

DRAFT MINUTES

Opioid Crisis Recovery Funds Advisory Committee - Kickoff Meeting
June 28, 2021 @ 2:00PM

In attendance:

Members: Ashley Alise Absmeier-Koppenhafer, Wendy Andrade, Cristen Bates, Joshua Blum, Kevin Bommer, Lesley Brooks, JC Carrica, George Dingfelder, Jamie FitzSimons, Jessie Garcia, Andres Guerrera, Sue Hansen, Curtis Hayes, Chase Kohne, Jeffry Kuhr, Dmitry Kunin, James Mobley, Alonzo Payne, Armand Potestio, Connie Price, Jim Schoettler, Julie Shimonek (joined for the 2nd half), Brad Sjorstrom, Judy Solano, Robert Valuck, Marc Condojani for Robert Werthwein. Absent: Jamie FitzSimons.

Attendees from the Department of Law: Attorney General Phil Weiser, Matt Baca, Gina Cannan, Amy Berkowitz Caplan, John Feeney- Coyle, Kurt Morrison and Heidi Williams.

Additional Attendees: Jose Esquibel.

Advisory Committee Orientation:

Overview of the Attorney General's Office including mission and vision.

Review of State laws impacting boards including Colorado's Open Meeting Law, Colorado Ethics Law, Colorado Open Records Act and Americans with Disability Act.

Member and staff responsibilities

Overall mission of the Advisory Committee

Further Discussion:

Clarification on rules around Colorado Open Meeting Laws by Cristen Bates: Gina Cannan responded that it is ok to speak with someone such as supervisor about content of a meeting without concern of violating the open meeting law. The concern is with two or more committee members.

Question about the McKinsey funds from Brad Sjorstrom. Attorney General Weiser confirmed the funding is in hand but there is not a plan to spend the funds until an agreement with LGs has been reached with the MOU. Heidi Williams and Attorney General Weiser clarified how much funding is available.

Brad Sjorstrom also asked about the Settlement funds and the time-period for use and the option of banking the funds. John Feeney-Cole clarified the timeline of the funding and that no specific stipulations state when the funds must be spent.

Chief Dingfelder asked about joining regions to create something like an inpatient facility. Attorney General Weiser suggested the regions form as larger regions prior to the signing of the MOU.

Commissioner Wendy Andrade addressed some of the reasons behind separate regions.

Discussion on importance of matching funds with other available funding via Federal or State funds.

The following minutes include the chat and associated discussion:

Dr. Leslie Brooks wrote: “Financially supported internships and trainings would be a worthy area for funding. Many of the persons that we want to recruit for these careers (from historically marginalized communities and diverse backgrounds, abilities, and beliefs) are often challenged by the need to complete an internship but also need to earn a salary of some sort....”

Judy Solano added to the chat: “To add to Dr. Brooks comment. The need for mandated culturally trained workforce to include the methods and philosophies of harm reduction approaches is virtually nonexistent in academic programs for all healthcare professionals to include the clinical programs.”

Discussion: There was significant discussion on the topic with enthusiasm around supporting paid internships and looking at licensure requirements. Creating a different system of approach to recruit a culturally relevant workforce.

Christen Bates wrote into the chat: “Recruiting from within rural areas for job placement and affordability.” Discussion on this topic was met with agreement.

Attorney General Weiser stressed the Open-Source model.

Marc Condonjani added to the chat “OBH continues to fund training to help those who want to begin MAT. But this is through Federal Opioid Response grant funding that isn't guaranteed to continue.”

Jose Esquibel noted that Steve Holloway at CDPHE is working in this field. He is looking at ways to incentivize the diverse pool of candidates. Funding to help the pipeline.

Dr. Blum wrote into the chat: “Funding for peers is also a huge area of need/opportunity. Actively partnering with mutual help organizations could extend impact as well. Embark Reco Colorado in CO Springs can be a model organization for this work.”

The problem of working for free for internships was discussed.

Jessie Garcia noted the struggle to find resources for high school graduates to enter the mental health field.

Dr. Brooks shared about the complications around CAC/CAS and how do we get the trainers

Ashley Alise Absmeier-Koppenhafer wrote into the chat “CO AHEC through CU Anschutz Medical Campus would also be a great resource as their priority is to recruit, train and retain health care professionals in underserved areas. The AHEC in the SLV use to be very robust but has declined over the years secondary to funding.”

Heidi Williams noted looking at licensing regulatory requirements and changing the ways we meet supervision needs.

Attorney General Weiser highlighted the Opioid Response Unit relationship with Office of Behavioral Health and Narcan partnerships in general.

Heidi Williams pointed out that we want to ensure we are not duplicating services and using the funds well.

Andres Guerrero discussed the impact he has had working with Universities with first generation college students and discussing career opportunities.

JC Carrica suggested the group use Google Docs or Basecamp to share resources. The Attorney General clarified that this would violate State meeting laws. The Opioid Response Unit will collect info and share it out to the Advisory Committee.

Jose Esquibel suggested utilizing resources such as the Opioid funding guide put out by John Hopkins. Heidi Williams will share this and other resources with the committee.

The meeting was concluded at 3:25PM