

Opioid Response Region 4 Council Agenda
September 12, 2023
10:00 am
Virtual Meeting Attendance

On September 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Commissioners from across the Eastern District attended a virtual meeting to continue the work of the Opioid Response Region 4 Council.

Present were:

Board Members: Scott Weaver – Yuma County, Chris Richardson – Elbert County, Stan Hitchcock – Kit Carson County, Mike Brownell – Logan County, Kevin Blankenship – City of Sterling, Greg Tacha –Town of Limon, Sheriff Dave Martin – Fort Morgan, Adam Gates – Yuma County

Advisory Council Members: Valerie Boyd – Kit Carson County Public Health, Spencer Green – Centennial Mental Health, Trish McClain – Northeast Colorado Health Department

Also present: Erika Greenberg – Centennial Area Health Education Center, Jennifer Mackender – Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, MJ Jorgensen – North Colorado Health Alliance, Jim Kuemmerle – Colorado State University, Office of Engagement and Extension, Tonya Wheeler – Advocates for Recovery Colorado, Dewane Pace – Haxtun Hospital, Ted Backman, Danya DeHerrera-Smith, Jack Patterson – Opioid Response Unit, Ailala Kay – OMNI Institute, Stacey McClellan – OMNI Institute, Lauren Rosenbaum – OMNI Institute

Minutes

The August meeting minutes were approved with edits to incorrect dates and the addition of Sheriff Dave Martin to the attendee's list. Sheriff Martin moved to approve, and Mike Brownell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

COAC Updates

Commissioner Weaver discussed the COAC conference that took place in August. Peers were a central topic of the conference and will be a focus of the Region 4 Council moving forward, including being a part of the Council to lend their voice and living experiences. Commissioner Weaver expressed that Region 4 is on track and will continue to look into the next important steps the Council needs to make. Ailala Kay and Stacey McClellan also spoke about what they learned at the Conference and echoed the importance of including peers in the Council's work and working with the community.

Jack Patterson noted that with the long project timeline, the Council has an amazing opportunity to learn and revise plans to include peers. Jack also mentioned an additional settlement that has not been included in the published budget estimates. He also noted that recordings from the conference sessions can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTmB4xDweP9CZinqxkMxDtA>.

Next year's COAC conference will be in Fort Collins.

Commissioner Weaver introduced Jennifer Mackender of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention. Jennifer supports regional councils by learning about and sharing successful strategies happening throughout Colorado. She is here to support the Council in any way she can.

Region 4 was approved for the entire \$376,878 request in the infrastructure funding grant. This funding will cover the money allocated to the transportation RFP grant recipients. The additional funding means the council can spread abatement funding out to future projects.

Financial Reports

A financial report was presented in the meeting, but there were no significant financial updates to report. Kevin Blankenship moved to approve the financial report, and Sheriff Martin seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

Organizational Updates

The State's Connect Effect Campaign Materials Toolkit is posted on the Council's website.

Ailala Kay reported on OMNI's newly submitted scope of work totaling \$30K. Parts of the scope of work are supported by the new infrastructure grant funding and cover the evaluation of Centennial and NCHA's transportation grant and backbone support for monthly Council meetings. Also in the scope of work not currently funded, is a newly planned resource scan which will help determine what already exists in the region, funds to support the creation of future RFPs, and travel funds for next year's COAC conference.

Sheriff Martin moved to approve the new scope of work and Mike Brownell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming Grants/Funding Opportunities

Stacey McClellan went through upcoming grant opportunities.

The first was an RFI for Combating Youth Vaping in Colorado (September 2023 deadline) Other grants included: 2023 Overdose Awareness Mini-Grant (October 2023 deadline), Expanding Financial Coaching and Counseling Services (October 2023 deadline), Supporting Coloradans in Recovery Through Non-Clinical Programs (October 2023 deadline), and Rural Emergency Medical Services Training Grant (May 2024 deadline).

It was noted that CDPHE will be sending out a new Overdose Data to Action Funds RFP soon.

Transportation RFP Grantee Update

OMNI started working with Spencer Green and MJ Jorgensen on the evaluation plan for RFP recipients. The final plan will be sent to the board for questions and approval. Recipients will be

updating the Council every month at meetings, and then OMNI will present a report quarterly and annually to share with the Council and COAC.

Spencer Green gave the update for Centennial. They are prepared to launch services for Morgan and Sterling on Sept. 26 from the city limits out. They will provide rides for people who need treatment services in combination with mental health services. Rides are free to start with, and they are putting together a funding mechanism with Medicaid. The hours of operation are 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. The dispatch center and software are set up, and people will call an 800 number to book a ride. They will then be in the system when they need other services. Lots of clients can't make appointments due to a lack of transportation, so this will really help.

MJ Jorgensen gave the update for NCHA. The evaluation meeting with OMNI went well, and they feel confident about getting the data and exploring how to leverage it for additional funding for the region. NCHA has a new space in Sterling which offers an expanded office and community base. NCHA has hired 2 FTE and is interviewing more. Tonya Wheeler from NCHA noted that it is such a blessing to grow in the region and looks forward to growing peer support in the region. NCHA's Sterling office opened in 2020, and it's been great to see the space grow since then. A plug was made for Rally for Recovery in Denver and the 23rd Sterling Rally for Recovery.

Abatement Plan Review

OMNI gave a Funding Overview which touched on the big influx of new funds for the second year – \$1,675,930.50 is allotted for FY 22-24. The Region's total remaining funds are \$1,360,529.50 for 2022-2024. It was noted that unused money can roll over. Through 2038 \$8,138,001.01 has been allocated so far.

OMNI is going to continue doing educational presentations at meetings on funding areas. They will also work on a resource scan of the Region and a community survey as part of the process to select the Region's next priority. After a priority is set, the Council will put out new RFPs. Evaluation of the Abatement Plan will be ongoing.

Unscheduled Business

Commissioner Weaver acknowledged the specific challenges the southern part of the Region faces and opened the floor to council members from the southern part of the region to get a sense of the issues they're having. Chris Richardson from Elbert County was having audio issues and could not remark. Stan Hitchcock from Kit Carson County agreed that the southern area has issues and is looking for ways to fix them.

At the meeting with Senator Hickenlooper, Commissioner Weaver met Dewane Pace, CEO of Haxtun Hospital in Haxtun, Colorado. Dewane was present at the day's meeting and talked about where the opioid problem is starting from and his talks to doctors who are prescribing opioids. The hospital has an Alternative to Opioids (ALTO) project.

Commissioner Weaver suggested opening up more spots on the Advisory Council and invited Dewane Pace and Jennifer Mackender to be on the Advisory Council. Mike Brownell expressed

support for the idea and would like to add peers to the Advisory Council. Jennifer and Dewane were happy to join. Tonya Wheeler noted that the Advisory Council is missing someone with living experience and that someone in their office at NCHA could fill that role. It was decided that MJ Jorgenson and NCHA team will also be added to the Advisory Council.

New Advisory Council members are Dewane Pace, Jennifer Mackender, and MJ Jorgenson.

Next Meeting

Due to a scheduling conflict, the October meeting needed to be rescheduled. The next Council meeting is planned for Wednesday, October 11, at 1:00 p.m. (This date and time was decided outside of the regular meeting time.)

The meeting adjourned at 11:03.

Scott Weaver, Chairman