

Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council (OERAC)

Meeting Minutes for January 19, 2024

Meeting Location: Hybrid meeting using WebEx and in-person at Elmer L. Andersen Human Services Building in St. Paul, MN.

Members present: (Names in italics are non-voting OERAC members)

Remote: Brock Reed, Heather Bell, Sadie Broekemeier, Irene Folstrom, *Dana Farley, Eric Grumdahl*

In person: Joe Clubb, Dr. Ashwin George, Sarah Grosshuesch, Rep. Erin Koegel, Jack Martin, Senator Kelly Morrison, Toni Napier, Dr. Kathy Nevins, Dr. Charles Reznikoff, Kristi Schoen, *Jolene Rebertus*

Members not present:

Rep. Dave Baker, Peter Carlson, Pam Hughes, Senator Bill Lieske, Judge Nicole Starr, Dr. Antony Stately

State Staff Members Present: Jen Sather, Jenny Rennquist, Alicia Baker, Amanda Langston, Laura Farlow, Jeff Campe, Elizabeth Ryan, Kristine Preston

Guest Speakers: Jeremy Drucker, Kari Irber

Call to order

Facilitator Stacy Sjogren began the meeting at 10:00 am, reviewed the OERAC mission, the meeting ground rules and gave a guest welcome. The OERAC Chair, Dr. Kathy Nevins, and OERAC Vice Chair, Joe Clubb, reviewed the meeting agenda and gave welcome. A roll call followed. Quorum was secured. See voting log for details.

Business items

Minutes approval: Reznikoff moved to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2023. Seconded by Napier. Motion passed with roll call vote. See voting log for details.

Bylaws update: OERAC Chair Dr. Kathy Nevin gave a timeline for OERAC bylaw voting. Bylaws will be sent via email to council members soon and a roll call vote will be held at March meeting. No legal review is needed currently.

Follow up: Bylaw roll call vote at March meeting.

New staff introductions: The new State Opioid Response Administrator Technical Specialist, “Operations Coordinator”, Laura Farlow, introduced herself.

Annual Legislative Report: DHS staff, Amanda Langston, reviewed and facilitated discussion on three legislative report recommendations (Slide 13). Council members were asked to speak about the three recommendations presented.

- **Unchanged recommendation: Pretrial release funding for opioid testing for all counties that have pretrial release- some pretrial release panels do not test for fentanyl. (Judge Starr).**
 - *Member comments from: Reznikoff, Nevins, Rebertus, George, and Martin*
 - Concerns on incarceration rate impact from fentanyl inclusion in pretrial release panels.
 - Discussion on appropriateness of OERAC council putting this forward.
 - Questions raised about whether this works against decriminalization and supporting people living with SUD.
- **Revised recommendation: New wording: Facilitate access to Hepatitis C treatment by eliminating prior authorization and the need to document engagement in SUD treatment while integrating harm reduction services to support Hepatitis C treatment.**
 - *Member comments from: Martin, Farley, Rebertus, Grosshuesch, Nevins*
 - Discussion on reinfection, increased access to treatment.
- **New recommendation: Support education campaign on the dangers of supplements purchased in retail stores such as kratom, phenibut, tianeptine, Delta 8, GHB, etc. and the impact of polypharmacy with prescription medications. (Dr. Kathy Nevins).**
 - *Member comments from: Nevins, Grosshuesch, George, Martin, Farley,*
 - Director of Office of Addiction and Recovery, *Jeremy Drucker*, referenced recent news article highlighting risk of tianeptine.
 - DHS staff *Jen Sather* discussed recent funding allocation at state agency for public awareness campaign.
 - Importance for public awareness of harms of certain available products, without historical scare-tactics in place.
 - Verification of GHB over the counter availability.
 - Review of core values in Bylaws to ensure that recommendations on non-opiates is appropriate for the OERAC council to put forward.

Jack Martin motioned to remove first recommendation, move forward with the new wording of second recommendation and accept third recommendation as written. Seconded by Dr. Charles Reznikoff. Motion passed with roll call vote. See voting log for details.

Update on 2023 RFP OERAC Grants: Jen Sather presented an overview of the 2023 OERAC grants.

