

Region V Systems
Opioid Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2023
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

- I. Welcome:** Trina Janis opened the meeting at 1:03 p.m. at Integrated Behavioral Health Services, 1430 South Street, Lincoln, NE 68502.
- II. Introductions:** Janis welcomed attendees, followed by introductions.
- III. Conflict of Interest:** Attendees were given an opportunity to sign the *Conflict of Interest* form if they had not done so. There were no additional questions or concerns about the form.
- IV. Review of Changes in Charter:** The Charter was revised to reflect the changes that were recommended by this Committee at the November meeting. There was no further discussion.
- V. Vote on Approval of Charter:** Janis commented that the Charter will be reviewed annually, and that the Committee would vote by consensus. Given there were no additional questions or concerns, a consensus vote was held. There was no opposition, and the Charter was approved unanimously.
- VI. Video and Review of Exhibit E:**
- 1. Video Comments:**
- A video entitled "Optimizing the National Opioid Settlement Funds" was presented. Dr. Rachel Werner introduced the panelists and briefly described their credentials and activities related to the opioid settlement. The panel was moderated by Shashana Aronowitz who provided statistics to support the fact that opioid involved overdoses were increasing significantly.
 - Up to 26 billion dollars is anticipated to flow to states and counties due to litigation with pharmacies. These dollars will come with "guardrails" to avoid the missteps that occurred with the tobacco settlement dollars that were not used exclusively to mitigate the harm caused by smoking. States must spend at least 70 percent of the monies for opioid related expenses.
 - Exhibit E was crafted to provide "guardrails" to ensure the funds were used in a way that addresses the current crisis as effectively as possible. It was noted that the impact of opioid usage is unique to each state so there is no "one-size-fits-all" though Exhibit E provides eight broad strategies that research has supported to be effective. Priorities mentioned include getting Narcan into the hands of more people, immediate access to drug treatment, making treatment more affordable, providing wraparound and recovery support services, and prevention. The importance of allowing the voice of those with lived experience was mentioned, as well as ensuring that evidence-based treatment is used.
 - Five principles were noted: spend the money to save lives, use evidence to guide the spending, invest in youth prevention, focus on racial inequality, and develop a fair and transparent process.
 - The link to the video will be sent to attendees.
- 2. Exhibit E Review:**
- Janis noted that the way Exhibit E is written it appears to put more emphasis on Schedule A (Core Strategies); however, that was not the intent, and the Committee should look at all the strategies including Schedule B (Approved Uses).
 - Schedule A - Core Strategies were discussed at length.
 - Schedule B – Approved Uses – there were few comments regarding Schedule B. Time was a barrier to reviewing all of them, so Committee members were asked to finish reviewing the approved uses and address any comments to Janis by December 22.

VII. Discussion / List of Obvious Expenditures:

- Survey of laws that may be creating barriers such as laws against distribution of clean needles/ needle exchanges, etc. It was suggested that Region V legal be asked to do a review of current laws relating to opioid treatment.
- Purchase / increase use of Narcan. Concerns about Narcan expiring were noted.
- Training / education including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) education – for first responders, 911, schools, physicians, prescribers, etc.
- Collaboration with ESUs for training in schools.
- Increasing accessibility to treatment. Several comments addressed the challenges in rural areas in particular.
- Providing more integrated care facilities.
- Efforts to reduce stigma. Personal experiences were shared where individuals were not treated with respect.
- Wraparound services were mentioned frequently to allow for collaboration among treatment teams. Wraparound could include housing, transportation, job placement, and childcare among others.
- Peer support services / in ERs and hospitals to provide a warm handoff.
- Prevention efforts.
- Create interest in the field to increase the number of providers.

VIII. Region V Systems Opioid Settlement Funds Summit - Resource Panel

- March 19-20, 2024 – Wilderness Ridge Country Club (1800 Wilderness Woods Place, Lincoln, NE 68512)
- Vic Johns from Mission Field Treatment Center volunteered to sit on the panel.

IX. Next Meeting:

- January 9th – 1:00-3:00 p.m. Department of Health and Human Services (CFS Conference Room P), 301 Centennial Mall S, Lincoln, NE 68508

X. Next Steps:

- Vote on Obvious Expenditures
- Introduction to Blueprint
- List of Resource Panel
- Summit Agenda and Registration

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.