

# Opioid Crisis Recovery Funds Advisory Committee Meeting

October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Meeting Minutes

**Members:** Attorney General Phil Weiser, Cristen Bates, Wendy Buxton-Andrade, Sue Hansen, James Mobley, Andrea Alvarez, Lesley Brooks, Ashley Absmeier-Koppenhafer, Gordon McLaughlin, Andrea Alvarez, Jim Schoettler, Dmitry Kunin, Chase Kohne, Jamie Fitzsimmons, Danielle Culp, Douglas Heller, Jason Hoppe, JC Carrica

**Department of Law Staff:** Jamie Feld, Christian Dykson, Robyn Steuer, Mindy Baumgardner

**Guests:** Jose Esquibel, Sarah DeVore

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### ***Welcome***

Attorney General Phil Weiser welcomed the committee and introduced Andrea Alvarez, an appointed member licensed to practice as a nurse.

### ***Review and Approve Minutes***

Attorney General Phil Weiser motioned an order to approve meeting minutes.

Commissioner Wendy Buxton-Andrade moved to approve the motion.

James Mobley seconded.

All in favor

### ***Reflections on 2023 Opioid Abatement Conference***

Jamie Feld opened the discussion for all committee members to share their reflections from the 2023 Opioid Abatement Conference in Montrose, noting that over 200 attendees from across the state attended. Colorado was presented with the Award for Excellence in the Application of the Opioid Litigation Principles as the inaugural state winner from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. 69% of attendees rated the conference “Excellent”, compared to 54% for the 2022 Conference.

AG Weiser thanked Jamie Feld and her team for their efforts coordinating the conference and shared that there is a goal to host the 2024 conference in Larimer County, potentially in Fort Collins.

Jose Esquibel shared that although he was unable to attend the conference, he did hear excellent comments for those who were able to attend – specifically surrounding the conversations and having folks hear about different perspectives.

Dr. Lesley Brooks added that the ability for this conference to engage with everyone, including new stakeholders is really incredible, noting it is extraordinary there were many different conversations being had through this platform to ignite and facilitate these conversations.

Attorney General Phil Weiser shared that building of community practice is impressive, as well as the number of people from law enforcement, community leadership, public health, service providers, peer coaches, and individuals with lived experience were learning and engaging with one another, which is a big accomplishment.

Jamie Feld recognized Commissioner Sue Hansen, along with Montrose County, the City of Montrose, and the Region 14 council for their work with the conference as a variety of different components were donated, such as the venue space and the food offered.

### ***Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) in Jail Challenge Concept***

Jamie Feld shared a concept of recognition for Medicated Assisted Treatment in the jails and invited for Sheriff Jamie Fitzsimons to share his thoughts on this concept.

Sheriff Jamie Fitzsimons shares that his jail was one of the first jails to sign up for the Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) and stated that it has changed lives in the community. Along with the wrap around services and MAT, Sheriff Fitzsimons shared that the two together makes it all whole for that warm hand off to the community to ensure individuals stay sober after they have been released.

Danielle Culp with the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) shared that the BHA is excited to pursue this program and have found success so far. This program is implemented within all JBBS jails currently but is still working on future planning for funding support. BHA would like to highlight jails that have done great work and developed capacities to promote best practices. BHA is looking into the future, examining funding and also looking into identifying better outcome measures for MAT as the program grows statewide.

AG Weiser thanked Danielle Culp and invited Dr. Lesley Brooks to share her thoughts on the warm hand off to a service provider with Medicaid benefits once they are realized, so there is no insurance gap and that is an effort that is currently being built throughout the state.

Dr. Lesley Brooks shared she is excited to provide support to spread this effort and scale it to where it needs to be.

Jamie Feld invited Cristen Bates to share any updates on Medicaid coverage in incarcerated settings.

