



Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Opioid Response Advisory Committee

Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Unten
Location: Dakota County Northern Service Center

Attendance

Voting Members:

- Maria Anderson
- Michael Beltowsky
- Jennifer Denmark
- Terry Johnson
- Hanna Kazempour
- Tiffany Neuharth
- Bridget Norring
- Bryan Schowalter
- Cara Schulz
- Jacqueline Young

Dakota County Staff in attendance:

- James Johnson Jr.
- Alicia Ward
- Eli Baker
- Elizabeth Unten

Absent: Marcus Blue, Nate Burkett, Erin Carder, and Dr. Seema Maddali

Agenda

- Call to Order
- Approval of the Agenda
- Approval of March Minutes
- Department Updates
- 2025 Community Input Survey Results
- Strategic Planning: Quarter 2
- Open Forum
- New Business

- Public Comment
- Member Announcements
- Adjourn

Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Dakota County Northern Service Center, Room 520

Meeting Notes

Per Diem Requests

Eligible committee members who opted to receive a per diem received request to sign.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve agenda made by: Bryan Schowalter Seconded by: Tiffany Neuharth Result: motion passed approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March meeting minutes. Made by: Bridgette Norring Seconded by: Jacqueline Young Result: motion passed approved by unanimous consent.

Department Updates

Public Health Updates

Dakota County submitted its annual report on opioid settlement fund usage, which can be accessed on the MN Opioid Dashboard. The contract with Thrive Family Recovery Services has been signed, and a meeting is scheduled for April 17. Five additional contracts are nearing completion, with introductions planned for the June 2025 ORAC meeting. A survey was sent to previous SBIRT training attendees to assess interest in follow-up training, including an advanced SBIRT session and a case-sharing workshop.

Several upcoming trainings and events are scheduled:

- Naloxone & Mental Health Workshops for Spanish and Somali students on April 23 at Diamondhead Education Center, Burnsville.
- The East African Community Health Fair on May 10 at the Rosemount Mosque.
- SBIRT Training on May 14 at NSC and September 10 at WSC.
- Spanish Naloxone Training on May 20 at Kaposia Library in South St. Paul.
- Additional Naloxone Trainings are being planned for Southeast Dakota County, and suggestions for locations or partnerships are welcome.
- Washington County is hosting the 7-County Metro Opioid Meeting on April 3, and JJ will be attending.

Social Services Updates

Alicia Ward shared updates on school outreach efforts. On March 31, Social Services hosted a well-attended meeting, *Seeing and Serving Every Student: Expanding the Continuum of Care with Community Referrals*, with the ISD196 chemical health team to establish a process for referrals. Four presenters shared information on

referral and workflow processes for comprehensive assessments and treatment coordination, as well as resources such as Narcan availability, prescription drop locations, and community treatment resources. Social Services workers serving youth ages 12 and older were in attendance. Meetings are continuing within school districts to identify and fill the service gaps. Lakeville South is working to formalize processes, while Hastings has an established program with Canvas Health, allowing Social Services to fill gaps. Efforts continue to expand outreach to schools that currently lack services or have limited program support.

The Dakota County Crisis Center now has a chemical health supervisor in place for A Place to Go – supported by Dakota County, operating from 4:30 PM and beyond, offering crisis assessments during off-hours filling a gap in services. There has been one walk-in as the Crisis Center builds staffing. The Guild housing program is now operational, and residents have moved in.

2025 Community Input Survey Results

The Community Input Survey received 417 responses. Of those, 44% reported lived experience with opioid use, 38% had no personal impact, and 33% work with affected individuals. The funding priorities identified in the survey remained consistent with previous years, with a strong focus on prevention and treatment. A comparison to last year's responses is being further analyzed and will be presented in more detail later.

Strategic Plan: Quarter 2

The county leadership team recently previewed the strategic plan in preparation for board review later this month. One recommendation is to focus on Community Awareness through 2025, emphasizing the voices of individuals with lived experience and leverage state and metro-wide momentum on opioid awareness. In 2025 as members complete their 2-year terms the board will consider potentially restructuring the committee, redefining its purpose, or adjusting its scope. During this time, the board will also continue evaluating how other counties make decisions about the opioid settlement spending.

The Community Awareness goals for this period include developing and promoting a culturally appropriate opioid awareness campaign, creating a community guide for substance use and recovery services, and launching a paid communication campaign. Dakota County currently offers resources such as the Community Resource Guide and the GIS Substance Use Treatment Finder, both available on the county website. Additionally, Rise Up Recovery also provides an interactive recovery resource map. Future website updates will enhance the accessibility of these tools.

Beyond this meeting, two key tasks will require our time and commitment.

1. Community Guide Development: efforts to develop a community guide including the where, who, and how, with information gathered through community focus groups and community partners.
2. Communication Campaign: Planned in collaboration with Dakota County Communications, with input from ORAC.

The county will also participate in various community events, including local festivals, the Rise Up Summer event, and awareness initiatives such as Fentanyl Awareness Day on April 29, May is Mental Health Month, National Night Out on August 5, National Recovery Month in September, and Overdose Awareness Day on August 31. Planning is in progress for a countywide vigil to honor those lost to overdose.

Open Forum

Committee members attended a meeting at the State Capitol advocating for warning labels on digital platforms, emphasizing the importance of keeping online spaces safe. The conversation also touched on the appearance of

social media warning labels. It was noted that students in grades 9-12 are currently unable to carry naloxone, and there is a proposed bill to include opioid prevention education in school curriculums. Additionally, upcoming legislation aims to make it easier for organizations like Change the Outcome to provide mandated education and support.

Cara Schulz provided an update on federal policies influencing local efforts, highlighting upcoming panel presentations on the opioid crisis. A key focus is shifting toward addressing mental health treatment first, stabilizing individuals before tackling related issues such as substance use and abuse. This approach aligns with the principles of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ensuring foundational support before addressing secondary concerns.

Potential Agenda items: Creating subcommittees to support specific initiatives in the strategic plan, along with a review of the RFP process for future proposals.

New Business

No motions were made

Public Comment

No public attendees were present, and no comments were made.

Member Announcements

Members were encouraged to notify JJ of any upcoming community events.

Adjourn

Cara Schultz adjourned the meeting by acclamation.