- 28 OERAC grants that are in process or executed. 5 have been executed, 23 unexecuted.
 - *Member comments from: George, Clubb, Rebertus, Martin, Grumdahl*
 - Review of extensive contracting process.
 - *Eric Grumdahl* amplified discussion of in-depth contracting process and length of timeline.
 - Council discussion on timeline of contract execution and if notifying applicants about timeline length is necessary.
 - Concerns about expiring funds due to length of contract execution.
 - DHS staff *Jenny Rennquist and Jeff Campe* gave review of carry over for unspent funds, amendments, and other financial options in the case of expiring funds.
 - Concern of impact contracts delays may have on smaller organizations.

Public Comment

OERAC Chair, Dr. Kathy Nevins, welcomed public comment at 10:20AM. Stacy Sjogren verified at 10:40AM.

OERAC Char, Dr. Kathy Nevins, welcomed public comment at 1:40PM.

- Lolita Ulloa, Director of Strategic Planning in Opioid Work for Hennepin County
 - Discussed Hennepin County's RFP process and the demographics of new grantees.
 - Concerned over discussion of point system for organization having had prior experience.
 - Gave insight to Hennepin County RFP, including county's restraint in awarding full funding amount to grantees, new Elevate program, application requirements for proposals to provide insight on current funders, funding amount, and funded services, as well as declaration of current submissions for similar funding for the same project.

Legislative Report Recommendations from Governor's Advisory Council on Opioids, SUD, and Addiction

Jeremy Drucker, the Director of the Office of Addiction and Recovery, presented recommendations from the Governor's Advisory Council on Opioids, SUD, and Addiction. Jeremy presented on behalf of Council Chair, Beth Elstad. (Slides 16-25).

Jeremy Drucker reviewed the advisory council priorities, the council's emphasis on the population of Justice-Involved Individuals, and the key area of Increasing access to MOUD in Jails and Prisons. (Slides 17-19).

The Advisory Council on Opioids, SUD, and Addiction's recommendations were listed (Slides 20-25). OERAC members were encouraged to comment.

- *Member comments from: Bell, Folstrom, George, Clubb, Broekemeier, Grosshuesch, Nevins, Koegel, and Martin*
- *Additional insights given by DHS staff Jen Sather*
- Discussion about how to utilize previous state-based Homelessness Mitigation Plan and cater it towards counties. Specifically modify to include persons who were incarcerated for short periods of time (which was a barrier in state-based plan).
- There is a forensic peer recovery program through Minnesota Recovery Connection for those who are not currently incarcerated.
 - Proposed recommendations look at reimbursement rate structure for these positions.
- *Folstrom, Clubb, and Broekemeier* added personal views on the length of background study turnaround.
- *Grosshuesch* recognized importance of including elected officials at local level and in the legislature for housing support and outlined the communication barriers present between local jurisdictions.
- Stigma around housing and housing was discussed, with emphasis of needing education for general public in order to overcome misperceptions of sober housing.
- Definition of "Justice Involved Person" was clarified.
- *Martin* presented concern over a missing gap of community support and additional funding for criminal justice system compared to community resources.

- A need to enhance recovery ecosystem. No wrong door mentality, accessing buprenorphine anywhere. Need for provider training, education, and resources for providers to engage with this care.
- Current barrier of lower reimbursement rates for Medicaid/Medicare patients, leading to lack of continuous care. Disincentivizes providers for treating these patient's long term. Need to address these items with providers and within the larger healthcare systems.
- Adolescent emphasis and lack of available treatment for this population.

OERAC Financial Status Report

Kari Irber presented the OERAC Financial Status Report. Overview the OERAC Grants, including the two separate funding streams, the Registration and License Fee Account and the Settlement Account.

Kari presented material on past fiscal year spending costs, carryovers, and cash available balance. MDH Tribal Award funds were discussed and the amount remaining in that area. For the upcoming RFP that will be published in 2024, \$13.9 million was guaranteed to be included in that balance. DHS gave insight onto contract funding discussion.

- *Member comments from: Nevins, Grosshuesch, Grumdahl*
- Concerns over expiring funds were raised.
 - *Grumdahl* affirmed they would present council with confirmed answered from DHS and MMB over those concerns as soon as possible.

