

# Opioid Crisis Recovery Funds Advisory Committee Meeting

June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Meeting Minutes

**Members:** Attorney General Phil Weiser, Andrea Alvarez, Ashley Absmeier-Koppenhafer, Sue Hansen, Jason Hoppe, Jose Esquibel, Andres Guerrero, Laura Goldberg, JC Carrica, Lesley Brooks, Rob Valuck, Gordon McLaughlin, Cristen Bates, Douglas Heller, James Mobley, Connie Price, Jim Schoettler

**Department of Law Staff:** Jamie Feld, Jack Patterson, Natalie Sandoval, Mindy Baumgardner, Robyn Steuer

**Guests:** Ericka Aden, Jess Angelson, Sylvia Simms, Briana Hird, Laura Goldberg

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### ***Welcome***

Jamie Feld welcomed the committee and discussed areas of topic for this call.

### ***State Settlement Fund Update***

Director of Opioid Response Jamie Feld provided an update of the state settlement funds and the Opioid Response Strategic Impact Grant. This grant has a funding amount of \$8 million and its intent is to provide measurable impact in addressing the serious challenges of the opioid epidemic. Jamie Feld noted that the Colorado Attorney General's office has worked with other state agencies to look at what is being done in areas such as recovery friendly workplaces and peer recovery. The procurement team is currently reviewing applications to identify recipients of this grant.

Jamie Feld added that funds were also released to the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes as this community has been disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis. These funds were provided in a lump-sum directly to these communities from the State Share.

In addition, Jamie Feld also shared that there is a grant for the Colorado Department of Corrections with funding for a 2-year period, starting January 2024. Conversations were had with both the BHA (Behavioral Health Administration) as well as HCPF (Health Care Policy & Financing) on how to prepare the Department of Corrections for the 11-15 waiver to ensure these funds are providing services that are needed. Initially, the funds were able to provide buprenorphine, but it has now expanded to methadone.

Jamie Feld shared about the Connect Effect, a campaign for youth between the ages of 10-14 and their trusted adults. The Connect Effect is an evidence-based campaign that has been cited nationally, in a variety of different areas. Jamie mentioned there is a mini-grant opportunity and if any of the regions are interested in the campaign, Connect Effect resources will be provided at no-charge along.

### ***Colorado Opioid Abatement Council Updates***

Jamie Feld provided updates from the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council, which oversees the regional and infrastructure shares. Recently, the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council developed

recommendations and guiding principles, which are based on the principles from John Hopkins. The five guiding strategies are:

1. Spend the money to save lives.
2. Use Evidence for Overdose Prevention & Improved Health Outcomes
3. Invest in Cost-Effective Interventions Along Substance Use Continuum
4. Focus on Equity
5. Develop A Fair & Transparent Process for Spending Funding

Jamie Feld shared that these recommendations are available on the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC) website, and it is important to know these funds are used to expand programming and not to supplant existing funds.

Jamie Feld shared there is an upcoming funding opportunity through the Infrastructure Share. This funding opportunity would be the third round of the Infrastructure Share and is expected to launch in Summer 2024. In addition, the Opioid Response Unit is in the process of hiring an Opioid Response Funding Specialist, which will support the Infrastructure Share.

Jame Feld also shared the Opioid Outcome Data Workgroup has been meeting regularly and the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC) has approved the use of funds from the infrastructure share for the group to develop a data RFP.

### ***SAMHSA State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant***

Briana Hird, Projector Director with the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) for the State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant shared that her team is entering the fourth iteration of the grant at the end of September and would like to highlight some programs and projects that have been done with the state-targeted response. Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) is a program that runs throughout the state and is run by a colleague. CRAFT provides virtual and in person trainings specifically for friend and family of people with substance use disorders. CRAFT is developed in a way to help give skills to the identified group above to better communication or to engage in treatment.

