

MINUTES

Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council Meeting

October 23, 2024

2:00 – 5:00pm

4th Judicial District Attorney's Office

105 E. Vermijo Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

4th Floor Main Conference Room

First Name	Last Name	Title	Present(Y/N)
Voting Members			
Lynette	Crow-Iverson	Colorado Springs (COS) City Council	Y
Erik	Stone	Teller County Commissioner	Y
Lt. Jake	Markus	Proxy for Teller County Undersheriff	Y
Holly	Williams	El Paso County (EPC) Commissioner	Y
Carrie	Geitner	EPC Commissioner	Y
Michael	Allen	Fourth Judicial District Attorney	N
Doug	Trainor	COS Police Department	Y (Proxy Lieutenant Roy Ditzler)
Randy	Royal	COS Fire Chief	Y (Proxy Deputy Chief Jayme McConnellogue)
David	Leinweber	COS Councilmember	Y
Lee	Walker	Victor Fire Department	N
Dr. Leon	Kelly	EPC Coroner	Y (Proxy Dr. Megan Kliesner)
Joseph	Roybal	EPC Sheriff	Y (Proxy Chief Andrew Prehm)
Denise	Howell	Manitou Springs City Manager	Y (Proxy Chief of Police Bill Otto)
Patrick	Regan	Monument Police Chief	Y (Proxy Commander Tim Johnson)

Non-Voting Members: Municipalities who will cycle onto the voting membership in future years			
Frank	Salvato	Cripple Creek City Manager	N
Chris	Deisler	Woodland Park Police Chief	N
Troy	Johnson	Fountain City Attorney	N
Current Non-Voting Members			
DeAnn	Ryberg	EPC Public Health Deputy Director	Y
Kim	Mauthe	Teller County Director of Human Services	N
Michelle	Wolff	Teller County Public Health Director	N
Bridgette	Fuson	Department of Human Services (Monument Representative)	N
Non-Voting Members Appointed by Council as SMEs			
Jack	Briggs	Springs Rescue Mission	N
Dr. Eric	Stein Bronsky	Physician, Medical Director CSFD AMR EPC/Teller 911 Authority	Y
David	Albrecht	Cardiologist, lived experience	N
Jason	Jorgenson	COS School District 11	N
Matt	Riviere	Advocate, lived experience	Y
Laura	Ridenour	EPC Behavioral Health Manager	Y
Staff Support, Members of the Public, and Subject Matter Expertise			
Amanda	Grant	EPC Deputy Director – Financial Services	Y
Kenny	Hodges	EPC County Attorney	Y

Others Present:

Nick Grassi, Project Analysis for Financial Services
Sunny Bryant, EPC Deputy Administrator
Erik Olson, Director of Colorado Strategy for Face it TOGETHER
Mya Cappellino, Director of Marketing for Initium Health
Nicole Johnston, Project Manager for CHP
Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection
Tim Dienst, CEO/Chief Ute Pass Regional Health Service District
Becka Barnhart, CDC Foundation
Arren Gavin Ute Pass Regional Health Service District
Regina Winters, Associate Dean of the College of Public Services at UCCS
Jonathan Caudill, Interim Dean for the College of Public Service at UCCS
Jason Rose, College of Education at UCCS
Amanda Mayor, College of Education at UCCS
Kate Singh, Chief Communication Officer for 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office
McKee-Borah Maelee, Mental Health El Paso County Sheriff's Office
Gregory Tung, PhD MPH, Associate Professor for the Department of Health Systems, Management & Policy at Colorado School of Public Health
The FullCircle Program Denver: Sam Wilson – Facility Director for Full Circle Denver, Declan Thompson - Event Coordinator for FullCircle Denver, Ben Spencer -Program Director, Kaitlyn, Amanda Osorn, Marcus Rodges, Sam Larsen, Peter Whittle, Gavin, Dianna, Colby, Joshua Johnson, Stacey Haggerty, Kayla, Anya Tillman, Jay, Melissa, Amanda Decarlo, Nick, Tim, Theresa, Nathaniel, Trinity

