

# Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council (OERAC)

## Meeting Minutes for January 16, 2026

**Meeting Location:** Hybrid meeting using WebEx and in-person at Elmer L. Andersen Building - 2nd Floor, Room C2370, 540 Cedar Street, St. Paul MN 55101.

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

Remote: Rep. Dave Baker, Dr. Heather Bell, Dr. Ashwin George, Dr. Charles Reznikoff, Brock Reed, Kristi Schoen, Judge Nicole Starr, Dr. Antony Stately

In person: Joe Clubb, Sarah Grosshuesch, Rep. Robert Bierman, Jack Martin, James Marthaler, Dave Matteson, Richard Printon, *Deepa McGriff, Jolene Rebertus, Teresa Steinmetz*

**Members not present:** Curtis Jackson, Senator Zaynab Mohamed, Abdirahman Warsame

**State Staff Members Present:** Laura Farlow, Stacy Sjogren, Alicia Baker, Jen Sather

## Call to order

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

## Business items

**Minutes approval:** Minutes from the December 5, 2025 meeting were approved. See voting log for details.

**New council member welcome:** The council welcomes three new members, and James Marthaler and Richard Printon introduced themselves to the council.

- James Marthaler, representing public members with chronic pain, intractable pain, or a rare disease or condition
- Richard Printon, representing alternative pain management therapies
- Yussuf Shafie, representing licensed opioid treatment program providers.

## DHS Updates

- **Audit Update:** Teresa Steinmetz, Assistant Commissioner of the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), discussed the recent BHA Audit findings. She discussed system improvements that have been made since the review period and the work in progress to improve oversight, including increased training for staff and additional supervisor oversight of grant contracts. Process improvements will occur across the board, including the management of OERAC contracts.
  - Member Comments: Clubb, Bierman, Martin, Baker
  - Discussed staff capacity for contract management and the oversight responsibilities that have grown recently.
  - Council members noted importance of connecting with grantees and legislatures.
- **Proxy Reminder:** Reminder to council members that proxy members are allowed. Council members should contact the DHS team and Chair of the council.

## Public Comment

OERAC Chair, Joe Clubb, welcomed public comment at 10:20AM.

- Sheila Grabosky, speaking as a person living with chronic pain, addressed the need for greater transparency regarding the Council's process for selecting members. Sheila Grabosky also expressed concerns about the Council making recommendations related to kratom.
- Margie Pierce, representing *Keep Coming Home*, spoke about the ongoing crisis Minnesota sober homes are experiencing. She highlighted the dedication and inspiring work of sober home operators who continue to service their residents.
- LaRie Corn introduced herself as a Native American woman, U.S. Army Veteran, mother and advocate for sober living in Minnesota. LaRie Corn emphasized the critical role housing plays in recovery and the positive outcomes associated with access to stable recovery housing. She noted a continued need to expand these resources across the state.
- Meyer Belkin, owner Act 2 recovery residences, spoke on the importance of sober homes and the essential nature of these facilities for people in recovery. He shared that Act 2 is reducing beds and closing properties due to funding losses. He emphasized need for short term stabilization funding. Meyer Belkin indicated that his written remarks would be shared with council members following the meeting.

## Tribal Consultations Presentation

OERAC Chair Joe Clubb and Vice Chair Sarah Grosshuesch, discussed their experiences attending the State Tribal Consultations in Fall 2025. They shared the information brought to the Tribal Consultations and the feedback they received.

## Legislative Recommendations Discussion

The council reviewed updates made to the legislative recommendations following the December 2025 meeting. Recommendations had been submitted prior to the December meeting and were discussed at that time.

Language revisions approved by the Council in December were presented for confirmation at the January meeting.

### **Recommendations Submitted in 2025**

The Council reviewed language changes made since December 2025. Minor revisions were introduced in January and brought forward for a vote. The Council voted on the recommendations as outlined below. The motion passed, see voting log for details.

- *Clarify and strengthen implementation of existing timeframes for DHS background study reviews and reconsideration requests. Require written notice to applicant and prospective employer when those timeframes cannot be met and issue a final decision no later than six months from the request.*
- *Establish statutory language that allows traveling set-asides for an individual who changes positions, when the new role is aligned in duties and continues to serve the same population.*
- *Support the current legislation for Psychiatric Collaborative Care Model, S.F. 8/H.F. 958 and the addition of the billing code G2211.*
- *Support efforts to improve public safety and expand research on kratom, including 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), without criminalizing individuals who use kratom.*
- *Support the proposed legislative language: Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, prior authorization or step therapy shall not be required or utilized for any class of drugs that is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of substance use disorder and for the treatment of chronic pain*

### **Recommendations Submitted in Previous Years**

The Council reviewed language changes made since December 2025. Minor revisions were introduced in January and brought forward for a vote. The Council voted on the recommendations as outlined below. The motion passed, see voting log for details.

- *Funding for mobile or rural methadone clinics.*
- *Increasing reimbursement rates for providers that specialize in chronic pain management, excluding non-interventions, ensuring they have adequate compensation for the time necessary to provide comprehensive care to their patients.*
- *Facilitating 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.*
- *Funding for (nurse) care coordinators - in the same style as peer recovery navigators, these professionals help individuals navigate the system and stay connected, but unlike peer recovery navigators, they are more medically savvy in their approach (could be a nurse but does not need to be).*
- *Explicitly affirming that people taking medications used to treat addictions are protected from discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Housing Act.*
- *Allowing the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) to be used for Institutional Review Board (IRB)- approved research, especially when individual patients provide consent.*

