

Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2023
12:30 to 2:00 pm

Date of meeting: September 27, 2023

Start time: 12:34 pm

End time: 2:03 pm

Location: In-Person Meeting at Worcester City Hall with Virtual (Zoom) Option

		Vote 1	Vote 2	Vote 3
1	Kate Walsh (<i>non-voting chair</i>) – Executive Office of Health and Human Services	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Jennifer Almonte – Lynn Department of Public Health	-	-	-
3	Charles Anderson, MD, MPH, MBA – The Dimock Center	-	X	X
4	Matilde Castiel, MD – Worcester Department of Health and Human Services	X	X	X
5	Maureen Cavanagh – Magnolia New Beginnings	X	X	X
6	Abby Dean – Brookline Health Department	X	X	X
7	Lisa Golden – City of Lowell Department of Health and Human Services	X	X	X
8	Lindsay Hackett – City of Springfield	-	-	-
9	Kate Lena – Barnstable County Department of Human Services	-	X	X
10	Adrian Madaro – Massachusetts House of Representatives	X	X	X
11	John McGahan – Gavin Foundation	X	X	X
12	Carla B. Monteiro – Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center	X	X	X
13	Jeffery Olmstead – Amherst Fire Department	X	X	X
14	Andy Ottoson – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	X	X	X
15	Alyssa Peterkin, MD – Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center	X	X	X
16	Joanne Peterson – Learn 2 Cope	X	X	X
17	David Rosenbloom, PhD – Boston University School of Public Health	X	X	X
18	John Rosenthal – Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI)	-	-	-
19	Stephanie Sloan – New Bedford Health Department	-	-	-
20	Jennifer Tracey – Boston Mayor's Office of Recovery Services	X	X	X
21	LaToya Whiteside – Prisoners' Legal Services	-	-	-

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

Proceedings

Vote to Call to Order: Secretary Kate Walsh welcomed members and called the meeting to order with a roll call vote (see detailed record of votes above – Vote I).

Recap of Strategic Themes/Ideas from Advisory Council: Secretary Walsh provided an overview of key thematic priorities that Advisory Council members have raised to date. See [slides](#) for details.

Overview of Existing Initiatives and Potential Opportunities by Theme: Secretary Walsh and Deirdre Calvert, Director of the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS), provided an overview of existing Commonwealth initiatives to provide context for the Advisory Council on work already being done in each thematic area. They coupled that overview with examples of potential opportunities in each thematic area, for the Advisory Council to consider, and opened the floor to discussion. See [slides](#) for existing Commonwealth initiatives and potential opportunities, by theme. Points raised by Advisory Council members are summarized below:

- Equity:
 - Abby Dean: Brought up the topic of the aging substance use disorder (SUD) population and inequities that exist, such as when individuals are turned away from nursing homes due to inability or unwillingness to manage medication-assisted treatment (MAT).
 - Carla B. Monteiro: Highlighted the problem of underreporting in the aging population due to many living alone. Also noted that women are often not accepted into domestic violence programs if they are on Suboxone or Methadone.
 - Jennifer Tracey: Pointed out that social determinants of health, such as housing and education, must be improved for sustainable recovery to be achieved.
- Data Collection & Analysis:
 - Carla B. Monteiro: Inquired whether the dashboard could expand upon gender identities and disaggregate the data to see more specific categories such as DCF involvement, ethnic groups, immigration status, language barriers, neighborhood, etc. so needs can be better met.
 - Director Calvert: Noted that the dashboard is based on currently available data and affirming that future iterations will be more granular.
 - Secretary Walsh: Emphasized the need for more data.
 - Dr. David Rosenbloom: Highlighted that the BSAS dashboard only covers data reported by BSAS licensed facilities, which misses a lot of data. Noted that other real time data is being collected which could be made available on a local basis.
 - Director Calvert: Concurred with Dr. Rosenbloom, agreeing that other data sets need to be included in future iterations.
- Supporting Families:
 - Secretary Walsh: Touched on current initiatives such as Moms Do Care and First Steps Together, as well as a recent joint meeting hosted by DPH and DCF that encompassed training on effective ways to partner with families coping with SUD.
 - Joanne Peterson: Asked about evidence-based support for families and whether it includes peer support. Advocated for support of orphan children due to overdose deaths of parents.
- Service Expansion:
 - Secretary Walsh: Highlighted important programs that could be expanded, including hospital-based SUD services, mobile MAT, treatment for stimulant addiction & MAT enhanced services.
- Workforce:
 - Carla B. Monteiro: Shared that unfortunately leadership positions were not eligible for prior funding despite the fact that they oversee training and are needed to sign off on clinical hours.
 - Dr. Alyssa Peterkin: Agreed that funding should be applied to the wider human services

- workforce and not just to direct care employees.
- Jennifer Tracey: Asked if there has been any outreach in attracting more individuals to the behavioral health field.
- Secretary Walsh: Identified shortages in workforce in behavioral health, direct care, and nursing. Noted that Governor Healey is strategically addressing this need through MassConnect by providing community college funding for those who had to drop out. Highlighted \$100 million in recent state funding for behavioral health workforce, which could free up ORRF funding to focus more on priority areas complementary to workforce.
- Representative Adrian Madaro: Shared there are some limits to those funds in the Behavioral Health Trust Fund and asked whether that Fund can cover license fees and scholarships.
- Secretary Walsh: Asked whether there might be room to “down-regulate” the need for licenses in some areas; noted that BSAS is currently covering the costs of LADC licenses.
- Carla B. Monteiro: Inquired about raising the salaries for those in behavioral health.
- Secretary Walsh: Explained that the state is both a rate maker and a rate payer, funding the majority of this work through direct services or contracts. Pointed to the challenge with entry-level human services work paying less than entry-level jobs in sectors like retail, while flagging that raising wages has a huge impact on the state budget. Noted that these challenges are why we are having these conversations, to make these decisions.
- Director Calvert: Highlighted that MassHealth did raise rates earlier this year but that there is still more work to be done.
- Awareness:
 - Dr. Matilde Castiel: Mentioned a training program with a focus on decreasing stigma and promoting education on addiction. Voiced support for expansion of programs such as clinicians and recovery coaches in Emergency Departments, suboxone in ambulances, and career education in the area of behavioral health.
 - Carla B. Monteiro: Agreed that awareness is key, noting that addiction begins and ends with pain. Suggested customization of posters to educate members of diverse communities.
 - Secretary Walsh: Raised the idea that partnership with municipalities can help with raising awareness of addiction, decreasing stigma, and increasing career education.

Recommending System Change Priorities: Due to technical difficulties, it was decided that voting on system change priorities would be completed via a survey distributed by email to Advisory Council members. The results of the survey will be reported at the December meeting. Secretary Walsh concluded the meeting by sharing information on upcoming meetings and emphasized the work of the ORRF as a key priority for Governor Healey.

Vote to Approve 8/2/2023 Meeting Minutes: Secretary Walsh requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Council’s previous meeting on August 2, 2023. A motion was made by Carla B. Monteiro and seconded by Dr. Matilde Castiel. Minutes approved (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 2).

Vote to Adjourn: Secretary Walsh requested a motion to adjourn, made by Carla B. Monteiro and seconded by Dr. Matilde Castiel. Meeting adjourned (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 3).