion by email, the meetings were approved with all in favor and none opposed. The purpose of this meeting was to invite Dr. Lyn O'Connell to speak about stigma reduction campaigns and resources. The Subcommittee also discussed their 2025 key performance indicator (KPI) status and progress.

## **Agenda Items:**

### **Meeting Minutes**

- Bradley McCoy informed the group about the new meeting minutes approval process. If a quorum is not present at the meeting, meeting minutes will be shared via email, and a quorum of Subcommittee members will respond with a motion, a second to the motion, and a majority of Subcommittee members responding to support the motion and/or offer corrections to the minutes. All previous meeting minutes for the calendar year 2025 have been approved.

### **Guest Speaker – Dr. Lyn O'Connell (Public Education Subcommittee Chair)**

- The Subcommittee invited the Public Education Subcommittee Chair, Lyn O'Connell, to discuss concerns of pregnant women not seeking care due to fear of a criminal charge for substance use during pregnancy. West Virginia does not criminally charge those who use substances during pregnancy and the Subcommittee discussed methods to inform the public about it. Lyn O'Connell discussed existing partnerships with the Pregnant and Parenting Women Subcommittee and Drug Free Moms and Babies (DFMB).
- Ongoing efforts to address informing the public on this issue included:

- Cabell County is currently working to put signage in provider offices about this, and it is in the process of being approved by state communications.
- The medical director for the state's jails is aware of obstetricians who work with moms with substance use disorder (SUD).
- When materials have been approved for dissemination at provider offices, Lyn will share them with the Courts Subcommittee as well to share with courts/jails. Stephanie Bond will share materials with judges, day report centers, and probation offices. Dr. Stephen Loyd asked to have all this information and materials provided to him to share when he speaks to judges next.
- The Center for Substance Abuse and Treatment (CSAT) has research published on the outcomes of women with SUD seeking prenatal care.
- Stephanie Thornton shared the following link about state policies on substance use during pregnancy that states "in states where SUD during pregnancy is criminalized, there is a 45% increase in overdose deaths." <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/state-policies-substance-use-pregnancy>
- The Subcommittee discussed how the message above needs to be marketed to communities that the state does not criminally charge pregnant women using illicit substances because some do not seek prenatal care at all and therefore would not make it into a provider office to get the information. Dr. Loyd will make this a talking point at the upcoming Community Conversations.
- The Public Education Subcommittee's stigma reduction campaign contains interview materials of success stories which include at least one mother. They can be found at the following link: <https://stigmafreewv.org/stigma-videos/> Project Hope also has at least three mothers who have done press about their success stories so that existing media can be shared as well.
- The Public Education Subcommittee will discuss the dissemination of materials on this at their August meeting.
- The Subcommittee discussed funding for family treatment courts. State Opioid Response (SOR) funding will end in September. Dr. Loyd and the Subcommittee are reaching out to the West Virginia First Foundation about continued funding.

### **Community Conversations**

- Bradley McCoy provided an overview of the Town Hall Meetings (using the new term of Community Conversations this year) and the schedule. The virtual format will be the same as in previous years with the exception that a breakout group will be added for "general discussion." The three virtual and four-in-person Community Conversations are scheduled for:
  - Wednesday August 27th 10:00-12:00 (virtual)
  - Wednesday September 3rd 1:00-3:00 (virtual)
  - Friday September 5th 1:00-3:00 (virtual)
  - Tuesday September 9th 3:45-5:15 (in person, Charleston, WV)
  - Thursday September 11th 6:00-8:00 (in person, Logan, WV)
  - Monday September 15th 4:00-6:00 (in person, Moorefield, WV)
  - Tuesday September 16th (4:00-6:00) (in person, Wheeling (WV)
- Bradley shared the link for volunteers/participants to register: <https://helpandhopewv.org/odcp/>

**General Key Performance Indicator Updates**

- The West Virginia Addiction Credentialing Board is formalizing the process for a family peer recovery support specialist using other states' existing models for insight.
- Justin Smith is connecting with Brad Story at the West Virginia Behavioral Healthcare Providers Association to make sure his living document of open treatment beds is reaching all those that it needs to. It can be found on the ODCP website at:  
[https://tableau.dhhr.wv.gov/views/SUDBedAvailability/SUD\\_dash?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y](https://tableau.dhhr.wv.gov/views/SUDBedAvailability/SUD_dash?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y)
- After ODCP publishes their updated treatment and recovery map in September, the Courts Subcommittee will share it with judges.
- Stephanie Thornton will work with the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership to ensure that access to care is advertised in carceral settings.

**Adjournment:**

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet on Thursday, September 4 at 10:00 AM.