

Opioid Response Region 4 Council Agenda

January 8, 2024

10:00 am

Virtual Meeting Attendance

On January 8, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Board members, Advisory Council members, invested partners, community members from across the Eastern District and staff from the Colorado Attorney General Opioid Response Unit attended a virtual meeting to continue the work of the Opioid Response Region 4 Council. This meeting was changed from in-person to virtual due to inclement weather.

Present were:

Board Members: Scott Weaver – Yuma County, Ben Ferree – Town of Limon, Greg Tacha – Town of Limon, Sheriff Dave Martin – Fort Morgan, Stan Hitchcock – Kit Carson County, Terry Hofmeister – Phillips County, Mike Brownell – Logan County, Kevin Blakenship – City of Sterling, Mike Leerar – Yuma County

Advisory Council Members: Trish McClain – Northeast Colorado Health Department, Michelle Pemberton – Northeast Colorado Health Department, MJ Jorgensen – North Colorado Health Alliance, Director of Addiction Response, James Kuemmerle – Colorado State University, Office of Engagement and Extension, Tonya Wheeler – Executive Director, Advocates for Recovery Colorado, Jennifer Mackender – Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention,

Also present: Erika Greenburg – Centennial Area Health Education Center, Ginger Williams – Colorado State, Rebecca Steib – Milestone Community Wellness, Dayna DeHerrera-Smith, Jamie Feld & Jack Patterson – Colorado Attorney General Opioid Response Unit, Brandi Drtina – North Colorado Health Alliance, Jack Devie – Milestone Community Wellness, Ailala Kay – OMNI Institute, Stacey McClellan – OMNI Institute, Lauren Rosenbaum – OMNI Institute

Minutes

Terry Hofmeister noted a needed change in the December meeting minutes. Under the NCHA update, the new office location was incorrectly recorded as Centennial and should be changed to Sterling. Terry Hofmeister moved to approve the minutes with that change made and Mike Brownell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

COAC Updates

Jamie Feld, Director, Opioid Response Unit, and Jack Patterson, Opioid Response Program Coordinator, gave the COAC update.

An updated list of settlement dollar estimates was provided. It was noted that they do not include settlements from Purdue or the Sacklers, and with a new Kroger settlement, more money will come, and additional settlements will be coming in the future.

The Data Outcomes Workgroup is putting together a shared data proposal that will be used to centralize statewide data and will release an RFP.

The Colorado Department of Corrections has been given \$4 million to deliver MOUD in DOC facilities. This money can be used for expenditures on things such as medications, staffing, and care coordination. They will send out a press release along with a one-pager. Jamie announced the potential for a \$50,000 award for 5 jails. The recipients will be made at the Fall Opioid Abatement Conference. A focus on the justice system is important because research has shown that focusing on DOC clients lowers statewide opioid death rates.

The Impact Grant, created to accelerate progress with high-impact ideas, has an \$8 million award and will launch in February of 2024. Round three of the infrastructure grant will have an available \$5 million and will launch in Spring of 2024. It was noted that collaboration between regions is a great way to use these funds.

The Connect Effect campaign was launched. The focus of the campaign is to start conversations with teens about pills and fentanyl and talk to youth about pro-social activities around mental health and suicide. Mini-grants will be released to help communities pay to market the campaign in their areas.

The Opioid Settlement Dashboard is up-to-date and shows how each region is investing funds. There are \$59 million in planned expenditures. To view the breakdown by expenditures by region, visit <https://coag.gov/opioids/dashboard/>.

An update was provided on the Opioid Abatement Innovation Grant. In 2023, there were 66 applications and \$4 million awarded. Larimer County received the grant in Northern Colorado. The Denver Health and Hospital received funds and have a partnership with NCHA in Region 4.

There was an important reminder that the next deadline for Regions to request funds is March 15, 2024. The schedule to request funds will be in March and September each year.

With regard to expenditure reporting, February 9, 2024, is the next reporting deadline. The Year 1 expenditure period was from October 1, 2022 - December 31, 2023. The year 2 expenditure report timeline is from January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024. More information will be given at the Regional Learning Forum on February 7, 2024 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

It was announced that the next COAC conference will be held in Northern Colorado in either September or October. Region 4 Advisory Council member MJ Jorgenson will be partnering with COAC to plan the conference.

Jamie Feld shared that Region 4 is making great progress. If there is anything the State can do to remove barriers, members from COAC are happy to come out to the Region.

Commissioner Weaver thanked everyone for their hard work, especially Jamie and Jack at COAC and Ailala and the OMNI team.