Quorum Met? Yes (12/14)

1. **2:05-2:10pm | Introductions and Roll Call**
 - a. Conducted as shown above.
2. **2:10-2:12pm | Consent Calendar Discussion**
 - a. **COUNCIL ACTION:**
 - i. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus motioned to approve the minutes. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner seconded the motion.
 - ii. **Vote:**
 1. Unanimously approved.
3. **2:12 – 3:05 | University of Colorado Presentation (Gregory Tung, PhD MPH, Associate Professor for the Department of Health Systems, Management & Policy at Colorado School of Public Health)**
 - a. **Summary**
 - i. Dr. Gregory Tung provided a presentation on cannabis use and its potential risks, particularly focusing on the negative health outcomes associated with cannabis use, including its relationship to mental health disorders and psychosis. Dr. Tung emphasized the importance of limiting cannabis concentration to mitigate some of these issues. He also discussed research regarding the interplay between cannabis use and

opioid use, noting the complexity of the substitution effect. Dr. Tung clarified that while short-term cannabis use may substitute opioids for pain control, in chronic addiction contexts, the effect can be additive rather than substitutive.

- ii. Dr. Tung addressed questions from council members, including concerns about the risks of higher THC concentrations in modern cannabis products and the potential for cannabis to serve as a gateway to other illicit drugs. He also discussed the need for a more nuanced approach to addiction, emphasizing that it is not solely a medical condition but also influenced by emotional and environmental factors.

b. Discussion

- i. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone asked about the potential for limiting cannabis product concentrations to reduce harms. Dr. Tung explained the idea of implementing concentration caps, which some legislative sponsors in Colorado had proposed as a means of limiting THC potency and mitigating its negative impacts on mental health, particularly in youth.
- ii. Dr. Tung highlighted growing research on the link between cannabis use and mental health disorders, particularly psychosis, anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Council members expressed concern about the increased risk for youth, given the documented negative health outcomes for this population.
- iii. Dr. Tung shared findings on the complex relationship between cannabis and opioid use, acknowledging the substitution effect in some instances, where individuals replace opioid use with cannabis for pain management. However, he cautioned that this effect is more apparent in short-term, clinical pain management scenarios (such as post-surgery) and less so in chronic addiction contexts, where cannabis use might have an additive effect rather than a substitutional one.
- iv. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone questioned whether the substitution effect in addiction contexts might be more akin to switching from one addictive substance to another (e.g., from alcohol to cannabis). Dr. Tung acknowledged that while some short-term substitution effects can be observed, chronic addiction often leads to poly-substance use rather than a clear substitution.
- v. Dr. Tung explained that the gateway theory is controversial, with some research suggesting that cannabis use may increase the likelihood of using other substances, but the issue remains debated. Council members debated whether cannabis use in youth could serve as an entry point to other illicit drugs, with some concerned about the potential long-term consequences of early cannabis use.
- vi. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus asked about the risk of cannabis products being laced with other harmful substances like fentanyl. Dr. Tung clarified that while cannabis is generally not laced with

fentanyl in his research, poly-substance use, especially among youth, is a growing concern. He noted that the prevalence of vaping and other consumption methods in young people increases the risk of exposure to mixed substances, including synthetic drugs.

