

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Treatment, Health Systems, and Research**  
**Subcommittee of the**  
**Governor's Council on**  
**Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment**  
**Monday November 4, 2024, Approved**

**Attendees:**

**Subcommittee Members:** Dr. James Becker (co-chair), Jorge Cortina, Dr. Garrett Moran, Rebecca Roth

**Not Attending:** Jostin Holmes, Dr. Michael Kilkenny (co-chair), Hallie Morgan, Jessica Smith

**Marshall University Staff:** Deb Koester, Bradley McCoy

**Opening:**

Dr. James Becker (co-chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Treatment, Health Systems, and Research Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Monday November 4, 2024, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve the September meeting minutes. Jorge Cortina made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Dr. Garrett Moran. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved with all in favor, and none opposed. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the 2025 Plan.

**Agenda:**

**Finalize 2025 State Plan**

- The Subcommittee used the time to actively work on the 2025 Plan.
- They discussed the possibility of adding a percentage of change for fatal and nonfatal overdoses in Goal 1. This would make it measurable and would use the number of fatal overdoses from the Office of Drug Control and Policy dashboard.
- The Subcommittee discussed how the field has changed in recent years. Polysubstance use is more prevalent. Meth use has seen a resurgence with mitigating effects or fear of fentanyl.
- Preliminary findings of literature reviews suggest that higher doses of buprenorphine are more effective for keeping people in treatment.
- West Virginia has some of the greatest obstacles to treatment due to counseling requirements.
- Deb Koester suggested having a roundtable discussion on some of these issues.
- While formal policy does not restrict dosage of suboxone, providers will have to justify prescribing of higher doses to Medicaid after their initial 60 days of treatment in order to obtain coverage. Provider education on the continuum of care and maintaining higher doses of medical assisted treatment to reduce craving will be necessary. The Subcommittee would like someone to speak on this at a future polysubstance summit and identified Jeremy Husted from West Virginia University as a potential speaker.
- There is existing demographic data for overdoses at the national level that could be used to identify target populations such as race, ethnicity, pregnant/parenting women, youth, etc. The Subcommittee would like to add a KPI about compiling data on this. They may also collaborate with other Subcommittees focused on pregnant and parenting women and youth, for example.

- Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 2: This subcommittee will be included in the spring meeting with other subcommittees for cross-sectional work at an in-person meeting.
- Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 3: The Subcommittee would like to have a planning meeting in December and a roundtable discussion in January before legislative session.
- West Virginia has the lowest salary rates for those working in treatment. The West Virginia Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers Initiative (CCBHC) will improve pay rates to make them more competitive. This was effective October 1, 2024. There are currently six approved Centers in the state: FMRS Health Systems, Inc., Pretera, Seneca, Southern Highlands, Westbrook, and Valley Healthcare. The Subcommittee recommended that other payment models such as the Pennsylvania Center of Excellence should be explored.
- The Subcommittee would like to ask the State Office of Rural Health to provide a report on the number of workers in the state working in treatment for substance use disorder.
- Deb Koester and Bradley McCoy will work on final edits to the plan and send it back to Dr. Jim Becker and Dr. Kilkenny for revisions and then out to the entire Subcommittee for additional review prior to November 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Reconfirm Subcommittee Membership**

- The Subcommittee would like to invite Keith King to future meetings as a member. Someone from the State Office of Rural Health may need to be on the committee as well. Deb Koester will follow up on this.

#### **Other Business**

- None.

#### **Adjournment:**

Dr. Becker closed the meeting by thanking all subcommittee members for their attendance. The subcommittee will meet again next month.