



Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Opioid Response Advisory Committee

Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025
Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Unten
Location: Dakota County Northern Service Center

Attendance

- Voting Members
 - Jennifer Denmark
 - Tiffany Neuharth
 - Cara Schulz
 - Jacqueline Young
 - Dr. Seema Maddali
 - Terry Johnson
- Dakota County staff in attendance:
 - James Johnson Jr.
 - Alicia Ward
 - Elizabeth Unten

Absent: Maria Anderson, Michael Beltowsky, Marcus Blue, Nate Burkett, Erin Carder, Hanna Kazempour, Bridgette Norring, and Bryan Schowalter

Agenda

- Call to Order
- Approval of the Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Department Updates
- RFP Awardee Presentations
- Overdose Awareness Month
- Substance Use Resource Guide
- Public Comment
- Adjourn

Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, July 1, 2025

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Northern Service Center, Room 520

Meeting Notes

Per Diem Requests

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

Quorum Not Met

It was noted that quorum was not met for this meeting. As a result, official business could not be conducted.

Department Updates

Public Health

Currently the hiring of a new Public Health Director is on hold. Gina Pistulka has been named Interim Director and brings over 25 years of experience. She is supportive of continuing the work outlined in the Strategic Plan. The May is Mental Health campaign was well received, with hundreds of resources shared across the county. Dakota County Libraries were key partners in this success.

CredibleMind, a new free digital resource for mental health and well-being, is now available to all county residents. It includes articles, tools, and podcasts, and can host local resources.

An Advanced SBIRT training is scheduled for September 10, 2025, with a focus on adolescent care.

Naloxone trainings are being planned for summer events. Miesville is confirmed as a site as well as other rural Dakota County communities. The committee was asked to share suggestions for additional communities in need.

A Young Adult Survey targeting ages 18–26 is available. Members are encouraged to share it broadly to help shape meaningful services.

The TriDistrict CAPS program offers hands-on career experience to high school students. Applications for the 2025–2026 school year are open.

Discussion for all Dakota County libraries to become Naloxone Access Point (NAP) sites. Five additional libraries are considering joining later summer 2025.

Social Services

Social Services and Public Health are collaborating with high schools across the county. Recently, due to the loss of LADC grant funding in Hastings Independent School District 200 meetings have been held to collaborate with Dakota County programs in fall 2025. Meetings will continue with Hastings through the summer and are underway to support services like assessments, treatment coordination, and alternatives to suspension.

RFP Awardee Presentations

Representatives from the following organizations presented a broad overview of their work in the community and shared plans for their upcoming efforts:

- Lionheart Wellness & Recovery, Tiffany Neuharth
- Gateway Recovery Center, Matthew Mortinson
- Thrive Family Recovery Services, Pam Lanhart

- Minnesota Recovery Connection, Cynthia Munguia
- Wayside Recovery Center, Heather Anderson

Each organization highlighted the services they provide and how their initiatives will support individuals, families, and the community affected by opioid epidemic in Dakota County.

Overdose Awareness Month

JJ submitted a \$150,000 funding request to the County Board to launch an 18-month multimedia campaign focused on opioid awareness. Planning to solicit a vendor to support the Opioid Awareness Campaign with Public Health and County Communications.

Campaign efforts will focus on Opioid and Overdose Awareness throughout August. Plans include lighting city buildings in purple on August 31, proclamations from the County and each city, and a candlelight vigil, possibly live streamed with Hastings as a central site. Public Health will lead event planning with support from a subcommittee. A meeting will be held the week of June 16. Tasks include coordinating logistics with cities, contacting families, securing venues, exploring livestreaming options, and inviting partners to host resource tables. Anyone interested in helping is encouraged to reach out to JJ.

Substance Use Resource Guide

JJ shared initial plans to develop a Substance Use Resource Guide focused on what the guide will include, who it is for, and how it will be used, noting that the "how" will be the most challenging part. A work group made up of ORAC and Public Health staff will begin work alongside the multimedia campaign, with plans to create a project plan, gather input through community focus groups, and build a comprehensive database of available services.

Public Comment

Seven members of the public attended the meeting. One community member shared feedback recommending that the campaign plan include a stronger focus on highlighting recovery stories as part of the overall messaging.