

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee Friday, April 11, 2025, Approved

Attendees:

Attending: Stephanie Bond, Candace Facemyer, Sam Hess, Judge Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (Chair)

Invited, Not Attending: Amber Blankenship, Cindy Hill, Tom Plymale

ODCP Staff: Dr. Stephen Loyd, Laura McGuire, Justin Smith

Marshall University Staff: Rachel Bledsoe, Bradley McCoy

Guest Speaker: Patrick Mirandy, Chief of Staff for West Virginia Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Opening:

Stephanie Thornton (Chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Friday, April 11, 2025, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve the February and March 2025 minutes. Judge Rowe proposed a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Sam Hess seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or changes. The minutes were approved with all in favor, and none opposed. The purpose of this meeting was to host Patrick Mirandy, the Chief of Staff for the West Virginia Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, to discuss Narcan policies and procedures across jail/prison facilities and upon parole.

Agenda Items:

Guest Speaker – Patrick Mirandy, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

- Mr. Mirandy has worked within corrections facilities since 1994 when he began as a parole officer.
- Past drug screen panels began with only four panels. The panels used today have 16 panels and are constantly adapting to maintain screening for drugs being introduced into the population.
- Over the past four to five, multiple overdoses have occurred in facilities due to fentanyl.
- West Virginia Regional Jails have implemented the GOALS program (Getting Over Addicted Lifestyles Successfully) to assist in tracking statistics, such as recidivism rates, and getting those incarcerated with substance use disorder (SUD) all the services needed, including alternative sentencing.
- As of June 2023, there were approximately 1000 incarcerated individuals on medicated assisted treatment (MAT). To date, the program now has 4,000 individuals on MAT. The primary focus is overdose and substance use prevention and allowing access to medicine assistance treatment. MAT is used in conjunction with therapy, counselors, and other evidence-based programs. Facilities attempt to keep the incarcerated on the same MAT as they were using previously if they are already being treated.

- The current Narcan policy was released in 2024. The newest procedural updates are scheduled to be released on May 16, 2025. Upon release of the new policy guidelines, parole offices will have Narcan available.
- Narcan has decreased overdose rates in West Virginia by 50%. Overdose deaths across the state are down by 40%. EMS reported calls for drug overdoses are down by 40%. ER Visits due to overdoses are down by 50%. 80% of the incarcerated population have a substance use disorder or are in the facility due to a SUD-related crime.
- Narcan is offered in both jails and prisons as individuals are released for re-entry. Juvenile detention centers also have access to Narcan, and they are kept in populated areas throughout the facility for immediate emergency access.
- Those who have a short-term jail stay have a harder time gaining access to MAT services due to the shortened stay (i.e. a person is admitted on a Friday and is bonded out later in the evening.) Short-term jail stays are referred to PSIMED for behavioral health treatment upon release.
- The group discussed injectables for MAT, such as SUBLOCADE, as a comparison for cost effectiveness, access, and overall benefits.
- Two barriers exist around the usage of injectables:
 - Transportation to a clinic prescribing injectables and a pharmacy with them in stock
 - Continuance in administering the injectable. It is only administered monthly so consumers do not have to remember to take it daily, but it may lead to a decline in adherence.
- Clinics need to be accessible. Telehealth should be available to assist in rural areas for continued care and access.
- A new medical contract with Wexford has a therapist and licensed provider at all jails/prisons.
- As of March 17, 2025, individuals who are incarcerated are asked if they would like to take Narcan with them as part of standard release procedures. It is possible that if someone is released directly from magistrate court, they would not be asked if they want Narcan, since they are foregoing the typical release procedures on-site at the correctional facility.
- There are opportunities to advocate for the use of Narcan and its accessibility at state academy training. While officers are trained in how to use Narcan, they can always use more education about why it's used and barriers to access.

Plans for Future Subcommittee Collaboration

- The Courts Subcommittee will invite Dr. Jim Becker from the Treatment Subcommittee to the July meeting. They will also meet with the Youth Subcommittee later in the year to discuss youth treatment availability.

Subcommittee Highlights

- Bradley McCoy explained that all Subcommittees are submitting highlights of the work they have done thus far this year. Stephanie Thornton will provide him with a list of things that were not explicitly mentioned in the State Plan Quarterly Progress Report.

Additional Discussion

- The Subcommittee members questioned the overcrowding issues reported regarding many correction facilities. One explanation offered is there is a lengthened time gap between sentencing and convictions. This causes the intake units to become crowded. The systems are working to reduce this effect by prioritizing people along with services available.

Adjournment:

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The Subcommittee will meet again on Tuesday May 13, 2025 at 10:00 AM.