

MINUTES

Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council Meeting

February 26, 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	COS City Council	Y
Erik	Stone	Teller County Commissioner	Y
Lt. Jake	Markus	Proxy for Teller County Undersheriff	Y
Holly	Williams	EPC Commissioner	Y (Proxy Sunny Bryant)
Carrie	Geitner	EPC Commissioner	Y
Michael	Allen	Fourth Judicial District Attorney	Y (Proxy Kate Singh)
Mark	Chacon	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	Y (Proxy Tim Johnson)
Mark	Cristiani	Fountain Police Department	Y
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	Y
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	N
Laura	Ridenour	EPC Behavioral Health Manager	Y
Staff Support, Members of the Public, and Subject Matter Expertise			
Amanda	Grant	EPC Deputy Director – Financial Services	N
Kenny	Hodges	EPC County Attorney	Y

Others Present:

Logan Hyder, El Paso County Public Health

Becka Barnhart, CDC Foundation

Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection

Beth Roalstad, CEO Homeward Pikes Peak

Declan Thompson, Event Coordinator for FullCircle Denver
FullCircle Members
Eric Olson, Director of Colorado Strategy Face it Together
Next Chapter members: Corporal Heath Miller, Roger Johnson, Miguel Lopez
Tod Jones, Senior Project Manager The Phoenix
Damian McCabe, Director of Behavioral Health UC Health
Ann Cesare, Senior Director of Community and Government Affairs UC Health
Stanley Conley, Director Open Hearts and Open Doors

Quorum Met? Yes (13/15)

1. **2:07-2:10pm | Introductions and Roll Call**
 - a. Conducted as shown above.
2. **2:10-2:11pm | Consent Calendar Discussion**
 - a. **COUNCIL ACTION:**
 - i. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner motioned to approve the January minutes. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus seconded the motion.
 - ii. **Vote:**
 1. Unanimously approved.
3. **2:11 – 2:45 | Next Chapter Presentation (Damian McCabe, Director Behavioral Health)**
 - a. **Summary**
 - i. The Next Chapter program, which primarily operates in El Paso and Teller counties, was created to prevent and treat substance use, focusing on veterans and their families. Damian McCabe, Director Behavioral Health UC Health, provided a presentation highlighting the program's success, sharing the story of a veteran who was restored through the program and now helps others. Since its inception, the program has far surpassed its initial goal of serving 700 individuals, with over 1,220 participants enrolled. The program's primary goal is to reduce suicides and prevent overdose deaths, and it has been successful in achieving this, with no participant taking their life since enrollment. Moving forward, the program is focused on sustainability and scaling, seeking continued funding, though further expansion may require additional resources.
 - b. **Discussion**
 - i. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone asked about the expansion of services to Teller County.
 - ii. Damian McCabe, Director Behavioral Health UC Health, explained that the state asked to extend services to Teller, and they are now serving both counties, with plans to expand further if possible.
 - iii. COS Council member Lynette Crow-Iverson inquired about the difference between restorative health and rehabilitation, which Damian McCabe, Director Behavioral Health UC Health, clarified as a focus on restoring individuals' lives, including family, work, and health, rather than just treating addiction.

- iv. Steve Johnson, COS Fire Department Community and Public Health Administrator, asked about the criteria for entering the program, with Damian McCabe, Director Behavioral Health UC Health, confirming that all veterans with a DD214, regardless of discharge status, are eligible.
4. **2:45-2:50pm | High Concentration Cannabis Marketing RFP**
- a. **Summary**
 - i. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, reviewed the RFP for high concentration cannabis marketing, aimed at raising awareness of the risks of cannabis use combined with opioids.
 - b. **Discussion**
 - i. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone suggested revising the RFP to include Cripple Creek, given that marijuana was recently legalized there.
 - ii. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner discussed the timing of the cannabis licensing in Colorado Springs, highlighting the urgency to roll out this RFP.
 - iii. **Motion:** EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner motioned to approve the RFP draft with the amendment regarding Cripple Creek. Teller County Sheriff's Office Lt. Jake Markus seconded.
 - iv. **Approval:** All in favor; the motion passed.
5. **2:50-4:05pm | Strategic Planning (Initium)**
- a. **2025 January 31 Grant Applicants**
 - i. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, provided an update on the 2025 January 31 grant cycle, with a focus on the 35 applicants that had submitted proposals. He walked through the overall process and mentioned that there had been a lot of work behind the scenes to evaluate and categorize the applications based on the council's priorities.
 - ii. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, explained that the 35 applicants were categorized into various sections, and a provisional ranking system was established based on their alignment with the ROAC's 5 scopes of work (1. MAT/MOUD, 2. Youth Prevention, 3. Community Prevention, Education and Awareness, 4. Recovery Supports and Transitions and 5. Family Advocates).
 - iii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone noted that the Attorney General's office expressed a preference for funding new or expanded services rather than continuing existing programs. He emphasized that the goal should be to move the needle forward with new services.
 - iv. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, responded by confirming that the rubric used to evaluate applicants included a significant weight on the novelty of the program and innovation. He also noted that interviews/Q&A sessions with applicants will be an essential part of the evaluation process to ensure a deeper understanding of each program's potential impact.
 - v. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner emphasized the importance of ensuring that the organizations previously funded are actually delivering on their

promises and that their past performance is factored into the decision-making process for the new grant cycle.

