

# **Opioid Response Region 4 Council Summary**

**March 2, 2026**

**9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

## **In-Person Meeting Attendance**

On March 2, 2026, 9:30 a.m. MT, Board members, Advisory Council members, vested partners, community members from across the Eastern District, and staff from the Colorado Attorney General Opioid Response Unit attended an in-person meeting to continue the work of the Regional Opioid Abatement Council (ROAC). The in-person meeting took place at the Concessions Building at 410 West Hoag Street, Yuma, CO 80759.

### **Present were:**

Board Members: Scott Weaver – Yuma County, Terry Hofmeister – Phillips County, Benjamin Ferree – Town of Limon, Greg Tacha – Town of Limon, JD Ross – Sterling Police Department, Mike Brownell – Logan County, Stan Hitchcock – Kit Carson County

Advisory Council Members: Dante Gonzalez – Centennial Mental Health Center (CMHC), MJ Jorgensen – North Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA), Trish McLean – Northeast Colorado Health Department

Other Attendees: Allie De Souza – Milestone Community Wellness, Angela Shuff – Advocates for Recovery Colorado, Brandi Ritchey – Yuma County, Brandy Cutshaw – TurnKey Health, Dayna DeHerrera-Smith – Porch Light Health, Jack Devie – Milestone Community Wellness, Jonathan Judge – Rise Above Colorado, Julianne Kramer – Melissa Memorial Hospital, Kristen Heller – Centennial Mental Health, Kristin Carpenter – Colorado Consortium, Marissa Busell – Melissa Memorial Hospital, Mary Kay Connote – Melissa Memorial Hospital, Mellie Ryan – Colorado ROOTS, Mindy Baumgardner – Attorney General’s Office Opioid Unit, Nikki Burns – Unbound Courage, Olivia Carrara – Colorado ROOTS, Oscar Hernandez-Soria – Attorney General’s Office Opioid Unit, Rebecca Stieb – Milestone Community Wellness, Sarah Arntt – Arntt Synergy Consulting, Shaun Wilson – Hope House, Tonya Wheeler – Advocates for Recovery Colorado, Ailala Kay – Omni Institute

### **Minutes**

Stan Hitchcock moved to approve the February meeting minutes. Terry Hofmeister seconded. The motion passed without objection.

### **Introductions and Regional Reflections**

Councilmembers introduced themselves and shared accomplishments or hopes for the region. Achievements and goals for Region 4 included:

- Strong regional collaboration
- Reduced competition among organizations
- Successful mini-grant model
- Increased service access in rural/frontier communities

- Law enforcement and treatment alignment
- Growth in youth programming
- Expansion of recovery housing and hospital withdrawal services
- Recognition of Region 4 as a model across Colorado

### **Financial Reports**

Brandi Ritchey from Yuma County shared the invoices for this month’s financial updates. The Council reviewed the below invoice numbers and dollar amounts for both regional and Infrastructure work.

Terry Hoffmeister moved to approve the current Region 4 financial update Mike Brownell seconded. The motion passed without objection.

- Invoice #1433 – Epifluence/Colorado ROOTS, regional: \$14,588.71
- Invoice #8733 – Omni Institute, regional: \$9,166.67
- Invoice #63-2026-01 – NCHA, regional: \$84,796.42
- Invoice LOG-298 – TurnKey Health (Logan), regional: \$126.60
- Invoice MGN-166 – TurnKey Health (Morgan), regional: \$45.67
- Invoice WSH-163 – TurnKey Health (Washington), regional: \$30.08

Pending the invoices, the fund balance currently stands at \$1,211,690.03.

Greg Tacha moved to approve the invoices. Mike Brownell seconded. The motion passed without objection.

### **Funded Organizations Spotlights and Updates**

Leaders of organizations with program(s) funded by Region 4 were invited to present on services provide through Region 4 funding, any gaps noted in the continuum of care, and Region 4 dollars spent to-date along with total remaining dollars. The following are points from speakers’ presentations.

- **Epifluence/Colorado ROOTS**
  - Presenter: Mellie Ryan
  - Overview
    - Funding period: September 2024 – September 2026
    - Partnerships established with all Region 4 hospitals
    - 150+ referrals received
    - 100+ provider consult calls
    - 160+ providers trained
    - Community education and hospital dashboards implemented
  - Financials
    - ~\$280,985 expended
    - ~\$317,000 remaining
  - Upcoming work

- Colorado ROOTS' Regional Symposium will be held on May 8, 2026, in Colorado Springs
  - CME credits are available
  - Focus on hospital engagement, peer support, and education
- **Melissa Memorial Hospital** (acute withdrawal management)
  - Presenters: Mary Kay Connote, Marissa Busell, Julianne Kramer
  - Highlights
    - Acute alcohol withdrawal program launched
    - 3 patients served to date
    - First patient self-referred back (positive indicator)
    - Strong staff buy-in following initial hesitancy
    - Implementation of phenobarbital protocol
    - Warm-line consultation utilized frequently
    - Spanish-speaking community health worker hired
  - Key outcome: Improved local access to withdrawal services that previously required travel outside the region
- **Milestone Community Wellness** (recovery housing)
  - Presenter: Rebecca Steib
  - Overview
    - Two recovery residences planned (north and south regions)
    - First location targeted: Logan County
    - Property identified, awaiting loan approval
    - Male recovery house prioritized initially
    - Interviewed house manager candidate
  - Challenges
    - Financing challenges due to organization age
    - Lending institution documentation requirements
- **Hope House** (youth prevention program)
  - Presenter: Shaun Wilson
  - Services
    - 30 youth currently served (target: 35)
    - Justice-involved youth support
    - Transportation provided
    - Partnership with Turning Point (IOP)
    - Family support services
    - Job readiness programming
    - School coordination
    - Youth engagement projects (community mural)
  - Financials
    - ~\$4,000 invoiced to date
    - ~29% of allocated funding expended
  - Key outcome: Strong youth engagement, prevention focus, and court collaboration
- **North Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA) and Partners**

- Presenters:
  - MJ Jorgenson (NCHA)
  - Tonya Wheeler (Advocates for Recovery Colorado)
  - Dayna DeHerrera (Porchlight Health)
- Services
  - MAT access & care coordination
  - Same-day MAT access
  - Jail coordination
  - Transportation support
  - Naloxone distribution (8,864 doses distributed via kiosks)
  - Peer recovery support (walk-in model)
  - Contingency management for stimulant use
  - Hep C & PrEP services
  - Integrated rural health hub in Sterling
- **TurnKey Health** (jail-based behavioral health services)
  - Presenter: Brandy Cutshaw
  - Counties served
    - Logan
    - Morgan
    - Washington
    - Yuma (clients housed in other facilities currently)
  - Services
    - MAT (Suboxone, Vivitrol, Naltrexone, Methadone)
    - Mandatory treatment participation for MAT clients
    - Naloxone upon release
    - Resource packets upon release
    - Inpatient referral advocacy
    - Case management
  - Challenges
    - Unpredictable release timing
    - Transportation
    - Community stigma
    - Housing/employment barriers post-release

### **Legislative & Funding Concerns**

The Council discussed challenges such as Medicaid work requirements and potential coverage loss, rural hospital vulnerability, federal funding restructuring, recent state cuts to Recovery Community Organization (RCO) funding, and impact on peer recovery programs.

The Council discussed proposed actions, including exploring the formation of a Legislative Committee, engaging in Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI) for lobbying support, and increasing advocacy and tracking of funding risks.

### **Regional Funding Overview**

Funded initiatives that are active across all Region 4 counties include treatment providers, peer services, mini-grants, hospital programs, prevention initiatives, and facilitation and evaluation support by Omni Institute. Of note is Region 4's mini-grant model, which has been recognized for its innovation and replicability across Colorado.

**Next Meeting**

The April meeting will be held on April 6, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. MT.

The March meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. MT for lunch and networking sessions.

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Scott Weaver, Board Chair