Briana Hird shared that in the second and third phases of SOR, funding was available to help build 11 new Oxford houses. The Oxford houses are recovery residences and is a space for people to engage in recovery activities and maintain sobriety. Oxford houses support the use of MOUD and MAT for their clients.

With the SOR funding, nearly 20,000 people have been able to receive recovery services in some capacity. This includes SOR peers, harm reduction, Naloxone and Overdose prevention, indigent funding for MOUD/MAT, 6 mobile health units, 2 mobile opioid treatment units, 3 new methadone medication units, and commonly known campaigns such as Lift the Label and Recovery Cards Projects.

Briana Hird quickly shared basics of SOR4 and mentioned that the total award amount of \$20,798,725 is per year and this cycle will be a 3-year grant cycle. Due to this change, the changed amount per year would be about \$1,000,00, which will account for the different dollar amounts seen during SOR3. Their application is due to SAMHSA by Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and if awarded, anticipated award start date would be September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. For SOR4, there are five priority areas:

1. Financial Wellness.

2. Additional medication units.
3. Funding medication access for indigent patients.
4. Full scope of services of transition aged people, 16-25.
5. Assisting providers in implementing contingency management.

### ***Ensuring Sustainability: Medicaid Update***

Cristen Bates, Director of the Office of Medicaid & CHP+ Behavioral Health Initiatives and Coverage shared the work the partners from Center for Medicaid Services has created with the purpose to do in-reach and support of transitions of people who are transitioning out of criminal justice settings. Cristen shared that historically, there has been an inmate exclusion policy, meaning no funding or federal support should be spent for services for individuals who are inmates of a public institution.

Cristen Bates shared that Colorado has submitted an 1115 waiver. The purpose of the 1115 waiver is to get Medicaid for the incarcerated individuals and for a better connection to care and better health outcomes for these individuals when they are released. After an individual is released, Cristen shared there is a large increase in overdose deaths following exit or forced abstinence. The hope is to increase access to physical and behavioral health care to ensure these individuals are aware of the support they have and how to remain healthy. The following benefits are available up to 90 days prior to release:

- Physical and behavioral health assessments & care coordination.
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).
- Up to 30-day supply of medications upon release.

Goal of federal match is to expand existing programs and services, and any savings must be reinvested in this population, i.e. individuals who are at risk or have previously been incarcerated.

Cristen Bates shared that the existing 1115 waiver is being amended to include criminal justice re-entry and adding in continuous coverage for people who are leaving the department of corrections and be covered for up to 12 months without interruption.

Cristen Bates shared that there is another 1115 amendment which includes housing and nutrition support, bridge housing, and wraparound services to be submitted August 2024.

Cristen Bates continued the conversation by talking about the differences between jails and prisons in this benefit. Starting with State-ran facilities such as Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Division of Youth Services under the Department of Human Services, there will be two separate contracts that will be signed by other state agencies as opposed to signing contracts and doing readiness reviews for all 52 jails in the state of Colorado. Expect by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 that services will be provided in Department of Corrections facilities, while jails would likely be approved by January 2026.

Cristen Bates shared that they have heard from some jails that they are not yet ready for rolling out program and seeking buy-in from the jail leadership and staff.

Cristen Bates shared that they expected the federal match to be between 70-80%, providing massive savings to jails and prisons. The state will need tracking at the state and local level to ensure that funds are used to increase access to healthcare services.

Dr. Jason Hoppe asked about what the hand-off looks like for the 30 days post release.

Cristen Bates responded that they are working on the implementation plan but the goal is to have them walk out with their medication in-hand, rather than a prescription as well as scheduling appointments within the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks as much as possible

Jose Esquibel shared that the Colorado Consortium would be hosting a series of regional meetings between jail administrators and community-based organizations that serve people who are incarcerated to prepare and identify any needs for bridge funding.

Cristen Bates shared that they are working on Medicaid eligibility processes and anticipate 80-90% of folks leaving incarcerated settings to be eligible for Medicaid.

***Adjourn***

Jamie Feld adjourned the meeting.