Cristen Bates shared that she had a conversation with the Department of Corrections, and they are attributing the increase in Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) services in prisons to the great work done in jails. Individuals are receiving support in the jails and once they are sentenced and transferred to a prison they will be able to continue their medicated assisted treatment. Health Care Policy & Finance (HCPF) recently sent a report to the general assembly for the potential to have Medicaid coverage for people who are in incarcerated settings and during the period of re-entry, which is 90 days prior to release. About 70-80% of the individuals in jail or prison are eligible for Medicaid. Cristen emphasized that this report was able to show that the expansion will increase services and outcomes while remaining budget neutral with budget approval.

AG Weiser and Dr. Lesley Brooks shared this is fantastic work.

AG Weiser thanked everyone for their commitment to this work.

Jose Esquibel noted there are tiers of jails, based on size, and that it may be beneficial to set tiers when recognizing their successes.

### ***Opioid Response Unit/Settlement Updates***

Jamie Feld shared that there are over \$750 million available to the state over the course of 18 years and a new Kroger settlement has just been announced. The Kroger settlement is estimated to bring in an additional \$70 million to the state and is not currently included in the totals. Colorado Opioid Settlement Funds are distributed as follows:

20% - Local Governments

60% - Regions

10% - Infrastructure Share

10% - State Government

Jamie reminded the group that all shares require full 100% transparency, and that the dashboard includes information on how Regions plan to expend their funds. Annual funding request deadlines for Regional Opioid Abatement Councils are September 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup> and the Annual Expenditure Reporting Deadline for all parties is February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. In addition, the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC) approved an additional deadline date of November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Regions are expected to maintain rosters and certify their plans are in compliance within their 2-year plan.

Jamie shared the Infrastructure Share has had two successful rounds for a total of \$4.4 million. The funds administered through the Infrastructure Share has been able to support programs for a range of activities for prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction, with a mixture of awards to urban and rural communities.

Jamie Feld added that there have been disbursements to both the Ute Mountain Ute and the Southern Ute tribes from the State Share, and funds for the Connect Effect fentanyl and opioid education campaign. Additional state activities include an interagency agreement with the Department of Corrections for MOUD and Continuity of Care, as well as Innovation Grants for \$4 million which are currently amending budgets/workplans to execute contracts.

### ***Innovation Grant Reflections***

Jamie Feld shared the Innovation Challenge Funding Opportunity that closed on June, 30, 2023 and asked for the committee to share any reflections as next steps are being considered. There was a large number of applicants, which resulted in \$44 million to be requested from these applicants. The goal is to have another round available in 2024.

Robyn Steuer shared that with the innovation challenge, the response was very positive, and it is outstanding that so many applications were received. The Opioid Response Unit is seeking input for what the next round should look like for next year due to the number of applications received.

Commissioner Sue Hansen shared she is interested to know how many rural counties applied.

Robyn Steuer shared she does not have that information readily available, but will share once she finds that information.

Cristen Bates recommended including a limit on the percentage of overall income for an organization for an application (i.e. no more than 20% of the annual income).

Sue Hansen noted that there may be challenges for regions with multiple counties to access these grants.

Jamie Feld responded that grant writing assistance and grant management are both areas that there has been interest in to help use these funds.

### ***Additional Funding Priorities***

Jamie Feld shared that there are thoughts of developing a “broad-based’ grant and under that grant, to have more targeted areas of focus.

Cristen Bates shared there is not much on housing and sober living and believes this is an area that can be expanded to meet individual needs. Systematic/structural support such as housing vouchers, as well as things such as rental assistance, childcare, pet care for people who are entering into treatment are key areas.

Jose Esquibel shared that about 2 years ago, he had a conversation with the Dumb Friends League and they are willing to take in peoples pets when their owners go to treatment, but they need the funding. Additionally, there is a group of black leaders that is working on a state plan to help identify how to best serve people in the black community with opioid use disorder and plan should be ready for review by the end of the year.

Jamie Feld mentioned that culturally responsive organizations has been identified as a potential key area and asked for more input in developing those targeted areas and ways to help improve the accessibility of these grand ahead of their anticipated launch in early 2024.

### ***Meeting Conclusion***

Jamie Feld reminded the committee of the resources available on Coag.gov and shared the next OCRF meetings will be February 28, 2024 then on June 26, 2024.

Jamie Feld adjourned the meeting.