Financial Reports

Commissioner Weaver noted that due to this meeting's date in relation to the year's end, the financial report has not changed from the last meeting, but the February financials will include up-to-date financial reporting, including Infrastructure Grant funds received.

Transportation RFP Grantee Evaluation Update

Recipients of the Transportation RFP provided updates about their programs.

MJ Jorgenson from NCHA shared that a brand new site will open on February 8, 2024. MJ will send out a flyer with details. They also shared that NCHA is fully staffed, and their vans are purchased. A Northeast Education Working Group is coming together to compile resources around substance use. NCHA is sending their invoice to the Council soon.

To provide context for Region 4's funding allocations, Commissioner Weaver stated that there are regions that have not spent any money but that Region 4 did the RFP early to get things rolling. After the environmental scan, the Region will catch up on spending available funds.

Commissioner Weaver noted that the Council received a signed contract from Centennial Mental Health. Commissioner Weaver is working on getting that signed.

Spencer Green provided the update for Centennial. Spencer stated that the Non Emergency Medicat Transportation (NEMT) in November had 87 rides in Morgan and Logan counties. In December, they had 142 rides that transported individuals to and from their appointments. The secured transport went down from November to December. They are fully staffed except for the coordinator position and are working on hiring a new coordinator. A wheelchair van was purchased and is currently in use. Centennial is looking to do work in Washington and Yuma counties and hopes to get to Lincoln and Kit Carson as well. Centennial does more Substance Use Disorder (SUD) work in Lincoln than mental health work which is different than most counties. They are looking to get more services down there and have all drivers trained in first aid and administering Narcan. Centennial's revised infrastructure grant proposal was approved by the Council outside of the meeting.

Commissioner Weaver stated that the Region needs to focus on providing services in Southern Regions and look at statewide meetings we can join.

OMNI is working with grantees to create evaluation reports, which will be shared publicly.

Upcoming Grants/Funding Opportunities

The upcoming grant opportunities were posted in the chat.

The Career Pipeline, Round 2, and the Work Based Learning Incentive are coming soon. Other grants included: Peer Recovery Support Services Monitoring Initiative (January 2024 deadline), Colorado HIV and AID Prevention Program RFA (January 2024 deadline), Supporting Coloradans in Recover Through Non-Clinical Programs (February and June 2024 deadlines), Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Utilizing Telemedicine or Other Remote-Based Platforms to Develop and Support Treatments for Substance Use Disorder (January 2024 deadline), Walmart Local Community Grants (Quarter 3: August-October and Quarter 4:

November-December deadline), Rural Emergency Medical Services Training Grant (May 2024 deadline).

There will be a new listserv where new grant opportunities will be sent out in real time. The email is OpioidRegion4@omni.org. Everyone was advised to be mindful of other's emails and to not reply all or send spam the emails.

Strategic Planning For 2024

An updated version of the Region 4 Resources dashboard was demoed. The OMNI team will work on getting this up on the Region 4 website.

Ailala Kay and Stacey McClellan from OMNI facilitated a strategic planning session for the Region's future funding priorities.

The session began with a review of the 2-year plan and current Region 4 funded areas. Of the funding areas presented in the MOU, programs focused on treatment services have had the largest funding thus far. These funds have gone to the transportation initiatives at CMHC and NCHA as well as consulting services provided by OMNI.

Ailala reviewed the original RFP allocations and the Region's completed goals and objectives. To provide a better view of the opioid crisis in the area, OMNI showed updated regional data that now includes data from 2016 - 2018. The most recent data are still pre-COVID. The Overdose Death Rates in this new data show that they were declining from the previous years, but more than doubled from 2010. Data did not include all counties, as the CDPHE Dashboard data is suppressed in smaller counties to protect personal data.

An update was provided on the Region 4 Prioritization Survey/Poll. There were 40 total responses across the region. Forty-five percent of respondents indicated they were either an individual with a lived/living experience or support someone with a lived/living experience.

The prioritization area rankings were the following: Prevention, Treatment, Recovery, Harm Reduction, and Criminal Justice. Data from those with lived/living experiences showed that Recovery was most important, followed by Treatment, Prevention, Harm Reduction, and Criminal Justice.

For each priority area, related programs were ranked by importance. Existing programs were noted in the Region 4 resource dashboard.

Commissioner Weaver emphasized that they have years to work on opioid abatement programs, so every piece can be addressed at some point. This discussion will focus on the prioritization process for the upcoming year. It was also mentioned that multiple areas can be integrated into RFPs and don't have to be siloed as they were broken out on the survey.

Following the presentation, an open discussion of the results was had.

