

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Wednesday October 30, 2024, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Amber Blankenship, Stephanie Bond, Candace Facemyer, Sam Hess, Cindy Hill, Judge Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (chair)

Members Not Attending: Tom Plymale

ODCP Staff: Justin Smith

Marshall University Staff: Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Stephanne Thornton (chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Monday October 7, 2024, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve the July 2024, September 2024, and first October 2024 meeting minutes. Amber Blankenship made a motion to approve without changes, and Cindy Hill seconded with all in favor, and none opposed, and the minutes were approved. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the 2025 State Plan and the timeline for its completion.

Agenda Items:

2025 State Plan (Final Draft Due November 15, 2024)

- The group discussed whether they wanted to update the current plan goals, and they decided to keep them the same because they are still relevant.
- Stephanie Thornton went over the emerging themes from the Town Hall Meeting Summary Report as well as a summary of talking points from the September and first October meetings.
- The group discussed naloxone availability in judicial settings. ONEboxes should be made available. Funding sources were discussed, and it is possible that funds already exist, but jails do not want to offer it. They currently have signs that naloxone is available upon release, but it is not discussed/encouraged. Delaware makes naloxone available in cells. This broadly needs to still be included in the plan in some capacity, but it may require a re-exploration of feasibility and options based on new administration post-election.
- The group would like to explore gaps in treatment availability for specialized populations. Such as women, women with children, children, and youth. Women in West Virginia have some of the highest rates of incarceration in the country. The 0–18-year-old age group is the only age group where females have a higher overdose rate than males. Non-detained status female offenders are at a high risk of overdose. An example would be female teenagers who have experiences with the system related to truancy or vaping. Touch points for this group would be shelters, out-

of-home providers, CPS, QRT, and the school system. The group discussed the effectiveness of teen court and how talking to probation could inform them.

- Trauma-informed care used to exist for juvenile staff but would like to see it implemented with adult staff as well.
- The group discussed funding for the creation of a youth services center. The First Foundation was discussed as an option but for right now they are only funding existing programs. AFAs have been given to the community for a youth services center and no one jumps on it. A facility building needs to already be existing due to the expense of land and building. Licensure for a youth facility can be complex, which is a barrier for those that want to get involved. Providers are interested but need resources to help them. There is foundation/abatement funding available to establish capital. According to Justin Smith's reports, there are currently no juvenile beds available in West Virginia. Keeping youth in the state would save the state money ultimately but need the funds to establish the infrastructure first. Border states have better pay for work and better reimbursement as well, so it is important to incentivize working here. The facility would also need capital to onboard staff and train them in specialization. Stephanie Thornton will investigate other funding sources.
- Alternative sentencing needs to remain a priority for this group. Those who work in the court system and will be new next year will benefit from this information. There needs to be a focus on case management from the court to the jail to the community.
- The group discussed the cost and availability of MAT services.
- Reentry needs to integrate family care to reduce recidivism for those that return to their habitual behaviors.
- This subcommittee would like to advocate for Family Treatment Court expansion. Settlement funds end June 2025, so they need to explore funds for that in the future by advocating to the legislature and First Foundation. Two circuits do not have a Drug Court and transportation remains a problem even for those rural counties that do have them. There is a need for local stakeholders to buy into the model for this to work.
- The group would like to address social determinants of health, but do not know who would be responsible for training on this or keep the data. It could be incorporated to various intake forms.

Reconfirm Subcommittee Membership

- This will be addressed at the next meeting.

Additional Discussion

- Amber Blankenship provided an update about the Building Bridges to a Better Community Workshops occurring on November 6th in Charleston and November 12th in Huntington.

Adjournment:

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The subcommittee will meet again on Tuesday November 12, 2024.