4. 3:05-3:25pm | Conference Debrief

a. Key Takeaways From the 2024 Colorado Opioid Abatement Council Conference in Larimer County

- i. The conference discussions highlighted the emotional impact of addiction and the complex debates around treatment models, especially regarding the need for more treatment beds.
- ii. Differing perspectives on the need for inpatient beds and addiction treatment facilities have raised important questions about how to define "beds" and what kinds of services are most needed.
- iii. The importance of collaboration with local government entities and health organizations was emphasized, particularly for addressing gaps in youth prevention and treatment services.

b. Discussion

- i. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, shared his thoughts on the impact of the conference, emphasizing the powerful personal stories shared by individuals with lived experience, particularly those who lost loved ones to substance use. He mentioned that the conference was a deeply emotional experience, providing a sense of urgency and deeper connection to the work being done by the council.
- ii. Matt Riviere shared his experience of hearing from families who had lost loved ones to fentanyl poisoning. He noted that listening to these personal testimonies was humbling and that it allowed him to see the human face of a crisis that is often portrayed as a series of statistics.
- iii. EPC County Commissioner Holly Williams appreciated hearing from people directly affected by substance use, noting that their experiences provided valuable insights. She found the conference impactful, particularly the session on the San Luis Valley's council and how they structured their group of 40 people. She was interested in their approach.
- iv. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone also attended the conference and reflected on the contrasting views he encountered regarding the need for more treatment beds. Specifically, he mentioned that some panels, such as the law enforcement panel, emphasized the urgent need for more beds for inpatient treatment for opioid use. He noted that while one group was advocating for more beds, he still hears that not all forms of addiction require inpatient treatment, and that alternative models might be more effective. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone suggested that these different perspectives should be aligned as part of the strategic planning process, which is crucial for the council moving forward. Dr. Eric

Stein Bronsky clarified that there is a difference between detox beds and recovery facilities.

- v. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner weighed in on the discussion by noting that many government-run programs might need to step in to fill gaps where the private sector cannot. She suggested that there may be opportunities for government-backed recovery centers or initiatives that could better serve underserved populations.

5. 3:25-3:45pm | ROAC Finance and Contracts Update (Initium)

a. Vote on Transfer of Unspent Administrative Funds to 2024/2025 Funding

- i. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus motioned for the rollover of \$332,628.29 unspent administrative funds from 2023 to make them available for council's use in 2024 and to implement the same process for future years (automatically roll over unspent funds from the administrative category once it has been balanced the following year). COS City Councilmember Lynette Crow-Iverson seconded the motion.

ii. Vote

- 1. Unanimously approved

b. Infrastructure Funds

- i. "The Colorado Opioid Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets aside 10% of Opioid Settlement Funds to the Infrastructure Share. Funds from the Infrastructure Share are distributed by the COAC to develop the infrastructure necessary to abate the opioid crisis in Colorado."
- ii. "Local Governments, Regions, and state governmental entities may apply for funds from the Infrastructure Share for capital and/or operational assistance for developing or improving the infrastructure necessary to abate the opioid crisis within the State of Colorado. The Infrastructure Share aims to create and/or increase access to services or programs that fall under the definition of Allowable Uses in Exhibit A of the Colorado Opioid MOU. The Infrastructure Share is intended to supplement other Opioid Settlement Funds and meet the needs of rural and underserved populations in Colorado."
- iii. Nicole Johnston, Project Manager for CHP emphasized that any funding for infrastructure improvements must remain aligned with the original MOU's directives. Nicole Johnston, Project Manager for CHP discussed the anticipated release of a new Request for Proposal (RFP), which will allow local governments and nonprofit organizations to apply for funding.
- iv. Nicole Johnston, Project Manager for CHP explained that this RFP process is part of a broader strategy by the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council to support local governments in accessing funding, noting that this will be the third round of funding in three years. She highlighted that it is likely to become an annual opportunity for local governments to secure funding for opioid-related initiatives.
- v. One topic discussed was an opportunity in Teller County, where there is potential for collaboration on community-based initiatives. The council

noted that this could be an excellent opportunity for Teller County to reassess its current approach to addressing opioid use and recovery and to potentially incorporate some of the strategies that have been successfully implemented in other areas.

