

# Opioid Crisis Recovery Funds Advisory Committee Meeting

March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Meeting Minutes

**Members:** Attorney General Phil Weiser, Cristen Bates, James Mobley, Gordon McLaughlin, Andres Guerrero, Rob Valuck, Jude Solano, Dr. Morgan Medlock, Ashley Koppenhafer, Sue Hansen, Julie Shimonek, Dmitry Kunin, Jeff Kuhr, Jim Schoettler, Wendy Buxton-Andrade, Curt Hayes, Kevin Bommer

**Department of Law Staff:** Heidi Williams, Jamie Feld, Jack Patterson

**Guests:** Jose Esquibel, Matt Pfeifer

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### ***Welcome***

Attorney General Phil Weiser welcomed the committee and introduced Dr. Douglas Heller as a new appointee.

### ***State Share Discussion***

Director of Opioid Response Heidi Williams provided a quick overview of the estimated funds received from the opioid settlements from the defending parties, noting that the state currently estimates that Colorado will receive approximately \$740 million over 18 years.

Heidi Williams noted that the distribution of settlement funds is determined by the Colorado Opioid Settlement Memorandum of Understanding signed by 312 local governments across Colorado.

The distribution is as follows:

60% Regional Share

20% Local Government Share

10% Infrastructure Share

10% State Share

Heidi shared that the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council recently released around \$2 million in the first round of funding from the Infrastructure Share.

Heidi provided an overview of the current state priorities for the State Share, noting current efforts to provide support to Colorado's federally recognized tribes, an Opioid and Fentanyl Prevention Awareness Campaign, a proposed Department of Corrections interagency agreement for medication for opioid use disorder, the 2023 Opioid Abatement Conference, family support, and recovery friendly workplaces.

Brandon Zelasko (SE2) shared an update on the fentanyl and opioid awareness campaign being developed. The goals are to develop and execute a statewide opioid and fentanyl awareness and prevention education campaign for youth ages 11-18 and their trusted adults in Colorado. Brandon shared SE2 is currently seeking to build their campaign on evidence-based strategies, seeking

community engagement, developing a flexible campaign that can be used by regions, and partnering with co-existing campaigns to avoid duplication.

Brandon shared that SE2 has completed the meta-analysis, conducted interviews with state and national partners, and conducted six geographically diverse discussion groups with young people, and is continuing to work on their statewide poll.

SE2 will present research findings and campaign strategy recommendations by the end of March, present communications and paid media plan by the end of April, develop and test creative concepts by May/June, and intends to launch the campaign by July/August.

### ***Innovation Grant Opportunity***

Heidi Williams shared that the Department of Law will be launching an opioid abatement innovation grant opportunity which will include three tiers of funding \$100,000-\$350,000, \$350,001-\$700,000, and \$700,001-\$1,000,000.

Lesley Brooks noted that the grants would allow communities to be creative and to work together.

JC Carrica emphasized the importance of care coordination and the need for working with smaller organizations that may not be affiliated with providers. JC expressed support for making the grants as accessible as possible, noting that many recovery community organizations may have challenges with government grants.

Heidi Williams confirmed that the innovation funds could potentially be used for medication costs in response to questions from Lesley Brooks and Jessie Spiers.

AG Weiser noted that the state is intentionally not setting additional restrictions on these funds to be able to provide funding to innovations, noting that it would potentially include operational costs. AG Weiser added that the State would continue to work with the Committee to improve the process to support innovations moving forward.

Dr. Heller asked about including an extra small funding option.

### ***Medication for Opioid Used Disorder (MOUD) in Department of Corrections***

AG Weiser shared that analysis from the Rand Corporation found that the number one most effective plan to promote public safety is to ensure when people leave prison that they are able to find a job and not return to prison. AG Weiser noted that the state is working on a fair chance hiring initiative and asked committee members to reach out to Heidi Williams to learn more.

AG Weiser added that the next strategy identified by Rand it to ensure that individuals are able to access treatment for substance use disorder in prison, in addition to being able to access treatment upon exiting prison.

Commissioner Wendy Buxton-Andrade noted the importance of helping individuals leaving the DOC to develop life skills, and asked why more was not being done to rehabilitate individuals within the DOC.

