

Opioid Recovery and Remediation Fund (ORRF) Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
 December 11, 2023
 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

Date of meeting: December 11, 2023

Start time: 10:31 am

End time: 12:00 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members participating remotely		Vote 1	Vote 2	Vote 3
1	Kiame Mahaniah (<i>non-voting chair designee</i>) – Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EHS)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Jennifer Almonte – Lynn Department of Public Health	X	A	X
3	Charles Anderson, MD, MPH, MBA – The Dimock Center	X	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, LICSW – Brookline Health Department	X	X	-
7	Lisa Golden – City of Lowell Department of Health and Human Services	-	-	-
8	Lindsay Hackett – City of Springfield	X	X	X
9	Kate Lena – Barnstable County Department of Human Services	X	X	X
10	Adrian Madaro – Massachusetts House of Representatives	-	-	-
11	John McGahan – Gavin Foundation	X	X	X
12	Carla B. Monteiro, MSW, LICSW – 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	-	-	-
15	Alyssa Peterkin, MD – Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center	-	-	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)	X	X	X
19	Stephanie Sloan – New Bedford Health Department	X	A	X
20	Jennifer Tracey – Boston Mayor's Office of Recovery Services	X	X	X
21	LaToya Whiteside – Prisoners' Legal Services	X	X	X

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

Proceedings

Vote to Call to Order: Undersecretary Kiame Mahaniah welcomed members and called the meeting to order with a roll call vote (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 1).

Vote to Approve 9/27/2023 Meeting Minutes: Undersecretary Mahaniah asked if anyone had any edits to the September 27 meeting minutes. Carla B. Monteiro provided corrections to her remarks as captured in the minutes, and also suggested that members' credentials be included. She made a motion, seconded by Matilde Castiel, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried (see detailed record of votes above – Vote 2).

AGO Opioid Settlements Update: Health Care Division Chief Sandy Wolitzky from the Attorney General's Office (AGO) provided updates regarding payments into the ORRF in 2023. Mallinckrodt's second bankruptcy in August 2023 is anticipated to result in a reduction in future payments to the ORRF of approximately \$18.5 million.

Update on Municipal Abatement Funds: See [meeting slides](#) for a detailed update on municipal abatement funds. Discussion ensued, with Kate Lena expressing appreciation for this level of public reporting and transparency regarding municipal abatement funds expenditures, and the opportunity this represents for the public to become more involved.

In response to a question by John Rosenthal regarding the scope of JSI's regional and municipal engagement, Julia Newhall (Dir. of Opioid Abatement, MA DPH Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS)) and Karen Tseng (EHS Senior Advisor) confirmed JSI is engaging extensively with municipalities, including live convenings, an online platform, listserv and newsletter, and technical assistance infrastructure. Kate Lena added that JSI recently presented at the MA Health Officers Conference and the room was full of municipal representatives.

Undersecretary Mahaniah underscored that the state and ORRF's role is to provide guidance/technical assistance to municipalities, who have ultimate authority over how to expend their abatement funds.

Discussion of Advisory Council's Recommended ORRF Priorities and Review of

Corresponding Initiatives: Undersecretary Mahaniah reviewed the results of the survey of ORRF priorities that Council members completed since the previous meeting, and presented recommended funding commitments for each priority. Council members ranked their priorities as follows: 1. Equity; 2. Service Expansion; 3. Workforce; 4. Supporting Families; 5. Social Determinants of Health; 6. Data Collection/Analysis; and 7. Awareness. See [meeting slides](#) for further details on each strategic priority and corresponding recommended initiatives. Points raised by Council members and highlights of the ensuing discussion are summarized below:

Equity

- Undersecretary Mahaniah: Noted the importance of reentry programs to equity as justice-involved populations have among the highest rates of overdoses.
- David Rosenbloom: Underscored the importance of looking upstream for ways to prevent, pretreat, and promote non-arrest models to recovery, including evaluation of programs already underway to see if they are preventing reincarceration.
- BSAS Director Dee Calvert: Noted ORRF equity activities would be in complement to existing work at BSAS and across the Commonwealth; confirmed program evaluation is in place for the diversion and prevention work BSAS is engaged in. Described the goal of the recommended ORRF equity initiatives as addressing gaps in current programming and ensuring smaller, grassroots organizations have equitable access to funding opportunities.
- LaToya Whiteside: Reinforced the importance of ensuring BIPOC grassroots organizations have access to ORRF funding and are able to navigate the government procurement process.
- Undersecretary Mahaniah: Highlighted the role of BSAS's community-based, competitively procured fiscal intermediaries to promote equity, accessibility, and technical assistance in grant application processes.

Service Expansion

- David Rosenbloom: While supportive of expanding hospital-based SUD programs (as emergency departments (EDs) continue to serve as a disproportionate entry point), concerned about sustainability of grant-based

programs to effectuate system change. He has seen prior community hospital grant programs fail to foster the institutional policy and cultural change needed in order to sustain impact.

- Charles Anderson: Noted that EDs are one point of entry but important to look at funding support across the care continuum, as many access their healthcare through community health organizations.
- Carla B. Monteiro: Agreed regarding investing in community support services and transitional support services in addition to EDs.
- John Rosenthal: Expressed enthusiasm/support for the ED grant program.
- Director Calvert: Noted challenges in operationalizing the law passed in MA requiring EDs to provide medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). Echoed that the goal is not for every person to go to the ED in order to access MOUD and emphasized the importance of care collaboration across the continuum and warm handoffs to community providers. Noted that EHS is engaging MassHealth to examine the related rate issue of making this a reimbursable service; and that BSAS has conferred with groups like CA Bridge to inform this shared work of addressing gaps in hospital-based SUD programs.

Workforce

- Kate Lena: Noted we are still losing providers to overdose, and the challenges for people in recovery to get into this field and stay in the field. Underscored the importance of support programs for SUD workforce.

Supporting Families

- Stephanie Sloan and Carla B. Monteiro: Asked about the recommended level of funding for each priority and what considerations informed them.
- Director Calvert and Karen Tseng: Considerations included guiding priorities reflected in the ORRF Strategic Framework and Advisory Council survey and recommendations, combined with data on scope of unmet needs and current activities in the Commonwealth.
- Undersecretary Mahaniah: Explained that, per the state subdivision agreement, ORRF funding is required to be complementary to existing resources such as BSAS's significant annual operating budget (supplement/strengthen rather than supplant). Director Calvert added that in light of this, the \$3.5M annually for supporting families is designed to be complementary to the \$5M annually in community grantmaking the Advisory Council recently endorsed (which includes supporting families), with the overarching goal of attracting and funding organizations and projects that would not normally qualify for BSAS funding.
- Joanne Peterson: Asked about help for communities in spending for children and families, suggesting, e.g., an advisory board comprised of young adults who have aged out of the system after growing up having lost parents to addiction.
- Director Calvert: Expressed enthusiasm for that idea and noted that JSI is a dedicated training and assistance resource funded through the ORRF to help communities strategize about the use of abatement funds.

Data Collection & Analysis

- Matilde Castiel: Underscored the importance of more localized data, such as through EMRs, to track trends in communities.
- Carla B. Monteiro: Wanted to confirm funding for data collection/analysis would be sufficient to support data disaggregation at the local level.
- David Rosenbloom: Lauded the dashboard as an excellent first and second start, and highlighted important next steps such as tracking outcomes at provider and organizational levels.
- Undersecretary Mahaniah: Noted that disaggregating data locally helps us tie trends back to factors like the social determinants of health.

Undersecretary Mahaniah summarized themes he heard throughout the dialogue, including: data about outcomes and performance that is disaggregated; ensuring smaller/nontraditional/innovative organizations in the community have equitable access to opportunities; families and how to support them; and, overall, how can we leverage ORRF funding to help sustain deep change across the continuum of care when someone seeks treatment. He committed to continuing to integrate these themes and guidance in advancing the work of the ORRF.

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