

MINUTES
Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council Meeting
 January 22, 2025
 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 (Proxy Michael Montgomery)
Erik	Stone	Teller County Commissioner	Y
Lt. Jake	Markus	Proxy for Teller County Undersheriff	Y
Holly	Williams	El Paso County (EPC) Commissioner	Y (Proxy Sunny Bryant)
Carrie	Geitner	EPC Commissioner	Y
Michael	Allen	Fourth Judicial District Attorney	Y
Doug	Trainor	COS Police Department	Y
Randy	Royal	COS Fire Chief	Y (Proxy Steve Johnson)
David	Leinweber	COS City Council	N
Lee	Walker	Victor Fire Department	N
Dr. Emily	Russell-Kinsley	EPC Coroner	Y
Joseph	Roybal	EPC Sheriff	Y (Proxy Sheriff Deborah Harris)
Denise	Howell	Manitou Springs City Manager	Y
Patrick	Regan	Monument Police Chief	N
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	Y
Bridgette	Fuson	Department of Human Services (Monument Representative)	Y
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:

Becka Barnhart, CDC Foundation

Mark Cristiani, Chief of Police City of Fountain

Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection

Beth Hall Roalstad, Staff Liaison Homeward Pikes Peak

Declan Thompson, Event Coordinator for FullCircle Denver

FullCircle Members

Libby Stuyt, MD, Psychiatrist, Board of Directors for IASIC- International Academy on the Science and Impacts of Cannabis

Evan Clumb, Business Development, Peak View Behavioral Health Presentation

Melissa Mouton, Founder of 2.0 Schools Colorado

Eric Olson, Director of Colorado Strategy Face it Together

Nick Wells, Colorado Springs Phoenix
Marry Higgins, Teller County Public Health Nurse

Quorum Met? Yes (11/14)

1. **2:05-2:08pm | Introductions and Roll Call**
 - a. Conducted as shown above.
2. **2:08-2:10pm | Consent Calendar Discussion**
 - a. **COUNCIL ACTION:**
 - i. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner motioned to approve the November minutes. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus seconded the motion.
 - ii. **Vote:**
 1. Unanimously approved.
3. **2:10 – 2:50 | Cannabis Presentation (Libby Stuyt, MD, Psychiatrist, Board of Directors for IASIC- International Academy on the Science and Impacts of Cannabis)**
 - a. **Summary**
 - i. Dr. Stuyt presented on the impacts of high-potency THC products, which have dramatically increased since 2000. She detailed how THC potency exceeding 10% correlates with adverse health outcomes, such as psychosis, dependency, and worsened pain management. Emphasis was placed on the disruption of brain development in youth and the public misconception that cannabis is a safe, medicinal product. Dr. Stuyt also highlighted the evolution of THC products like concentrates and their marketing's role in public acceptance.
 - b. **Discussion**
 - i. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner inquired about elements that should be included in an RFP to address these issues. Dr. Stuyt recommended educational materials targeting all demographics, starting in grade school, and including outreach to treatment providers, parents, and judges.
 - ii. 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen asked if Dr. Stuyt had presented her findings to judges. Dr. Stuyt responded that she has attempted outreach but has faced challenges connecting with the judicial system. 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen expressed wanting to connect with Dr. Stuyt, and Dr. Stuyt also expressed wanting to potentially engage with the judicial system. Ivonne Hernandez, Project Manager for Initium Health, stated that she would facilitate the introduction.
 - iii. EPC Commissioner Geitner also asked which organizations serve as strong examples of effective education initiatives on this matter. Dr. Stuyt suggested Johnny's Ambassadors, Every Brain Matters, Parents Against Pot, and similar advocacy groups as resources.
4. **2:50-3:15pm | Peak View Behavioral Health Presentation (Evan Clumb, Business Development)**
 - a. **Summary**
 - i. Evan Clumb provided an overview of Peak View Behavioral Health's services, which include inpatient and outpatient care for mental health and substance use disorders. The facility has been serving El Paso County since 2008 and recently expanded its capacity to 144 beds. Peak View offers 24/7 crisis stabilization, group-based programming, recreational therapy, and specialized

care units for suicidal ideation. Despite its comprehensive offerings, Evan highlighted a critical gap in residential treatment centers for Medicaid populations in the region.

