



Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC)

Assistance Committee

Meeting #23

April 8th, 2025
3:00pm – 4:00pm

Appointees Attending: Josh Blum, Terry Hofmeister, KC Hume, Racquel Garcia

DOL Staff Attending: Jamie Feld, Jack Patterson, Christian Dykson, Natalie Sandoval

Welcome and Introductions

ORU staff opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and acknowledged the presence of committee members.

ORU staff presented minutes from the February and March 2025 meetings for approval:

February 11th Minutes:

Motioned by Josh Blum.

Seconded by Commissioner Hofmeister.

Sheriff Hume abstained as he had not attended the meeting. The motion passed.

March 11th Minutes:

Motioned by Josh Blum.

Seconded by Commissioner Hofmeister.

The motion passed unanimously.

Supplantation Definition

ORU staff revisited a previous recommendation: “*add or expand effective programming rather than supplanting existing funds.*” They presented a draft definition of supplantation as “*deliberately replacing funds due to receipt of opioid settlement funds.*”

Committee members discussed scenarios where maintaining a program due to external funding cuts should not be considered supplantation. There was consensus that the definition should explicitly allow the use of funds to *maintain* or *sustain* effective programs impacted by reductions in other funding streams.

The committee proposed revising the definition to include the terms *maintain*, *sustain*, and *continue*, and suggested the inclusion of concrete examples. ORU staff agreed to bring a revised draft and example scenarios to the next meeting.

FAQ Development

ORU staff introduced three recent questions from stakeholders and proposed draft guidance:

1. Use of Funds for Ibogaine Research:
 - The committee unanimously agreed that funding Ibogaine research was not allowable, citing its status as a Schedule I drug, lack of FDA approval, and distance from evidence-based practices. Members expressed concerns about misuse of regional funds and undue influence from vendors.
2. Reimbursable Expenses:
 - ORU staff clarified that only expenses incurred after April 21, 2021 (the CO MOU execution date) were reimbursable, so long as they aligned with approved opioid abatement purposes. This position was supported by legal counsel and the committee.
3. Allowable Use of Funds for Food and Swag:
 - The committee agreed that food and promotional items ("swag") were allowable if they supported approved activities (e.g., coalition meetings, training, outreach).
 - Members emphasized the importance of using funds "within reason," reflecting judicious stewardship and alignment with COAC's values.
 - ORU staff noted that similar expenses had been allowed under the state share and referenced prior campaigns like the Connect Effect.

ORU staff committed to incorporating this guidance into a future FAQ document to be shared with the committee for feedback.

Community Inquiry

ORU staff addressed a public inquiry that falsely claimed Raquel Garcia had voted to use opioid funds for roofing sober living homes. Clarifications included:

- The project referenced was "Roofers in Recovery," funded in Region 18.
- Raquel Garcia was not yet a COAC member at the time of the vote (which took place March 13, 2023; she joined March 31, 2023).
- The vote had been unanimous, and Raquel's businesses had no affiliation with the funded entity.

Raquel provided personal context, explaining that her businesses were separate, locally supported efforts unaffiliated with opioid settlement funds. The committee expressed full support and emphasized the importance of transparent and factual responses to public concerns.

ORU staff committed to issuing a formal written clarification to address the misinformation.

Recommended Strategies

ORU staff shared observations from a national convening of state opioid administrators. Several states had published lists of “high impact” strategies and, in some cases, non-recommended practices.

Examples:

- California required 50% of funds be spent on six designated high-impact areas.
- North Carolina created an interactive library of high-impact strategies.
- Connecticut listed practices not recommended for funding, such as stand-alone detox services and unevaluated criminal justice programs.

Committee members responded positively and agreed that referencing established frameworks could help guide regions. They discussed the potential for Colorado to create a similar list, possibly referencing existing documents rather than creating a full non-allowable list.

ORU staff committed to continuing research and bringing additional examples to the next meeting for discussion.

COAC Recommendations

The committee expressed strong interest in the potential for Colorado to adopt a similar framework. Suggestions included:

- Highlighting strategies that are proven, effective, and evidence based.
- Cautioning against investments in low-impact or controversial approaches, especially those lacking peer-reviewed support or aligned with best practices.
- Possibly incorporating or referencing national examples as a resource rather than developing a prescriptive list from scratch.

ORU staff offered to gather more examples and revisit the topic at the next meeting. The committee supported continued exploration of a Colorado-specific set of recommendations, emphasizing alignment with COAC’s values of effectiveness, transparency, and responsible investment.

Opioid Response Unit Updates

ORU staff shared brief updates and expressed appreciation for the committee’s ongoing contributions.

- A Data Workgroup meeting was scheduled for that Friday, and ORU staff offered individual updates for anyone interested in recent developments.
- Committee members were thanked for their continued service, including several recent two-year reappointments. ORU staff acknowledged the added responsibility members carry when managing public inquiries.

- The team reaffirmed their commitment to transparency and support, noting that inquiries sent to coac@coag.gov and opioids@coag.gov are being tracked through formal procedures.

Public Comment

ORU staff opened the floor for public comment. No members of the public were in attendance, and no comments were submitted.

Adjourn