Follow up: Present council with plan for expiring funds.

RFP Decisions for Next Cycle

Proposed changes to RFP process

DHS Staff, Alicia Baker, presented proposed changes to the RFP application and scoring process. All proposed changes were based on comments and issues identified by the council from previous RFP years. (Slides 28-30).

- **New organization extra point (Slide 29)**
 - *Member comments from: Grosshuesch, Rebertus, Reznikoff, Clubb, Nevins, George, Napier, Martin, Morrison, Bell, Farley*
 - Is the question to fund smaller/newer organizations or organizations that work in a smaller area or with newer population?
 - Council felt it was important that the RFP considers:
 - Sustainability and generalizability
 - Reimbursable vs non-reimbursable services
 - Capacity building project
 - Continuation of previous projects
 - Declaration of previous and ongoing funding sources
 - Encouraging new organizations versus new projects
 - Verify that new wording would handle issue of multiple applications from the same organization in one category.

- Importance of declaration of different funding sources and the differences in amount of money given between funding sources.
- **Asking additional justification questions for counties/cities receiving settlement dollars (Slide 29)**
- **Allowing the rejection of separate projects by council during final vote (Slide 30)**
 - *Member comments from: Clubb, Rebertus, Nevins, Grosshuesch, Koegel, George*
 - Potential change works against the reviewers and the RFP process. Negative backlash may occur due to change.
 - Emphasis that in the final vote, the council needs a more in-depth description of each grantee they are reviewing, provided by DHS Staff.
 - Discussion, with rejection, to invite applicants to interview in person similar to the 2021 process.
 - Verification that in final council vote, the category just needs majority of the quorum to pass, rather than unanimous.
 - Clarification on role of council. Council advises Commissioner with their recommendations for the grants to be selected. Grant administration responsibility lies with the Commissioner.
- **DHS vs County/City RFPs (Slide 30)**

DHS staff and OERAC leadership will reconvene to discuss these proposed changes to the process and council members will be invited to participate in future discussions on these four items.

Weighted Criteria Revisions Proposal

DHS staff, Amanda Langston, presented a proposal to modify the weighted criteria in the upcoming RFP. (Slides 45-51). Outlined the requirements dictated by Office of Grant Management at the Department of Human Services.

Overviewed the previous year's requirements where applicants could select which populations they served. Then reviewed requirements of how an organization could qualify as a Targeted Organization, which could be a more equitable way to verify that an organization is working to support smaller communities and vulnerable populations.

- **Respondents who meet eligibility criteria and submit required documentation to qualify for Priority Bonus Points through Option A or Option B will receive additional points in their evaluation scoring after all other points have been allocated. (Slides 50-51).**
 - *Comments from: Nevins, Koegel, Grosshuesch, Reznikoff*
 - Additional comments from *Jeremy Drucker* and *Jen Sather*.
 - Clarification that Option B (Slide 51) is subcontracting the work through smaller Targeted Organizations.
 - Discussion on advantages of having separate RFP Track for smaller organization versus larger organizations.
 - Clarification that weighted criteria is a requirement of publishing the RFP.

RFP Reflections: Funding Categories for Next Cycle

DHS Staff, Alicia Baker, moderated discussion of category changes for the 2024 RFP.