- vi. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, confirmed that the performance of past grantees would be reviewed carefully, with a focus on whether they had met their objectives and been responsive to the council's requests. He mentioned that this would be part of the evaluation process for each applicant in the current cycle.
- vii. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, proposed dividing the January 31 funding cycle applicant review process into the five scopes of work, with the first review of the MAT/MOUD scope of work to take place at the next council meeting on March 26, 2025. Each organization will be allocated 20 minutes to answer questions from the council and provide further details or clarification regarding their applications. Council members were asked to closely review the organizations who applied for MAT/MOUD (Rocky Mountain Clinics, City of Colorado Springs #1, and Crossroads' Turning Points, Inc.) in advance and come prepared with targeted questions.
- viii. Additionally, council members were asked to review the applications for the following seven organizations who applied under the Youth Prevention scope of work (The FullCircle Program, TESSA, Once Chance to Grow Up, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region, The Lydia Hill Institute, Joint Initiatives for Youth and Family, and Merit Academy) and come prepared to the March 26, 2025 meeting to determine which of these organizations should progress to the next step in the application process to be invited to a Q&A session during the April 23 meeting.
- ix. Sunny raised a concern regarding the 2025 timeline, noting that with the review process split into the five scopes of work, we will begin reviewing one category per month, with the final category review concluding by July.
- x. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, expressed that the goal is to expedite the process, with July as the target for the new funding cycle. However, there is a risk of falling behind if we do not accelerate the process, noting that we may need to schedule a separate meeting to make final decisions and can revisit this matter in next month's discussion.

b. 2024 Awardee Reporting

- i. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, provided an update on the current status of funding for the 2024 awardees. He emphasized that this portion of the meeting would focus on ensuring transparency and accountability from past awardees, reviewing their progress and performance, and addressing any concerns related to the use of funds.
- ii. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, explained that while reviewing the performance of past awardees, the council would be looking at a variety of metrics to determine how effectively the funds were used,

including sustainability, measurable outcomes, and whether the grant goals were achieved.

- iii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone expressed a desire to focus more on the long-term sustainability of funded programs and the ability of awardees to demonstrate how their initiatives are continuing to make an impact. He emphasized that grant funding should not only address immediate needs but should also contribute to ongoing solutions that can continue after the funding cycle ends.
- iv. EPC Commissioner Carrie Geitner echoed Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone's points and raised the issue of ensuring that awardees remain responsive throughout the grant period, noting that the council should not continue to fund organizations that are not fulfilling their responsibilities.
- v. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, confirmed that each awardee's report would be evaluated to ensure it aligns with the expectations set at the time of funding. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, also mentioned that for organizations that failed to meet expectations, the council might consider asking them to explain their progress or lack thereof.

c. Website Analytics

- i. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, shared insights into the website's analytics, particularly highlighting an increase in direct traffic to the site.
- ii. James Corbett, Principal of Initium Health, reported that 49% of the website traffic came from direct visits, meaning that people are specifically seeking out the council's resources. This suggests a strong and engaged audience.
- iii. Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone suggested that this increase in direct traffic could be an indicator of growing public interest in the opioid crisis and recovery efforts.

6. 4:05-4:10pm | Public Comments

a. Discussion

- i. Beth Roalstad, CEO Homeward Pikes Peak, provided feedback on the quarterly dashboard and suggested adding a narrative section to the quarterly reports to allow for organizations to explain changes or provide context.
- ii. Eric Olson, Director of Colorado Strategy Face it Together, expressed gratitude for the funding received in Year 1 and shared success stories from Teller County.
- iii. Declan Thompson, Event Coordinator for FullCircle Denver, thanked the council and updated them on the expansion of their program from 2 to 6 families.

- iv. Sheri Trahern, Serenity Recovery Connection, thanked the council for the opportunity to be part of the SUD space, particularly in the area of peer coaching. She highlighted the growing number of organizations seeking funding for Medicaid and emphasized the importance of considering sustainability factors, noting that if Medicaid funding were to decrease, some organizations may no longer be able to operate.
- v. Stanley Conley, Director Open Hearts and Open Doors expressed appreciation for the funding and the opportunity to provide services.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10pm by Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone.