

# **Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Recovery Community Subcommittee Wednesday April 2, 2025, Approved**

## **Attendees:**

**Attending:** Amber Blankenship (co-chair), Elly Donahue, Heather Gregory, Dan McCawley (co-chair),

**Invited, Not Attending:** Brandy Blatt, Trenton Clem, Ardella Cottrill, Joe Deegan, Francisca Gray, Ann Hammond, William Long, Rajan Masih, Lou Ortenzio, Stephanie Stout, Destini Williams, Paul Shimer, JoAnna Vance

**ODCP:** Laura McGuire

**Guest Attendees:** Misty Adams (WV Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) (DCR) and Stephanie Thornton (Courts and Justice-Involved Population Subcommittee Chair)

**Marshall University Staff:** Rachel Bledsoe and Bradley McCoy

## **Opening:**

Amber Blankenship (co-chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Recovery Community Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was not present to approve the March 2025 meeting minutes. The purpose of this meeting was to invite Stephanie Thornton and Misty Adams as guest speakers to discuss case management in the incarceration, treatment, and recovery continuum and.

## **Agenda Items:**

### **Guest Speaker Stephanie Thornton (Courts Subcommittee) and Guest Attendee Misty Adams (DCR)**

- Alternative sentencing should exist in all court systems but will require the capacity for case management to reduce gaps in service.
- The group discussed standard operating procedures for courts providing services. There is work to be done in communicating the language around the treatment/recovery continuum to those working in the court system. For example, a judge may order someone to “a year of treatment” for their substance use disorder, but that does not exist. Those who work in prisons and jails, case managers, peer recovery support specialists, and all of those who work in the court system should be speaking of referrals, treatment, and recovery the same way. It is already written in the State Code that judges and prosecutors need to consider this alternative sentencing, but they need assistance in understanding it.
- Court officials should have consideration towards insurances payments required for treatment programs.
- Putnam County had a reentry liaison working for Prestera. The program was effective, but the position was gone when the grant for it ended. Police and Peers and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs have also helped to communicate the correct language with the court system. Mobile units also navigate between behavioral health centers and courts. Peer recovery support specialists (PRSSs) work in many of the public defenders’ offices across the state and should be utilized to standardize these procedures.

- There are still gaps remaining in the jails as opposed to the prisons systems. This is due to the jails being only short-term facilities (often 2-3 days) and prisons having more long-term stays. By the time someone is booked into a jail, case managers do not have the opportunity to set them up with services upon release/reentry. Many jails throughout the region do have a Master Resource Book available. The group discussed a plan to have the Master Resource Books immediately available on tablets which can be immediately accessed by jail/prison population.
- DCR has a pilot program with Presteria sending PRSSs into South Central Regional Jail to set them up with case management prior to release.
- The group discussed the importance of mentors assisting in decision making skills available to the incarcerated population. Peer recovery support specialists could also be critically influential in providing these services. Mobile units could also function in this role in creating the access to healthcare services, job opportunities, and educational resources for immediate access upon release and community reentry.

#### **2025 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Progress and Updates:**

- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** A watermark has been created to copyright the informed consent documentation. Laura McGuire has the document now and will work with the chairs to schedule meetings with managed care organizations (MCOs).
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 2:** No updates.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 3:** No updates.
- **Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 4 and 5:** No updates.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 1:** The group is working collaboratively to create a family peer support specialist curriculum. A subgroup of subject matter experts within this Subcommittee is meeting to develop this.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 2:** This KPI is completed as the group invited Misty Adams with DCR, Stephanie Thornton, and Laura McGuire from ODCP to the current meeting. Discussion highlighted the need for more mobile units and advocating for these positions.
- **Goal 2, Strategy 1, KPI 3:** The group has scheduled meetings with additional chairs and representatives including PSIMED and Dr. Stephen Loyd. Laura McGuire is assisting in the planned meeting with Dr. Loyd.

#### **Additional Discussion:**

- Town Hall Meeting dates were established as August 27, September 3, and September 10.
- Members may contact Amber Blankenship about a second chance recovery event being held in April in Logan County.

#### **Adjournment**

Amber closed the meeting by thanking all Subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. The full Subcommittee will meet again on May 7, 2025, at 2:00 PM.