- **Category A – Primary Prevention and Education (clarification proposed – Slide 31)**
 - *Member comments from: Martin, Grosshuesch, George, Rebertus, Nevins, Koegel, Broekemeier, Farley*
 - Importance of having both primary and secondary available. Protective factors are beneficial across all social determinates of health.
 - Need for adolescent primary prevention and normalization of use to prevent misuse.
 - Add additional clarifying examples of primary prevention projects.
- **Category B – Harm Reduction Services (clarification proposed – Slide 32-33)**
 - *Member comments from: Reznikoff, Martin, Nevins, George*
 - There are many different Harm Reduction definitions that exist. This category needs a clear definition, with examples.
 - Add additional clarifying examples of secondary prevention projects.
 - DHS staff, *Jen Sather*, gave insight to new Harm Reduction Team at the agency.
- **Category C – Workforce Development and Training Reduction (no changes proposed – Slide 34)**
 - *Member comments from: Grosshuesch*
 - Addition to the workforce area, emphasizing prevention specialists and public health prevention.
- **Category D – Expansion and Enhancement of CoC for Opioid SUDs (no changes proposed – Slide 35)**
 - *Member comments from: George, Farley, Clubb, Nevins*
 - Add language to include Ambulatory Detox centers ambulatory terms.
 - Clarification to change adolescent services to “lifespan, including adolescent”.
- **Category E – Chronic Pain and Alternative Treatments (no changes proposed – Slide 36)**
- **Category F – Emerging and/or Innovative Strategies (category removal and reassignment proposed – Slide 37-39)**
 - *Member comments from: Nevins, Reznikoff, Grosshuesch, Rebertus, Farley, George, Napier*
 - Preference for no additional points.
 - Concern of burden placed on smaller organizations.
 - Concern the requirement for data and reporting are too academic and westernized medicine focused.
 - Agreement of different definitions of evidence for successful outcomes, especially in relation to culturally indigenous projects.
 - RFP may need to clarify if innovation is a new product versus a new targeted population.
 - Council agreement on importance of having an open mind to what is considered innovative. For culturally specific projects, awareness that the project may not be innovative to the people in the community (traditional healing, etc).

Joe Clubb motioned to accept the category changes and the elimination of category F to merge innovative strategies into each category. Seconded by Dr. Ashwin George. Motion passed with roll call vote. See voting log for details.

RFP Cycle – Breakdown of Numbers (Slide 42-44)

DHS Staff, Alicia Baker, presented funding allotments that is currently confirmed for the 2024 RFP. A breakdown of the dollar allotments for each category was provided.

- *Comments from: Reznikoff, Nevins, Martin, George, Clubb, Napier*
- Confirmed that council has power to move money between categories when awarding grantees.
- Discussion of similar dollar allotment percentages to previous RFPs
- DHS staff *Jenny Rennquist* mentioned Minnesota Legislature funding allocation to Harm Reduction services.
- Emphasized need for Category A and B definitions.
- Confirmed that council cannot move applicants to different categories during review.

Dr. Charles Reznikoff motioned to approve changes and recommended dollar allotments. Seconded by Dr. Ashwin George. Motion passed with roll call vote. See voting log for details.

Adjourn

OERAC Chair Dr. Kathy Nevins adjourned the January 2024 meeting.

Next meeting: February 16th: Virtual meeting, 12:00PM -1:00PM

Roll Call and Voting Log

January 19, 2024

P = in person R = remote participant A = absent

Member	Attendance status	Minutes approval for 12/1/23	Vote: Approve 2023 legislative report recommendations Motion to remove "Pretrial release" recommendation and move forward with the remaining two with the new wording.	Vote: 2024 RFP Motion to accept category changes, elimination of F and merging innovation into each category	Vote: Approve the category dollar amount as proposed by staff.
Rep. Dave Baker	A	-	-	-	-
Heather Bell	R	a	y	-	-
Sadie Broekemier	R	-	abstain	y	y
Peter Carlson	A	-	-	-	-
Joe Clubb	P	a	y	y	y
Irene Folstrom	R	a	y	y	y
Dr. Ashwin George	P	a	y	y	y
Sarah Grosshuesch	P	a	y	y	y
Pam Hughes	A	-	-	-	-
Rep. Erin Koegel	P	-	y	y	y
Senator Bill Lieske	A	-	-	-	-
Jack Martin	P	a	y	abstain	abstain
Senator Kelly Morrison	P	a	y	y	y
Toni Napier	P	a	y	y	y
Dr. Kathy Nevins	P	a	y	y	y

Roll Call and Voting Log

January 19, 2024

Brock Reed	P	a	y	y	y
Dr. Charles Reznikoff	P	a	y	y	y
Kristi Schoen	P	-	-	abstain	-
Judge Nicole Starr	A	-	-	-	-
Dr. Antony Stately	A	-	-	-	-
Dana Farley	R				
Jolene Rebertus	P				
Eric Grumdahl/Kristine Preston	R				
Tally	voting members present= absent=	Motion to approve: Resnikov Second: Napier	Motion: Martin Second: Rezinkov	Motion: Clubb Second: George	Motion: Resnikov Second: Ashwin