b. Discussion

- i. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone asked how big the gap in available beds is and what happens when Peak View cannot provide care. Evan responded that while the addition of beds has improved access, demand still exceeds capacity. Patients who cannot be accommodated are referred to other facilities, with secure transportation provided if necessary.
- ii. Evan Clumb, Business Development for Peak View Behavioral Health, explained that Medicaid-supported residential treatment facilities are scarce in Colorado Springs, posing a significant barrier for individuals needing long-term recovery support. He emphasized that one of the key challenges is attracting providers willing to establish such facilities due to financial constraints and regulatory hurdles. Evan noted that tax incentives and financial support could help encourage development, but additional policy considerations may also be necessary to ensure sustainability.
- iii. 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen asked if Peak View receives referrals from the VA for veterans. Evan confirmed that Peak View collaborates with Evans Army Community Hospital and the VA.

5. 3:15-3:20pm | Regional Opioid Abatement Council Finance and Contracts Update (EPC Deputy Director of Financial Services, Amanda Grant)

a. Finance Updates

- i. No additional disbursements have been received from settlements.
- ii. The total ending fund balance remaining is just a little over \$11 million, with an additional \$6.9 million available for council's use with the submission of a two-year plan.
- iii. The council's two-year financial plan initially included more expenditures, but in order to comply with financial reporting requirements, the plan had to be amended to reflect actual expenditures. All unallocated funds from this plan were rolled into an additional two-year plan for 2025-2026, using the same percentage-based allocation method as the initial plan.
- iv. Financial reporting is submitted to the state via a Google form, serving as a placeholder plan until the council decides on final allocations. If anyone would like to see a copy of this, they can request this from EPC Deputy Director of Financial Services Amanda Grant.

6. 3:20-3:25pm | Off Cycle Funding Requests

a. Approval of event application form

- i. The council expressed their approval of the application form.
- ii. Motion: EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner moved to approve the funding application form for small grants (up to \$5,000).
- iii. Second: Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone seconded.
- iv. Vote: Unanimously approved.

7. 3:25-3:35pm | Infrastructure Funds

a. Request

- i. Letter of support for a \$500,000 application to state infrastructure funds for the new Recovery High Schools.

b. Discussion

- i. Melissa Mouton explained that the infrastructure funds are part of a statewide initiative through COAC, aimed at securing capital funding for school facilities. Approval was received from D11 School District and the state before the holidays, allowing the project to move forward.
- ii. The funding request covers a planned expansion of two schools, one in Aurora and one in Colorado Springs.
- iii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone asked if similar funding had been requested from regions in the Aurora area. Melissa Mouton stated that the primary funding strategy involves applying to COAC for infrastructure support while seeking additional operational and staffing support from Regions 8, 9, and 16.
- iv. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus inquired about the location for the Colorado Springs school and if the funding was designated for upgrades or securing a property. Melissa Mouton explained that they have been evaluating locations for the past six months and are seeking either a donated space or a property purchase. She requested assistance from council members who may have leads on available properties.
- v. 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen asked how many students the new school is expected to serve. Melissa Mouton stated that each location is expected to serve approximately 80 students.
- vi. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner asked whether the school is a charter under D11 and whether bond funding had been pursued. Melissa Mouton confirmed that the school operates under CSI, which is an independent state entity, and that infrastructure funding was pursued under CSI guidelines.

c. Decision

- i. The council agreed to provide a letter of support for the Recovery High School application.
- ii. Motion: Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone moved to approve the letter of support.
- iii. Second: Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus seconded.
- iv. Vote: Unanimously approved.

8. 3:35-3:40pm | High Concentration Marijuana and Opioid Use Disorder RFP

a. Discussion

- i. The facilitator and staff informed the council that they had developed a draft RFP document focused on addressing high-concentration marijuana and opioid use disorder. However, the draft was not presented at the meeting, as it still requires finalization before it can be reviewed at the February meeting.
- ii. Matt Riviere, advocate, lived experience, was identified as a key reviewer to provide further refinement to the RFP before its final submission.
- iii. A final decision and potential approval of the RFP were deferred to the February meeting to allow time for revisions.

9. 3:40-3:50pm | Strategic Planning (Initium)

a. 2024 Reporting Updates

- i. The facilitators reviewed the completion of the 2024 reporting and explained that analysis of each organization is currently in progress.

b. 2025 Grant Applicants Update

- i. The council was briefed on the status of 2025 grant applications, with three submissions received so far.

c. Marketing Update

- i. Marketing efforts were reviewed, highlighting strong engagement metrics from recent social media campaigns and discussions on how to enhance outreach strategies.
- ii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone asked about engagement tracking beyond social media impressions, specifically in regard to the website.

10. 3:50-3:55pm | Break

11. 3:55-4:12pm | Potential New Venue for Monthly Meetings

a. Discussion

- i. Council members discussed potential new venues for monthly meetings (Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments and the Justice Services Building), considering factors such as space, accessibility, and security.
- ii. The council decided to remain at the current location and explore options for optimizing the existing meeting space.
- iii. Members agreed to rearrange the seating configuration, potentially adding more tables to ensure adequate space for non-voting attendees to participate.
- iv. The decision will be reassessed in future meetings based on the effectiveness of the adjustments.

12. 4:12-4:14pm | Statutory Requirements

a. Discussion

- i. Council members reviewed the open meetings law, which requires that at the first meeting in January each year, the council must consider statutory compliance items listed on the agenda.

b. Decision

- i. The council voted to approve the statutory items as outlined.
- ii. Motion: EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner moved to approve statutory updates.
- iii. Second: Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone seconded.
- iv. Vote: Unanimously approved.

13. 4:14-4:16pm | Election of 2025 Officers of the Council

a. Decision

- i. Motion: EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner nominated 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen and Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone for re-election.
- ii. Second: Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus seconded.
- iii. Vote: Unanimously approved.

b. Results

- i. **Chair:** 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen (re-elected).
- ii. **Vice Chair:** Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone (re-elected).

14. 4:16-4:23pm | Public Comments

- a. Several community members shared their experiences and perspectives during the public comments section, highlighting the impact of the Full Circle program.
- b. Declan expressed his gratitude for the support received from the council, stating that Full Circle has successfully launched and submitted its application. He acknowledged the ongoing efforts to connect with families in need and invited anyone with potential contacts to reach out. Declan noted that they are currently working with two families, who were present at the meeting to express their appreciation. He shared that Full Circle is hosting meetings at Serenity Recovery Connections and will be launching their first Thursday meetings at First Lutheran. He emphasized that their focus has been on

engaging with the community and exploring ways to expand services, including the goal of securing a physical location. In addition, they are initiating sober social events and adapting their programming to meet community needs.

- c. Bruce, a participant in the Full Circle program, shared his personal journey with the organization. Initially introduced to the program through another sober event, he found that Full Circle provided a more supportive and effective approach. He recalled a pivotal moment when three kids and a mother encouraged him to stay engaged, leading to a transformative experience. Bruce emphasized that Full Circle teaches resilience, helping individuals navigate setbacks and move forward. He shared the tragic news of a friend who had recently passed away from an overdose and expressed gratitude for the support system Full Circle has provided him, which he credits for keeping him on the right path.
- d. Candance spoke about her experience with Full Circle, having joined the program six months ago. Initially, she struggled to attend meetings in Denver but found relief and stability when the program expanded to Colorado Springs. Candance credited Full Circle with saving her life and expressed deep appreciation for the program's role in her sobriety journey.
- e. Jennifer, Bruce's mother, offered a parent's perspective on Full Circle's impact. She emphasized that while the program provides critical support for youth, it also fosters a strong community for parents navigating the challenges of raising children struggling with substance dependence. She shared that a large parent support meeting was held the previous night in response to the passing of a young person, underscoring the strength and solidarity within the community. Jennifer, who has been in sobriety for over a decade, noted that she has seen more losses than she cares to mention, but Full Circle provides a level of support and community that she has not witnessed in traditional 12-step programs. She expressed gratitude for the meetings in the area and the opportunity to be involved, recognizing the program's role in saving both young lives and supporting parents through their own struggles.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23pm by 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael Allen.