- *Reestablishing a direct allocation to sustain the statewide Prescription Monitoring Program; this may be an allocation from all state settlement funds or allocation from current license fees collected.*
- *Mandatory reporting of rates of prescribing of FDA approved medications indicated for the treatment of OUD, and naloxone, upon discharge from hospital or emergency department for patients treated with the diagnosis of Opioid Use Disorder and continuing an ongoing prescription even if not filled should count towards the total.*
- *Making energy-based services billable.*
- *To protect and exercise the inherent sovereignty of each Tribal Nation; each Tribe should have the right to decide what services they will employ to best meet their holistic needs of their people.*
- *Providing jails with fentanyl test strips/naloxone for people being released from custody.*
- *Increasing job bonding for people who successfully graduate from a treatment court; the person is eligible to be bonded so they can get a job and be insured by the State.*
- *In alignment with the Minnesota Medical Association’s policy and recommendations, decriminalizing “simple possession” of illicit drugs.*
- *Allowing permanent reimbursement to telehealth services for SUD and Behavioral Health.*
- *Addressing the ongoing need for expansion of Managed Alcohol Programs, particularly in areas outside the metro.*
- *Expand, standardize, and sustain access to FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) across correctional, emergency and healthcare settings. This includes*
  - *Access to MOUD for incarcerated individuals and support for the 1115 SUD re-entry demonstration waiver through implementation and expansion.*
  - *Removal of restrictions that limit ability of hospitals and emergency departments to initiate and provide buprenorphine, including removal from the restricted recipient program.*
  - *Initiation of MOUD prior to SUD treatment intake assessments and ensuring reimbursement for MOUD-related recovery services.*
- *Improving data sharing across agencies facilitates informed and timely response.*
  - *Requiring data sharing between state and local agencies.*
  - *Making nonfatal overdoses a reportable condition.*
  - *Increasing statutory support for Overdose Fatality Reviews (OFRs).*

## **Priority List Discussion**

The Council discussed the idea of a priority list for organizing the legislative recommendations within the legislative report.

- Member comments: Rebertus, Martin, Clubb
- Agreement that in future years, recommendations should be submitted with the council members’ name attached and a short explanation.

Priority list approved by group vote.

## MMB Presentation on OERAC Grantees and Settlement Spending

Weston Merrick, Minnesota Management & Budget Impact Evaluation Unit, presented information on OERAC grantees and the impact of those contracts. 2024 County and City Opioid Settlement Spending was also reviewed. More information can be found on the [Opioid Epidemic Response Spending Dashboard](#).

- Member comments: Matteson, Rebertus, Clubb, Baker, Martin
- OERAC grantee progress reports are collected routinely by DHS, grant managers meet on a monthly basis with each grantee.

## Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

Jeremy Drucker, Director of the Office of Addiction and Recovery, presented on the Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative. The definition and benefits of a Recovery Friendly Workplace were emphasized. Jeremy Drucker reviewed what has currently been done in Minnesota. There is a National Recovery Friendly Workplace Certification that State Agencies and all organizations can utilize. A Minnesota based process is being looked into.

## 2026 RFP Discussion

DHS staff presented information on each RFP category, including priorities submitted by OERAC members and those identified in consultation with subject matter experts. Staff also shared potential funding options that fall outside of the formal RFP process.

The purpose of the discussion was to review the five OERS RFP categories, consider the submitted priorities and identify potential project types to highlight in the 2026 RFP.

- Member comments: Grosshuesch, Steinmetz, Rebertus, Clubb, McGriff, Matteson, Baker, Stately, Printon
- Members emphasized need for educational information on primary prevention, naloxone portal, and harm reduction, as well as context for each proposed priority.
- Council requested clarification on housing supports.
- Members discussed the high number of applications received each year and the need to clearly prioritize or narrow eligible project types within each category. Council emphasized importance of supporting diverse grantees and ensuring sustainability of funded projects.
- The council requested DHS staff return at the February meeting with top three recommended project types for each RFP category for further consideration.

## Adjourn

OERAC Chair Joe Clubb adjourned the January 2026 meeting early due to adverse weather conditions.

Next meeting: February 20th, 10AM – 3:30PM in St. Cloud, MN.

# Roll Call and Voting Log

January 16, 2026

P = in person R = remote participant A = absent Y = yes (approve)

Member	Attendance status	Minutes approval	Approval of 2025 recommendations with changes as noted in minutes	Approval of recommendations from past years with changes as noted in minutes	Inclusion of a top priorities list
Joe Clubb	P	Y	Y	Y	Affirmative "by acclamation"
Sarah Grosshuesch	P	Y	Y	Y	
Rep. Dave Baker	R	Y	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	
Dr. Heather Bell	R	Y	Y	-	
Rep. Robert Bierman	P	Y	Y	Y	
Dr. Ashwin George	R	Y	Y	Y	
Curtis Jackson	A	-	-	-	
Jack Martin	P	Y	Y	Y	
James Marthaler	P	ABSTAIN	Y	Y	
Dave Matteson	P	Y	Y	Y	
Senator Zaynab Mohamed	A	-	-	-	
Richard "Rick" Printon	P	ABSTAIN	Y	Y	
Brock Reed	R	Y	Y	Y	
Dr. Charlie Reznikoff (late arrival)	R	-	-	-	
Kristi Schoen	A	-	-	-	
Yussuf Shafie	A	-	-	-	
Judge Nicole Starr	R	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	
Dr. Antony Stately	R	-	Y	Y	
Abdirahman Warsame	A	-	-	-	
Deepa McGriff	P				
Jolene Rebertus	P				
Teresa Steinmetz	P				

# Roll Call and Voting Log

January 16, 2026

Tally	voting members present= 14 absent= 5	9 = yes 0 = no 3 = abstain	11 = yes 0 = no 2 = abstain	10 = yes 0 = no 2 = abstain	
	Quorum present	Minutes approved	Motion Passed	Motion Passed	Motion Passed