AG Weiser noted that there has been a lack of funding for this smart investment, noting the challenges created when there are expectations that governments operate like a business rather than making investments with a longer-term horizon.

Leonard Woodson shared that Senate Bill 19-008 requires a continuation of treatment for any incarcerated individuals that are moved between facilities within the DOC. He also shared that the DOC has partnerships with community service providers across the state that aid in the treatment continuation process.

Leonard Woodson noted that allowing individuals 3 months of medication instead of 1 month allows for a smoother transition into society but there is a cost associated with the increase in medication, which may be addressed with opioid settlement funds.

Jessica Krueger noted that many releases are rapid which does not allow for enough time to prepare individuals to ensure they have access to treatment before release, and that the DOC just needs more resources to provide more time.

Lesley Brooks thanked the DOC representatives and asked what kind of partnerships the DOC would like or might need in receiving communities to ensure that folks have their treatment continued and do not fall through the cracks.

JC Carrica gave recognition to Tom Clements' legacy and vision to bring Vivitrol into the DOC and shared gratitude to see this work coming to fruition.

Rob Valuck added that the data is overwhelming regarding the unmet needs and expressed enthusiastic support for the DOC's efforts.

### ***Care Coordination in Jails and Prisons***

Michelle Cornett with HCPF shared that Senate Bill 22-196 includes funding for Criminal Justice grants, technology, information systems, and diversion programs, and noted that section 7 of the bill requires HCPF to determine whether the state should seek a waiver to provide benefits including screening, intervention, and care coordination services prior to an individual being released from prison. The bill also requires an improved process for determining individuals for medical assistance eligibility and determine Medicaid eligibility and benefits.

Michelle Cornett shared that HCPF has contracted with HMA to evaluate the current criminal justice landscape and determine any necessary improvements to the current care continuation plan, determine whether federal intervention is necessary, and develop a cost benefit report that will be presented to HCPF leadership.

Michelle Cornett noted the timeline for the project. It was launched in February 2023, the report and presentation are projected to be presented to HCPF on September 1, 2023, and the presentation to legislature is going to take place in October 2023.

Michelle Cornett noted that the final outcome of the project is for HCPF to present a plan to the legislature, or to request 1115 waivers to CMS for potential approval. She also noted that communities need capacity for a new process for in-reach in jails, need cultural competence on criminal justice

involved services, and need connected care and social determinants. These are the pre-release services that are necessary before an incarcerated individual is released, the recommended time is 90 days pre-release.

Lesley Brooks expressed her support for continuation of care as it would reduce the amount that she needs to rely less on time-limited grants to put the care coordination program into place.

Cristen Bates shared that community support is necessary for this program to operate smoothly, but that community support will look different in each unique case. She shared that allowing Medicaid coverage is necessary to follow through on the post-incarceration care continuation plan. She also shared that local solutions are necessary for small communities, but an overall statewide process is still necessary to advise local governments and jails on correct procedures.

Matt Pfeifer asked if 1 week of medication is enough to provide the formerly incarcerated opioid-impacted individuals with enough support. Lesley Brooks responded that 1 week is cutting it too short, and that a three-month period of stabilization is necessary, with adequate medication access.

Ultimately, after discussion in the committee, further medication access was agreed upon and Jessica Krueger agreed that prescriptions would be accessible if further funding was provided.

### ***Annual Conference and Next Steps***

Heidi Williams shared that the annual conference is going to take place in Montrose, CO on August 16-18, 2023. The goal is to have 2-3 representatives from each Opioid Settlement Region. She encouraged individuals from the committee to attend.

Heidi Williams also shared that the Opioid Response Resources are on the COAG website for individuals interested in the opioid settlement work.

### ***Meeting Conclusion***

AG Weiser expressed his support for the committee and their great work. He shared that there is still a lot of work to do, and that sharing best practices is necessary. He also noted that he was grateful for the DOC's contribution. Finally, he advertised the innovation grants, and encouraged committee members to spread the word amongst individuals that fit the criteria and need funding.

AG Weiser and Heidi Williams adjourned the meeting.