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# **Substance Use Disorder Summit and Community of Practice Integration for Strategic Planning**

**Behavioral Health, Housing, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Administration**

**Substance Use Disorder Unit**

In conjunction with Alliant Consulting, Inc.

April 2023

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## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarize the work of the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) [Shared Solutions Summit](#) (“the summit”) and announce next steps for leveraging the work of this initiative into sustained actions through the [SUD Community of Practice](#) (CoP).

## SUD Shared Solutions Summit

To address record high deaths due to drug overdoses, Minnesota’s Department of Human Services (DHS) hosted the summit in January of 2023. The summit engaged participants from wide and varying perspectives in discussions aimed at improving Minnesota’s SUD policies and practices.

The summit design was a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH), Project Turnabout, Niyyah Recovery Initiative, the American Indian Chemical Dependence Advisory Council (AICAC), Alluma, Minneapolis College, the Association of Minnesota Counties, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

In October of 2022, organizers held two listening sessions. A survey was used at these events to help inform the summit’s development. Organizers asked questions to help identify what participants wanted to see in a statewide SUD summit.

Listening session participants represented a vast portion of the state and people directly affected by SUD. Participants were asked five questions and entered responses anonymously through an online tool. There was a morning and evening session and a post-event survey with a combined total of nearly 500 participants offering over 3,000 responses to the questions posed by the steering committee. Responses, which helped inform the structure of the summit, have been combined into a single document, available here: [SUD Shared Solutions Summit Listening Session Responses \(PDF\)](#).

The summit took place at the Elmer L. Andersen Human Services Building in St. Paul on Jan. 10 and 11, 2023. A virtual option was offered for those who could not attend in person. Summit participants included government representatives, people in recovery, DHS program staff, advocates, concerned community members, family and friends of people with a SUD and others. Just over 600 people registered for the summit over the two days including 415 virtual and 193 in-person registrants. Keynote speakers included DHS Commissioner Jodi Harpstead, Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan, the new Office of Addiction and Recovery Director Jeremy Drucker, and George Lewis of Motivational Consulting, Inc.

## Summit Themes

Based in part on responses to the listening sessions, the summit was organized around five main themes:

- Coordinated, Holistic and Integrated Continuum of Care
- Cultural Engagement and Responsiveness
- Funding and Workforce

- Law, Policy, and the Criminal Justice System
- Prevention and Education

Participants used a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations & Results) Analysis – a strategic planning tool to help create and execute a strategy – within each theme through smaller, breakout sessions.

Like the planning sessions, summit participants were asked questions aimed at prompting conversation and ideas. Participants were asked to enter their answers or comments into an online tool. Responses from each of the breakout sessions over the course of the two days were compiled. Participant response rates in each of the breakout sessions resulted in a great volume of qualitative data which can be viewed in the news sections on both the [summit webpage](#) and the [CoP webpage](#).

### **“Anything about us, without us, is not us”**

This is a message we heard loudly during the summit. People want to be actively involved, and part of the decision-making process. We recognize that a strategic plan created by the summit steering committee goes against the idea of action decided by those affected. For this reason, we have carefully considered how to drive the strategic plan and ensure there are goals and outcomes that align with the needs and wants of the communities most directly affected.

## **SUD Community of Practice (CoP)**

In 2021, state law was enacted ([Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 254B.151](#)) that directed DHS to establish a SUD CoP. The purpose of the CoP is to improve treatment outcomes for individuals with substance use disorders and to reduce disparities by using evidence-based and best practices through peer-to-peer and person-to-provider sharing. The CoP must use knowledge gathered through the community of practice to develop strategic plans to improve outcomes for individuals who participate in substance use disorder treatment and related services in Minnesota.

In May of 2022, DHS began planning the launch of the SUD CoP. A wide variety of participants reflective of those required by statute were sought to participate in three planning sessions with the goal of drafting a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP would allow DHS to select a vendor to support the overall development and ongoing work of the CoP. The planning committee’s focused outcomes can be referenced on the [CoP webpage](#). A copy of the RFP can be reviewed here in the news section on the [CoP webpage](#) as well.

