

OPIOID SETTLEMENT REMEDIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 30, 2024

Location: Duluth Government Services Center - St. Louis River Room, 320 W 2nd St, Duluth MN
Virtual

Present: Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Boyle, Commissioner Grimm, Sheriff Ramsay, Attorney Maki, Linnea Mirsch, Jana Blomberg, Brooke Wetmore (support), Sue Purchase, Greg Anderson, Verne Wagner, Heather Blue, Bryan Johnson, Jess Nickila, Melissa Dybvig, Jennifer Garbow, Pat Conway, Beth Bilden, Sherry Johnson, Brandon Hankey

Convened: The meeting was convened at approximately 4:01PM

➤ Welcome, Moment of Silence

➤ Introduction and Member Roles

This committee is a St. Louis County Board Chair initiated committee and must be re-confirmed at the start of each year. It is the intention to request recommitments each year from current members and analyze if any gaps in sector representation need to be addressed. Members placed themselves in the following sector categories:

Treatment Facilities - 1 member
Healthcare Systems – 4 members
Emergency Room – 1 member
Addiction Care – 2 members
Pharmacist – 1 member
Prevention Experts – 1 member
Harm Reduction Experts – 2 members
Law Enforcement – 2 members
Intervention & Recovery Experts - 1 member
Individuals with Lived Experience – 3 members
Education – 3 members
Research – 1 member
Criminal Justice – 2 members

➤ Harm Reduction and Prevention funding update

Jana Blomberg offered an update on the 7 funded projects supported by the first Request for Proposals (RFP). Four organizations - RAD, RAAN, Chum, Well Being Development – requested no cost extensions and will continue their work through the end of 2024. The remaining 3 organizations have completed their projects. A Handout (attached) presented the successes and barriers of the projects. Noted successes included increased community connections and cross sector collaboration. Noted barriers common across grantees were difficulties hiring and maintaining staff, and difficulties with one year funding opportunities. It was noted that this committee expressed concerns over grantees hiring staff using one-time funding, but it was reported that organizations are confident they will be able to maintain the

positions and that the added positions successfully expanded service offerings including North St. Louis County.

Jana Blomberg then offered an update on the county-wide communication plan. The plan uses US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)'s One Pill Can Kill campaign and includes billboards, social media, webinars, fact sheets, and more. This campaign has been targeted in April and May to coincide with area proms and graduations as well as National Fentanyl Awareness Day, which is May 7. Next, the communication plan subcommittee will launch the "Be There" campaign.

Verne Wagner suggested listing names of all the lives lost to overdose in St. Louis County.

Responding to a question raised by Commissioner Grimm regarding if the use of communication campaigns is evidence based, Linnea Mirsch noted that these two campaigns (the norm-reinforcing "Be There" campaign, and the DEA campaign) both are backed by science and data indicating lower usage/overdose as a result of the campaigns. Commissioner Grimm noted a gap in membership of the committee included current users or those new to their recovery journey.

➤ Criminal Justice Focused funding update

Sheriff Ramsay will be bringing forward a plan to the subcommittee to further reduce the supply of non-prescribed opioids in the county. Data shared of overdoses and opioid-related deaths indicated a continued rise. Several anecdotal stories were shared including the County Jail now using a contracted mail services which electronically delivers mail, body scanners, and the use of xylazine with fentanyl/opioids prior to arrests.

The County is currently funded by a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) grant to develop reentry programs to reduce overdose deaths and recidivism. The reentry program is cross-sector collaboration. St. Luke's, the medical provider for the St. Louis County Jail, currently provides Suboxone during the reentry process – a once-a-day prescription which limits the effects of opiates and prevents overdoses. The Jail is looking to begin using Sublocad, a similar prescription with effects that last 30-days rather than 1 day. This is promising, however, the prescription is significantly more expensive and pharmacy is working through prescription options post-discharge.

Legislative updates included that, as written, there is currently funding in the Omnibus Budget Bill for DHS to begin application for a Section 1115 Waiver to expand access to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment through MA coverage up to 30 days pre-discharge for up to 8 pilot settings. Related also to mental health needs in the jail there is some progress in expanding state capacity for severe mental health that may lessen the burden on correctional facilities.

The identification of uses of Opioid Remediation Settlement funds for Criminal Justice Focus has been intentionally slow as those involved work to identify gaps.

Linnea Mirsch offered a proposal to the committee to pursue a 2-4 year pilot program of a Reentry Team (including Social Worker and Probation Officer) which would go beyond traditional vocational services and support reintegration by offering support for mental health care, SUD, housing, financial, physical, social, interpersonal, and connecting to additional services. This 2-4 year pilot would work towards sustainability through the Officer Involved

Community Based Care benefit and 1115 Waiver. Arrowhead Regional Corrections (ARC) is supportive of this proposal. There was support from the Committee to move forward.

Commissioner Grimm, Sherry Johnson, Jess Nickila, Sue Purchase, Bryan Johnson, Melissa Dybvig, and Pat Conway volunteered to be on a subcommittee to further develop this proposal to bring to the County Board.

Sue Purchase shared about the emergency response RAAN is developing for those currently incarcerated and though an “alley crawl” to prepare those who may be closest to potential overdoses. She further indicated a need for improved access to oxygen for emergency prep kits, beyond the plastic oxygen masks. She indicated that there is a May 7th Naloxone Saturation Meeting.

Verne Wagner asked about the effectiveness and access to Fentanyl Test Strips in school settings. He proposed inmates could be used as public speakers in schools as a youth prevention method. Sheriff Ramsay noted that the St. Louis County Jail is short term which may not make sense. Prevention Education in Schools was discussed with Beth Bilden indicating she had trained naloxone administration in schools and Jana Blomberg indicating that the Public Health Department is connected with area schools but that one-time speakers, without ongoing follow up, were not found to be effective.

Greg Anderson expressed his support for the Reentry Team proposal. Commissioner McDonald offered to make a connection to Mohave County which has a similar, and successful program. Linnea Mirsch indicated Treatment Courts would be an opportunity for “handoff” of individuals involved in the proposed reentry program, however Pat Conway was concerned about long-term funding of Treatment Courts.

➤ Intention setting for Upstream Prevention funding

Jana Blomberg proposed a round of funding managed similar to the Harm Reduction and Prevention with “Request for Proposal” dedicated to “upstream” efforts including but not limited to education / training in school, training/capacity building, parent training, teen harm reduction, and peer/family supports. Due to the fact that one-year funding was identified as a challenge for previously funded organizations, the proposal would include seeking approval for multiyear funding. No specific funding levels were proposed, with the intention to wait until proposals are received. A proposed timeline would have an RFP draft created by the end of May and released mid-June. RFPs would be reviewed in August and brought before the County Board in September.

The County Board has declared that only money received can be spent, money cannot be pre spent and currently approximately \$2.2 million is available, with a total of \$18 million expected over the next 18 years.

Beth Bilden volunteered to be on a subcommittee and will reach out to an additional contact.

Beth reiterated how important the use of data is – even if it comes from multiple sources.

The meeting adjourned at 5:28PM

Notes prepared by Brooke Wetmore