- vi. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone mentioned that there have been ongoing conversations with Amber regarding the Eastern part of the county. This effort involves identifying service gaps and assets in the rural service areas, which will help in developing a plan for addressing opioid use and treatment in those regions.
- vii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone asked about the potential for partnering with existing recovery organizations, such as those focused on detoxification and long-term recovery pathways. The response confirmed that the funding is flexible enough to allow for partnerships with these organizations, provided they align with the MOU's requirements.
- viii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone suggested promoting these funds to ensure local governments are aware of these funding opportunities and how to access them. He proposed that the council should focus on how best to disseminate information to local governments, ensuring they are able to take full advantage of this funding.

b. McKinsey and Endo Settlements

i. Endo Settlement

- 1. A total of \$5,463,283.05 was distributed for Colorado across four categories: Regional, Local Government, State, and Infrastructure Shares.
- 2. Region 16 directly received a portion of these funds \$549,971.10. Future funding requests will be deducted by the amount already disbursed to Region 16.
- 3. Region 16 must allocate these funds to approved purposes in its 2-year strategic plan before requesting additional funds.
- 4. The funds will be included in the COST portal.

ii. McKinsey Settlement

- 1. A total of \$3,021,199.23 was distributed to local governments. There is no allocation to Regional, Infrastructure, or State Shares.
- 2. 13 local governments redirected their funds to the Region 16 Council totaling \$381,022.57. El Paso County also received a share of \$42,847.67.
- 3. The funds from this settlement will not appear in the COST portal and separate reporting will be provided.

iii. Vote

- 1. EPC County Commissioner Holly Williams moved to accept financial reports. All were in favor.

6. 3:45-4:20pm | Strategic Planning (Initium)

a. Historical Funding Guidance

- i. The discussion reviewed the history of funding details from Region 16 2024 disbursement and using that knowledge to guide future funding decisions.

b. Ad Hoc Funding Opportunities

- i. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner motioned to open ad hoc funding opportunities on a more flexible, year-round basis. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus seconded.
 - 1. Vote: All were in favor.
- ii. The goal is to create a streamlined process to allocate funds for programs and initiatives that don't fall into the regular funding cycle. Members discussed how ad hoc funding could be applied to unique, timely opportunities that arise and how to open this funding to a wider range of proposals.
- iii. The Council discussed the challenges related to data collection and reporting, especially in relation to opioid use and the effectiveness of funded programs. There was emphasis on ensuring that data collected accurately represents the communities being served and that reporting follows standard procedures to ensure transparency and accountability.
- iv. Members acknowledged the need to collect data on youth and their engagement with substances, recognizing this as a critical area for intervention.
- v. EPC County Commissioner Holly Williams raised the concern that there was no clear organization in place to collect data on youth substance use.
- vi. Commissioners Erik Stone and Carrie Geitner raised concerns about the Healthy Kids Colorado survey data, noting it would take time to address. EPC Public Health Deputy Director DeAnn Ryberg highlighted the difficulty of gathering representative youth data, with Healthy Kids providing population-level data but facing challenges in replication. They discussed exploring available data between El Paso and Teller counties, collaborating with Michelle Wolff to understand limitations and modeling. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner suggested more time to assess what can be done before proceeding with data collection.

c. Data Reporting

- i. Ivonne Hernandez, Project Manager for Initium Health informed the council that she will be providing the 13 awardees with their reporting templates in November.

d. Website Updates

- i. There was a focus on ensuring the website and associated tools are user-friendly, transparent, and accessible to all stakeholders, including the public and local organizations that may seek to apply for funding.
- ii. Initium to update version 2 of the purple color in the logo as it currently looks brown.
- iii. Nicole Johnston, Project Manager for CHP recommended adding a Q & A section

e. Funding Announcement Plan

- i. The goal of the announcement plan is to maximize the number of applications and ensure the funds are used effectively. This includes utilizing social media platforms, potential community events, and local networks to spread the word about funding opportunities.
- ii. Initium shared creative examples and Commissioner Erik Stone directed Initium to connect with the communications department to get these materials approved.

f. Process to Review Inquiries for Council

- i. Ivonne Hernandez, Project Manager for Initium Health, discussed a process for handling public inquiries, particularly regarding vendor proposals such as the request from Stage Analytics. The council agreed to include a review process for such inquiries, which will be added as a standing agenda item for future meetings. This process will streamline decision-making and ensure timely responses to public requests.

