

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Recovery Community Subcommittee Wednesday October 2, 2024, Approved

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members Attending: Amber Blankenship (co-chair), Brandy Blatt, Trenton Clem, Joe Deegan, Heather Gregory, Rajan Masih, Dan McCawley (co-chair), JoAnna Vance

Invited, Not Attending: Ardella Cottrill, Elly Donahue, Francisca Gray, Ann Hammond, William Long, Lou Ortenzio, Lacey Sawyers, Phil Shimer, Stephanie Stout, Destini Williams

Guest Speaker: Emily Birckhead (WVARR)

ODCP Staff: Jostin Holmes

Marshall University Staff: Bradley McCoy

Opening:

Amber Blankenship (co-chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Recovery Community Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, October 2, 2024, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was not present to approve the September 4, 2024 meeting minutes. The purpose of the meeting was to hear from Emily Birckhead for updates on WVARR and from Jostin Holmes for updates from ODCP.

Agenda Items

Guest Speaker Emily Birckhead

- Family support for recovery has two different definitions depending on what you are asking: 1) support for the family of those in recovery or 2) supporting families as a unit that seek recovery residence together as parents and children. Emily reported that there are currently 1464 certified beds across 104 certified residences. 74 (5%) beds are for women with children. 128 (8.7%) of the 1464 beds are co-ed stepdown apartments like West Virginia Sober Living. 492 (33.6%) beds are for women and 770 (52.6%) beds are for men. There have been three women's facilities closed this year and another fourth is closing soon because they cannot keep their beds filled. It is believed that it is not because of the lack of need, but because of the existence of significant barriers for women to seek treatment and recovery. The price, nuance, and liability of housing minors makes it difficult to support families or pregnant and parenting women. There needs to be a sustainable, separate funding source specifically for families. There is currently a recovery high school in early operation. There is a youth transition network for those 18-25 years old. Loosely defining families outside of what is traditionally thought is not a bad thing to best serve the population. Mountain Care Network is interested in having a youth facility, but the liability makes it difficult. The group discussed how to educate youth on how to seek treatment. Virginia Tech and Texas Tech are examples of colleges with collegiate recovery housing on campus. The group discussed how to best support kids who are being raised by their grandparents while their parents are in recovery and how to continue supporting the family unit post-reunification. Pyramid Behavioral Health has a recovery home community.

ODCP Updates from Jostin Holmes

- Jostin Holmes met with Rachel Thaxton before she left her position to continue the work on advancing the Informed Consent form created by this subcommittee.
- Jostin is reaching out to Nick Stuchell about the legal background required to get a family peer certification. Pennsylvania has 17 different types of peer certification, and our certification board wants to learn from them. They have developed their liability and legal protections by partnering with local universities.
- ODCP is looking to fund stepdown recovery apartments where individuals can continue learning life skills.

Review Town Hall Meeting Report

- This agenda item was not discussed.

State Plan 2025 Draft with Final Draft Due November 15, 2024 (Reach and Impact)

- The group extended their meeting on November 6, 2024 to two hours in length to work on this.

Reconfirm Subcommittee and Workgroup Membership

- The group will work on this at the next subcommittee meeting after completion of the 2025 Plan. They will use the BBH regional map to establish subcommittee members from each region.

Additional Discussion

- No additional discussion.

Adjournment

Amber closed the meeting by thanking all subcommittee members. The full subcommittee will meet again on Wednesday November 6, 2024.