Prevention

Prevention programs that received the highest priority rankings in the survey were School and Community Prevention Education and Public Education Campaigns.

Jamie Feld shared that Region 4 can use the Connect Effect materials for free for public awareness campaigns. COAC is looking at providing some mini-grant opportunities to support Regions: **Youth** Mini-grants will be given out to promote the campaigns. Other campaigns mentioned were: [Addiction Recovery | Lift The Label](#); [Tough as a Mother](#). The school resources mentioned were: [Resources for Youth Substance Use Prevention in Colorado \(riseaboveco.org\)](#).

MJ Jorgenson shared there are many general public campaigns already out there and suggested spreading existing campaigns, such as Addiction and Mental Health Awareness ([changingmindslarimer.org](#)), instead of making new ones.

Treatment

Treatment programs that received the highest priority rankings in the survey were Non-Medical Assisted Treatment (MAT) treatment programs, treatment programs targeted at special populations, and outreach and support for treatment programs

Commissioner Brownell stated that mental health professionals should be a priority. Spencer Green stated a second need for professionals and added that nationwide telehealth work has depleted local professionals, especially in rural and frontier communities.

Trish McClain asked about MAT vs. non-MAT treatment options. What is best for those who need treatment, and what is the easiest to provide to the region? She does not want to discount non-MAT but wants to keep the resources in mind and what we want to accomplish. Jamie Feld stated that we want the best form of treatment. We need to make sure it is evidence-based treatment. Ailala stated that in accordance with the CO Opioid MOU, OMNI will support the Region 4 Council in making sure funding is used for evidence-based services.

Benjamin Ferree stated that there were not many responses from the southern part of the Region and that the Council needs to get more data from the southern part of the region to understand how the needs are different. Ben noted that it feels like the approach the Council has been taking isn't working for the southern part of the Region. Ailala mentioned that another potential strategy could be doing more targeted outreach to the southern counties and that OMNI would be happy to work with Ben to get more input and participation from those counties.

MJ Jorgenson gave context for why they gave certain programs priority in the survey. They selected multiple pieces of care to ensure all care parts were covered. They also noted that MAT is the standard of care, and we don't want to have funding for non-MAT services keeping someone away from MAT services.

Recovery

Recovery programs that received the highest priority rankings in the survey were recovery programs associated with opioid use disorder and peer recovery coach/specialist/supporter programs.

Tonya Wheeler asked if there are recovery residences in Region 4 as she is working with people looking for housing. Spencer mentioned that Centennial has Sober Living Homes in Fort Morgan and will get more information to the group. He mentioned sober living is incredibly helpful for people with SUD. People with criminal conduct related to SUD have a harder time finding housing.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction programs that received the highest priority rankings were training and access to opioid overdose reversal medication and support through staffing, supply, and space needs for harm reduction organizations.

Jennifer Mackender stated that even though Harm Reduction was low on the prioritization list, the Council does not want to say they are not prioritizing Harm Reduction since it is important to the region. Trish McClain noted that just because pieces were broken out differently in the survey does not mean they cannot be grouped together in the RFP (e.g., recovery work will include naloxone). The community is already prioritizing harm reduction, so it doesn't necessarily have also to be the top priority of the Council. MJ Jorgenson agreed that building harm reduction into RFP can ensure Harm Reduction is incorporated even if it is not the priority. It was noted that Harm Reduction might have been deprioritized by survey participants because there are so many people already promoting naloxone. Spencer stated that harm reduction is also an important part of treatment.

Jamie Feld stated that COAC can provide data about what is lacking in the region, and OMNI can cross-walk this data with the dashboard.

Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice programs that received the highest priority rankings were treatment and recovery services during incarceration and re-entry treatment and recovery services.

Commissioner Brownell has been getting asked a lot about by law enforcement about body scanners in jails to keep visitors from bringing substances in. Sheriff Martin agreed with body scanners and is trying to get funding for that.

Jennifer Mackender stated that in light of the low prioritization of Criminal Justice programs in the survey, there might need to be more education about what criminal justice means and what can/should be done.

Commissioner Weaver noted that Criminal Justice can be included in Treatment and Recovery RFPs and doesn't have to be a standalone RFP.

Consensus on 2024 Funding Priorities for Revised 2024 2-Year Plan

A top priority is to consider how to get more information on southern counties.

Although Harm Reduction and Criminal Justice were lowest on the prioritization rankings, consideration will be given on how to incorporate them into RFPs.

Commissioner Weaver does not think the council needs to reinvent the wheel on prevention campaigns. He suggested that the council use funding to promote existing campaigns. Commissioner Weaver also noted that we don't want to take a one-size-fits-all approach as the Region has different needs throughout, and we want to make sure we're giving the southern part of the region the specific resources they need. Recovery and Treatment RFPs can trickle down if we write RFPs correctly.