7. 4:20-5:03pm | Public Comments

- a. Several individuals associated with the Full Circle Program shared their experiences with addiction and recovery:
 - i. Sam (Full Circle Program Director) expressed gratitude for the ad hoc youth prevention funding and shared plans to expand services to Colorado Springs. A detailed letter of intent (LOI) outlining the expansion timeline was provided.
 - ii. Amanda DeCarlo shared her personal story, explaining how her daughter has been in the Full Circle program for 15 months, recovering from cannabis, alcohol, and Benadryl use. She highlighted the positive impact the program has had on her entire family, as they are now all in recovery. Amanda also became a recovery coach and emphasized the program's support, including mental health services, community building, and peer support.
 - iii. Nathaniel expressed gratitude for Full Circle, sharing his struggles with addiction, including nearly losing his hand due to drug use. He found hope through Full Circle, noting the unique support system that contrasted with traditional 12-step programs.
 - iv. Owen shared how his addiction started at a young age due to bullying and trauma. He struggled with substance abuse and found help through Full Circle after rehab, describing the program as a supportive family that helped him regain emotional stability and mental health.
 - v. Jay talked about his early struggles with depression, self-harm, and substance abuse. He shared how Full Circle became a significant part of his recovery, helping him stay sober after rehab, despite peer pressure from college life.
 - vi. Kaitlyn Peterson acknowledged the difficulty of addiction and shared her personal journey of recovery, emphasizing the community and connections she found in the program. She honored the memory of

someone lost to a fentanyl overdose and expressed her hope for others' recovery.

- vii. Peter shared his struggles with addiction and how Full Circle helped him find a supportive community. He talked about his past attempts to get sober and how Full Circle gave him a fresh start, connecting him with people his age who were also in recovery.
- viii. Stacy (Parent of Full Circle participant) described her daughter's recovery journey and the support Full Circle provided not only to her daughter but also to her as a parent. Stacy emphasized the importance of the parent meetings and the emotional support Full Circle offers to families.
- ix. Trinity described her journey of overcoming self-harm, eating disorders, and substance abuse with the help of Full Circle. She expressed how the program gave her the tools for independent living and emotional well-being and how she's now sponsoring other girls in recovery.
- x. Ryan acknowledged his struggles with drug abuse and bullying, sharing his path to sobriety through Full Circle. Ryan expressed how the program transformed his life and gave him the chance to relate to others who understood his struggles.
- xi. Markus described his personal story of struggling with addiction and how Full Circle helped him regain control of his life. He emphasized the importance of being part of a recovery community and sponsoring others to help them see the light at the end of the tunnel.
- xii. Melissa (Parent of Full Circle participant) shared her experience as a parent of a child who has been sober for 16 months. She discussed how Full Circle provided support during her child's darkest times and how the program's parent meetings helped her find strength and build relationships with other families.
- i. Ben Spencer (Full Circle Director) provided an overview of Full Circle's expansion and growth, noting that it has grown from serving a few families to over 170 in just 2.5 years. He explained that Full Circle is focused on not only recovery but also prevention, empowering young individuals to make a difference in their communities. He emphasized that Full Circle is free of charge and continues to offer support even after individuals graduate from the program.

b. Additional Comments:

- i. The council discussed the need for a larger meeting space to accommodate both voting and non-voting members. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone identified a potential new venue that offers sufficient space and the necessary technology for meetings. Plans are being made to shift the meeting to this new location in 2025, and members are encouraged to suggest any additional space options.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03pm by Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone.