

Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

July 19, 2021

2:00-3:30 pm

Date of meeting: Monday, July 19, 2021

Start time: 2:00 pm

End time: 3:30 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (WebEx)

Members participating remotely		Vote 1*	Vote 2
1	Marylou Sudders (<i>non-voting chair</i>) – Executive Office of Health and Human Services	N/A	N/A
2	Jennifer Almonte – Lynn Department of Public Health	X	X
3	Charles Anderson MD, MPH, MBA – The Dimock Center	-	X
4	Gina Armstrong – Pittsfield Health Department	X	X
5	Jason Ball – Framingham Police	X	X
6	Koren Cappiello – Brockton Health Department	-	-
7	Matilde Castiel, MD – Worcester Department of Health and Human Services	X	X
8	Maureen Cavanagh – Magnolia New Beginnings	-	-
9	Damon Chaplin – New Bedford Health Department	X	X
10	Denise Garlick – Massachusetts House of Representatives	X	X
11	Lindsay Hackett – City of Springfield	X	X
12	Suzie Hauptmann – Falmouth Department of Human Services	X	X
13	Brendan Little – Granada House	X	X
14	John McGahan – Gavin Foundation	-	X
15	Mary Beth Ogulewicz – Amherst Department of Senior Services	X	X
16	Joanne Peterson – Learn 2 Cope	X	X
17	David Rosenbloom, PhD – Boston University School of Public Health	X	-
18	John Rosenthal – Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI)	X	X
19	Elsie Taveras, MD, MPH – Mass General Brigham	X	X
20	Jennifer Tracey – Boston Mayor's Office of Recovery Services	X	X
21	LaToya Whiteside – Prisoners' Legal Services	X	X

* (X) Voted in favor; (O) Opposed; (A) Abstained from vote; (-) Absent from meeting or during vote

Proceedings

Secretary Sudders called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. She welcomed members and noted that all votes taken during the meeting would be conducted via roll call.

Council members briefly introduced themselves and their respective affiliations.

Vote to approve minutes from the 6/21/2021 meeting: Secretary Sudders requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Council's previous meeting on June 21, 2021. Director Chaplin introduced the motion, which was seconded by Professor Rosenbloom and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

Secretary Sudders reviewed the Council's legislative charge, reminding members that she serves as a non-voting chair of the group and that any recommendations the Council puts forth will be adopted by a majority vote. The Secretary explained that funds from the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Trust Fund will not replace state or federal funds available to the Commonwealth, but will strengthen and expand existing programming and address known gaps. The Secretary stated that the state will receive \$200 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address pressing public health issues, \$136 million of which Governor Baker announced will be directed towards the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. The Secretary explained that from this amount, \$55 million will be utilized to increase supplemental rates to health and human service providers, known informally as Chapter 257 rates, to help address staffing issues that many providers have experienced.

Chief of Staff Diamond provided an update on the status of the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Trust Fund. She noted that there are currently \$11.5 million in the Trust Fund with no additional revenues deposited since the Council's last meeting in June. She stated that an additional \$1.5 million in settlement funds are expected to be deposited soon, as well as \$90 million over the next several years from the Attorney General's settlement with Purdue Pharma. Chief of Staff Diamond reminded Council members that they are subject to the Conflict of Interest Law and are encouraged to contact the State Ethics Commission regarding any matters that might require the filing of a written disclosure.

Deirdre Calvert, Director of the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) at the Department of Public Health (DPH) presented a summary of selected opioid-related data compiled by BSAS and provided updates on new initiatives BSAS is implementing, as well as new prevention and treatment opportunities. Among the updates and opportunities highlighted were expanded federal authorization to purchase fentanyl test strips; reduced barriers to prescribing and increased available pool of eligible providers who prescribe buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder (OUD); strengthening of low-threshold housing programs for high-risk individuals experiencing homelessness; and federal authorization to expand mobile methadone services, which will increase access to medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in rural regions and communities of color (expected in FY 21/22). For additional details, refer to the BSAS team's presentations posted to the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund Advisory Council's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

Secretary Sudders highlighted excerpts from the Governor's Opioid Addiction Working Group in 2015 through 2017 and the recent development of the Behavioral Health Roadmap, as recent state initiatives convened to develop proposals to mitigate the opioid crisis.

Secretary Sudders explained that Council members were asked to provide written feedback on the proposed principles and metrics that were shared with the Council during its June 21 meeting. She noted that feedback was received from 10 Council members, which was then bucketed based on themes into three categories: Criteria, Services, and Structure. For additional details on members' written comments,

refer to the Council's presentation posted to the Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund Advisory Council's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

Professor Rosenbloom suggested that the Council develop a process for establishing a set of priorities for how best to utilize the Trust Fund dollars, noting that the establishment of specific percentages set aside for prevention and treatment initiatives would be helpful.

Council members discussed the summary of written feedback on the proposed principles and metrics, suggesting revisions and additional topics for consideration. Among the proposals highlighted:

- Professor Rosenbloom and Commissioner Castiel noted that many of the individuals who are dying of opioid overdose have had previous “touchpoints” with the BSAS system and that the outreach system needs to be strengthened. Commissioner Castiel added that a focus on innovative approaches is needed, citing diversion programs and outreach strategies within communities of color.
- Chair Garlick suggested that support for individuals with disabilities, particularly the brain-injured population, be included among the criteria and principles for directing Trust Fund dollars.
- Director Tracey and Dr. Taveras requested a summary of services that fall outside the scope of federal funding, noting in particular specific harm reduction services that are not currently included under state and federal funding.
- Dr. Anderson, Mr. McGahan, Mr. Little, and Ms. Peterson suggested that innovated technology and approaches be promoted, such as apps to stay in touch with those who are transitioning out of treatment. Mr. Little also suggested that the criteria include a focus on supporting frontline workforce, particularly those of color, who have experienced high levels of burnout and may not have opportunities for advancement. Director Hauptmann stated that she was in agreement with increased support for frontline mental health clinicians and providers, as well as additional support for the families and households impacted by opioids, particular those caring for young children, such as grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Mr. Rosenthal proposed the creation of a central clearinghouse where families impacted by opioids could connect with qualified staff who could direct them to appropriate resources.
- Dr. Anderson stressed the importance of listening, learning, and teaching in communities, and building the steps to work with those in communities who best understand the barriers to access.
- Officer Ball suggested that eligibility to substance court needs to be expanded.
- Director Armstrong suggested that the scope of criteria should be broad to allow for funding specific initiatives based on community needs.
- Commissioner Castiel stressed the importance of job training for those in recovery to assist with both acquiring new and sustaining existing employment.

Secretary Sudders summarized a number of her priorities related to harm reduction, including increased harm reduction services, removal of barriers for those seeking pathways to treatment, addressing disparities among geographically-impacted and communities of color. In addition, she highlighted increased support for families impacted, education prevention in schools, and creating a culturally-competent workforce that reflects the communities in which they serve.

Secretary Sudders summarized the group's next steps, which included updated priorities, incorporating members' additional feedback; an analysis by the BSAS team of programs that fall outside the scope of federal funding; and development of a “strawman” proposal that will be shared with individual members for feedback. She suggested that at the Council's next meeting on September 30, the Council might come to agreement on a proposed tranche of funding from the Trust Fund that could be utilized in the near term. Secretary Sudders added that she would ask the BSAS team to prepare a summary of programs and

campaigns that the administration has implemented to provide context for some of the proposals that members had put forth during the meeting.

Vote to adjourn: Secretary Sudders requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Chaplin introduced the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Castiel and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.