

**Special In-Person Meeting of the Nebraska Opioid Settlement Remediation Advisory
Committee
November 26, 2024
Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) Offices, 1335 H Street, Lincoln, NE
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes **DRAFT****

1. Call Meeting to Order:

Chairperson Todd Stull called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. In accordance with § 84-1411(2)(b) of the Open Meetings Act, a copy of all documents being considered at the meeting, an electronic copy of this agenda, and a current copy of the Open Meetings Act are available at the Nebraska Opioid Settlement Remediation Advisory Committee's webpage at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>. The Open Meetings Act is also located at the front of the meeting room.

- a) Chairperson Stull reminded Committee members that in-person meetings require committee members to be physically present at the meeting site to be counted for quorum, and to vote.
- b) Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was determined to exist, with 11 voting members present.

Voting Members

Members in Attendance: Ann Anderson-Berry, Mary Ann Borgeson, Amy Holman, Brandon Kelliher, Cory Schmidt, Jason Scott, Riley Slezak, Todd Stull, Mike Tefft, Paul Vrbka, Christa Yoakum.

Members Absent: Christopher Kratochvil.

Non-Voting Members in Attendance: Kevin Borchert, Paul Price, Amy Reynoldson.

Non-Voting Members Absent: Susanna Batterman, Rick Hickstein, Sara Howard, Jerome Kramer, Paul Lambert, John Massey, Charity Menefee, Kevin Spencer, Bill Tielke.

Others in Attendance: Holly Brandt, Ingrid Gansebom, Tiffany Gressley, Thomas Janousek, Delainie Johnson, Patti Jurjevich, Jeri Keller-Heuke, Patrick Kreifels, Erin Maier, Katie McCarthy.

- c) Chairperson Stull stated that on November 20, 2024, a notice of this meeting with the agenda and other materials were provided to the public and all members of the Committee. Notice of this meeting with the agenda and other materials were available for public inspection at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Behavioral Health (DBH), 301 Centennial Mall South, 4th Floor in Lincoln, Nebraska. An electronic copy of the agenda, all documents being considered at the meeting, and a link to the current version of the Open Meetings Act were posted on the DHHS website at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>.
- d) Chairperson Stull informed attendees about the location of the Open Meetings Act, which is accessible to members of the public in the meeting room, and at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>, along with a copy of all reproducible written materials to be discussed at this meeting.

- e) **Public Comment:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, the Chair of the Committee reserves the right to limit comments on agenda items. Chairperson Stull stated that public comments will be heard on agenda items 3, 4, and 5. Each commenter will have five minutes to speak. Pursuant to § 84-1412(3), any member of the public desiring to address the body shall identify their name, including an address and the name of any organization represented by such person. Public members may sign up on the list at the front of the room or submit their name via the virtual chat box if attending virtually.

2. Consider a Motion to Approve the Minutes from September 4, 2024:

Chairperson Stull opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 4, 2024, meeting.

Motion was made by Ann Anderson-Berry and seconded by Jason Scott to approve the minutes as written. Chairperson Stull opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, the motion to approve the September 4, 2024, minutes passed with the following results:

Yay=10: Ann Anderson-Berry, Mary Ann Borgeson, Amy Holman, Brandon Kelliher, Cory Schmidt, Jason Scott, Todd Stull, Mike Tefft, Paul Vrbka, Christa Yoakum.

Nay=0

Abstain=1: Riley Slezak.

Absent=1: Christopher Kratochvil.

3. Nebraska Behavioral Health Regional Authorities reports of settlement funds expenditures and received requests for funds.

Holly Brandt, Regional Administrator for Region 1 Behavioral Health Authority, reported that the region has formulated an opioid response strategic plan with input from multiple organizations and community members, which resulted in four priority areas being identified. The grant application process launched in March 2024. Eight applications were received, with awards going to five applicants. The board of directors voted to obligate \$400,000 for a crisis stabilization center.

Katie McCarthy, Regional Administrator for Region II Human Services, reported several updates for the region. The Nebraska Opioid and Stimulant Summit was held in McCook earlier this year. The region has hired a Family and Systems Navigator and a Clinical Opioid Director. Some settlement funds have been used for facilitating recovery groups. While the region is holding \$516,000 for a possible crisis center, there will be mini grants offered in the near future, although no date has been set for this yet.

Tiffany Gressley, Regional Administrator for Region 3 Behavioral Health Services, stated that planning with the Opioid Response Network began in June 2023. A steering committee has been formed for planning and reviewing of grant applications. A fund manager was hired in August 2023. The online grant application launched in May received 11 applications, with 10 of them being granted for a total of approximately \$600,000. The first LB1355 fund allocation is earmarked for the expansion of a crisis stabilization unit in Grand Island. The next round of grant applications will be in Spring 2025. In all, almost \$1,000,000 has been obligated, and the

regional fund is currently around \$400,000.

Ingrid Gansebom, Regional Administrator for Region 4 Behavioral Health Systems, stated that input was gathered from local health departments to help identify needs and gaps in services provided locally. An opioid summit was held in April 2024 in conjunction with the Opioid Response Network. The grant application process was launched in October 2024 and closes this week. Priority will be given to applications for prevention, media, crisis systems, peer support and treatment access.

Patrick Kreifels, Regional Administrator for Region V Systems, reported that when the first settlement funds were received in June 2023, they immediately began working with the Opioid Response Network for guidance and expertise. The project manager was hired in September 2023. The opioid steering committee was formed in September 2023 and began working on the funds blueprint. The opioid summit in March focused on strategic planning which prioritized 24 abatements to be used in grant awards. 12 grant applications were received, of which 5 were awarded. Site visits to the awardees were done in October. The steering committee is looking at completing needs assessments on each of the 16 counties making up the region. They will be meeting again in January 2025 to re-prioritize strategies and release another grant round.

Patti Jurjevich, Regional Administrator for Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, stated that they currently have \$5,700,000 available. The Opioid Response Network summit in May resulted in 9 priority areas being identified, with 4 being selected for grant consideration. The grant application process opened in September and closed in October, resulting in 21 applications submitted. 4 applications were chosen to move forward in the award process. Additional rounds of grant applications will continue as long as there are funds available.

Chairperson Stull added that this committee is here to serve the Regional Authorities in their efforts.

4. Quarterly financial report of Nebraska Opioid Recovery Funds.

John Meals, DHHS Chief Financial Officer, was not in attendance to report on the funds' status.

5. DHHS Division of Behavioral Health updates.

Dr. Thomas Janousek, DHHS Director of Behavioral Health, gave updates on DBH's work regarding opioid funding.

LB1355 will change the appropriations of the settlement funds received. As shown in the "Opioid Settlement State Plan Overview" on the DBH website (<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Behavioral%20Health%20Documents/Opioid%20Settlement%20State%20Plan%20Overview.pdf>), payments received start out bigger and taper off towards the end of the settlement payout period. DBH is strategically planning on a spending budget of \$7,000,000 per year until 2038 to maintain a similar spending process for each year. LB1355-allocated funds are going into an infrastructure fund to focus on capital expenditure requests, since many fund requests focus mainly on services to provide. Generous contributions of land and buildings for these purposes have been received. DBH wants to enlist the regions as the initial contacts for entities

wishing to apply for infrastructure funds. The regions would be able to review and recommend applicants to DBH for final consideration and awards.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are still available and should be awarded by the end of 2024.

6. Public Comments.

Joseph LeDuc, Nebraska citizen, thanked the committee members for their continued work. Mr. LeDuc stated that the public is interested in this work and wants to see continual updates posted online. He also encouraged work to avoid the mishandling of these settlement funds.

Staci Hubert with the Nebraska Enhanced Services Pharmacies Network thanked the committee members for their work. Ms. Hubert stated that smaller, private pharmacies would benefit from reimbursements, as they are currently losing money on products. She questioned if any collaborations for all types of providers exist.

Brady Rhodes, Coordinator with the Community Impact Network, introduced his organization. Mr. Rhodes encouraged the inclusion of community collaboratives in the fight against opioids. He also encouraged the regions to align their fund allocations with aspects of the statewide plan.

7. Discussion of possible next steps and actions to be considered at future meetings.

Agenda items to be discussed at the next scheduled meeting include:

- Approve minutes of the November 25th special virtual meeting.
- Update “Conflict of Interest” forms.
- Elections of new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
- Behavioral Health Regional Administrators’ updates.
- DHHS DBH Director’s updates.
- Illicit opiates.
- Opportunities centering on detox centers.
- Medical marijuana’s effect on the opioid crisis.

It was requested that future meetings have speakers from sober living houses in Omaha, and the Stepping Up Initiative.

8. Discussion of meeting dates for calendar year 2025.

Discussion of possible upcoming meeting dates in 2025 was held. Dates selected for 2025 are:

- Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m. Central—virtual
- Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m. Central—virtual
- Wednesday, September 3, 2025, 1:00 p.m. Central—in person
- Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m. Central—virtual

Location for the meetings to be announced.

9. Consider a Motion to Adjourn.

The meeting agenda having been completed, Chairperson Stull asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Ann Anderson-Berry and seconded by Jason Scott. Roll call vote was conducted. The motion passed with the following results.

Yay=11: Ann Anderson-Berry, Mary Ann Borgeson, Amy Holman, Brandon Kelliher, Cory Schmidt, Jason Scott, Riley Slezak, Todd Stull, Mike Tefft, Paul Vrbka, Christa Yoakum.

Nay=0

Abstain=0

Absent=1: Christopher Kratochvil.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.