## **Synergy Between Initiatives**

The summit and the CoP were established with similar intent: to improve outcomes for people with SUD. The summit was successful in engaging people across the state to gather information on what is and is not working for individuals with SUD. The CoP planning sessions were successful in engaging with the individuals that are representative of the requirements set in Minnesota statutes for participation in the CoP.

Participants involved in the summit and the CoP Planning Committee had similar representation, with multiple participants overlapping between the two. In analyzing the volumes of qualitative data that resulted from the summit, it became clear that there was an opportunity to merge the SOAR analysis outcomes into the work that would come from the CoP. Some of the most actionable items discovered in the review of data that came from the desired goals and objectives of the summit's SOAR analysis included legislative proposals, agency recommendations, policy and operational changes and community action. These goals and objectives directly correlate with the CoP RFP's future contract deliverables, which state that proposals must identify how the vendor will develop reports with recommendations/outcomes including but not limited to the following topics:

- a. Gaps in substance use disorder treatment services
- b. Collective knowledge of issues related to substance use disorder
- c. Evidence-based practices, best practices, and promising approaches to address substance use disorder
- d. Strategic plans to improve outcomes for individuals who participate in substance use disorder treatment and related services in Minnesota
- e. Challenges and opportunities learned by implementing strategies

The summit identified these desired actions and left the actual process of who was to be involved, when and how, unspecified. DHS is currently in contract negotiations with a selected vendor that will support continued action of the work of the summit through the CoP. That vendor must develop a workplan, approved by DHS, that specifies action steps, people, engagement, process and timelines.

With such similar focuses and desired outcomes, plus complementary work completed to date, it is advantageous to combine these two initiatives and continue the work of the summit through the CoP, resulting in the actionable next steps with timelines and contract deliverables. The summit steering committee endorsed this action in a meeting on March 22, 2023. The CoP vendor will engage and identify individuals impacted by these topics and invite them to participate.

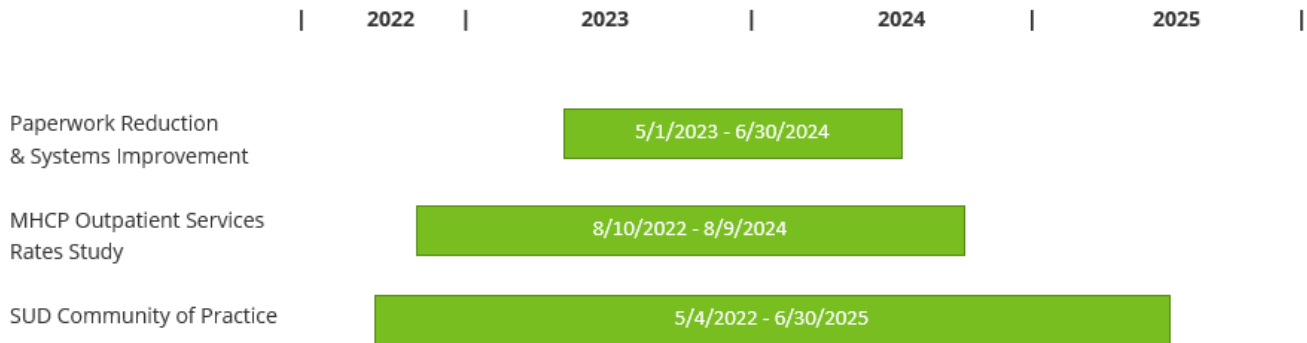
### **Informing the Strategic Plan**

In development of a strategic plan for SUD System Reforms, consideration has been given to the ongoing work being conducted as required under current legislative directives. Those directives include:

- Paperwork Reduction
- Outpatient Rates Study

The goal of the SUD Paperwork Reduction and Outpatient Rate Study is to develop and assess recommendations for improvements. This continues to align with the strategic plan being developed by the CoP.

## Timeframes of Work



## Next Steps

The summit's evaluation responses will inform:

- What to measure
- How to know if efforts are on track
- How to track the impact of potential changes
- Specific scorecard indicators
- How to sustain efforts

These can be built upon as part of the foundation for the CoP's strategic plan, which are also incorporated into the CoP's contracted vendor's workplan, including supporting the development of strategic planning processes and plans to improve treatment outcomes and reduce disparities, in addition to supporting the monitoring of strategy implementation and outcome assessment of the work.