Dayna DeHerrera-Smith noted that she was able to do co-branding campaigns using state campaigns and that they provide a lot of bang for your buck. It will be worth exploring how to get dollars for co-branded marketing.

Jim Kuemmerle suggested we create three work groups for each of the priority areas and have them report back in the near future so they could recommend the next steps and utilize our time better.

Regarding the high prioritization of school-based prevention programs, Jennifer Mackender was not sure if prevention in schools is simple. We have people in the northern part of the state that can build out specific training, and there are training happening now in Larimer County. MJ added to this that we have to be specific about the types of prevention programs. For example, there's a big difference between marketing and building training around social-emotional learning and prevention upstream strategies.

Ailala Kay mentioned it may be possible to focus on existing campaigns for Prevention if we are looking at March 15th. For Treatment and Recovery, the council could put workgroups together to get RFPs out for the March 15th deadline. Commissioner Weaver mentioned some regions are way ahead of us. We can reach out to those regions to help us build RFPs based on those already working programs. OMNI will work with the Consortium and COAG on acquiring existing RFPs.

OMNI can leverage the resources they have to get more data and information from the southern part of the region. Commissioner Weaver mentioned they had a few studies done previously and could use funding dollars to do another study of the region.

Benjamin Ferree will network and try to get more data from southern communities, spreading the word and representing the area. Ailala mentioned that we could focus on the southern parts of the region for the next infrastructure grants.

Commissioner Weaver discussed the importance of working with other state agencies. There is a lot of money out there that we could try to get through match funding.

Erika Greenberg mentioned that CAHEC has also just hired a new Regional Health Connector Shauna Richardson for the southern region. She will cover Elbert, Lincoln, Kit Carson, and Cheyenne Counties. Erika will have her attend Region 4 meetings to help address the region's needs.

Discussing school-based prevention, Terry Hofmeister suggested connecting with superintendents and principals to try to promote prevention in schools. Jim Kuemmerle stated that the total number of school districts across the region is 36.

Those interested in joining the Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery working groups put their names in the chat. Jim Kuemmerle, MJ Jorgensen, Trish McClain, Jennifer Mackender, Kevin Blankenship, Rebecca Stieb, Jack Devie, and Benjamin Ferree shared an interest in joining all three working groups. Dayna DeHerrera-Smith shared an interest in joining the Treatment group. Ginger Williams and Erika Greenberg shared an interest in joining the Prevention group. Tonya Wheeler shared an interest in joining the Recovery group.

Advisory Committee

Commissioner Weaver noted he will invite the DHS secretaries to join meetings.

Unscheduled Business

Commissioner Weaver asked if there were any expenses that we needed to take care of because the in-person meeting was canceled. Commissioner Brownell noted that the only expense was for food but that he would keep it and didn't need reimbursement.

Erika Greenberg mentioned CAHEC is bringing its Be Mindful It Matters traveling mental health exhibit to the NE Region beginning in February and would love anyone from this group for support and resources.

MJ Jorgensen reminded the council about the North Colorado Health Alliance Community Open House on February 8, 2024 at 216 N. 3rd Street, Sterling, CO.

Jack Devie expressed that Rural Colorado does not understand what the Council is trying to accomplish in terms of the opioid crisis and that we need to get the word out there. Commissioner Weaver mentioned how it is difficult to get people to participate and that unless it affects us, we do not get involved. That's why education is so important.

Dayna DeHerrera-Smith mentioned another plug for the opening of the Ranch.

Rebecca Stieb mentioned that if anyone wants to connect around Justice, Milestone Community Wellness wants to connect. Sheriff Martin wants to connect with Milestones around Criminal Justice.

Jennifer Mackender asked if there was any reason to have working groups for things we are not prioritizing. Ailala mentioned we would keep it tight for the next three months as we focused on RFPs, but then in March, the council would come back to talk about additional work groups.

Jack Devie mentioned that there are lots of unmet needs in Sedgwick County. Commissioner Weaver stated that there is a lot of area over the region, and we need to touch every part of the county.

Greg Tacha stated that he will visit with Cindy Tacha, who is involved in mental health with Lincoln Health. She is going to reach out to CAHEC.

Commissioner Weaver mentioned that the meeting in March might need to be moved due to conflicts. The council will schedule a make-up in-person meeting after RFPs are created.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 pm.

Next Meeting

The February meeting will be held on Monday, February 5, at 10:00 am.

Scott Weaver, Chairman