

Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council (OERAC)

Meeting Minutes for April 21, 2023

Meeting Location: Hybrid meeting using WebEx and in-person at Minnesota Board of Pharmacy building in St. Paul, MN.

Members present: (Names in italics are non-voting OERAC members):

Remote: Nicole Anderson, Dr. Heather Bell, Peter Carlson, Sarah Grosshuesch, Tiffany Irvin, Toni Napier, and Dr. Anne Pylkas

In person: Representative Dave Baker, Dr. Kathryn Nevins, Alicia House, Dr. Darin Prescott, Brock Reed, *Dana Farley, Eric Grumdahl, and Jolene Rebertus*

Members not present:

Sadie Broekemeier, Joe Clubb, Representative Erin Koegel, Senator Mary Kunesh, Esther Muturi, and Judge Korey Wahwassuck

Call to order

Facilitator Stacy Sjogren began the meeting at 10:00 and a guest welcome, review of ground rules, and roll call followed. Quorum was secured. See voting log for details.

Business items

After it was noted that the departure of Alexia Reed Holtum, State Opioid Response Program Director, was inadvertently omitted from the draft notes, Prescott moved to approve the minutes as amended from the March 17, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Napier. Motion passed with roll call vote. See voting log for details.

Eric Grumdahl, announced that Jennifer Rennquist will serve as Interim Supervisor for the Opioid Response Team.

Public comment

The following members of the public shared comments with the Council:

- Colleen Ronnei, Change the Outcome
- Michele Hein

DHS implementations update

Presenters: Jeff Campe and Eric Grumdahl

Contract extensions to 2021 awards. The list of grantees eligible for and requesting an extension was shared with the Council (see slide 12 on meeting slide deck). OERAC has already approved \$3.7 million for the 2021 grant round but with grantees' good stewardship of resources, their spending amounts to just \$2.5 million. This may provide the opportunity to apply the remaining money to other concerns. This funding round ends on June 30.

Follow-up action: MMB will add descriptions of how each grant recipient is using their award on the DHS Dashboard: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/opioids/opioid-dashboard/index.html>

Leech Lake grant extension request. OERAC had previously approved a grant of \$200,000 to Leech Lake and then up to \$400,000 as part of its Block Grant awards. Due to some significant contract processing issues at DHS, the May 2022 contract execution date was missed and not resolved until January of 2023. The impact of this delay on Leech Lake was that costs were incurred with no resources available to pay for them and they were not able to stand up some planned programming. DHS Assistant Commissioner Grumdahl's request of OERAC is to extend the current Leech Lake contract for two years and commit that the additional \$200,000 (for a confirmed total of \$400,000) be made available to them. Grumdahl noted that he has extended his sincere apologies, on behalf of DHS, for the delay and assured OERAC members that the grant contract review process is being assessed and revised.

Nevins moved as was requested, Grosshuesch seconded. Motion approved. See voting log for details.

\$1.1 Million Tribal Special Appropriation approved by OERAC in February. DHS has determined the most efficient way to handle the appropriation is to utilize an Interagency Agreement. Grantee reports back to OERAC will now require the following accountability measures:

Within first six months:

- Summary of funding distribution
- Brief summary of projects being funded of each participating tribe
- At least one key outcome or impact measure

Within three months of contract ending:

- Review of project summaries
- Final impact/outcome report out along with any other key findings
- Final accounting of spending and expenditures

Farley's MDH department will be involved in reporting processes for this special appropriation. Prescott gave historical references to previous instances where not all tribes accepted government funds or grants specifically intended to be divided evenly among the 11 tribes. No preference was confirmed as preferred by the tribes, and Dr. Prescott and Commissioner Nicole Anderson will give the council feedback on preferences for how the money be distributed if any tribes decline the money. OERAC will need to approve any changes to distribution.

Current year RFP timeline update. See slide 15 for an updated OERAC 2023 grant RFP funding timeline for details. A \$20 million RFP is anticipated which is the biggest round to date. It isn't unreasonable to expect up to 400 applications. Upwards of forty reviewers will likely be required. Staff is considering contracting with an outside firm to coordinate the review process. The timeline goal is to have contracts negotiated and executed by

mid- to late September. Grosshuesch suggested tapping into county health departments to provide review volunteers. This approach adds to OERAC's reviewer pool and develops valuable insights at the county level on how to develop better grant proposals, in general. Prescott also suggested a similar outreach for volunteers via tribal structures.

OERAC Staffing Ramp-up. Jen Sather, DHS SUD Director, shared that a significant staffing ramp-up is underway. Plans are in motion to hire a lead position focused on supporting the Advisory Council. Sather also anticipates hiring an additional five support positions.

OERAC Meetings Schedule

Presenter: Jeff Campe, DHS Contract Manager

Campe gave a brief overview of a possible sequence of Advisory Council meetings during the *remainder* of the current grant cycle. See slides 17 and 18 for details. Campe also gave a brief overview of the proposed long term meeting cadence and tentative agenda content (see slides 19-20). Council leadership will continue discussing and refining these schedule and tentative agenda content and prepare further for further conversation with all members at the June meeting. It was confirmed that there will be no May 2023 meeting of the Advisory Council. Long term goal is to get to six meetings per year with more predictable agenda items. Finally, Campe shared a proposed long-term cadence for the grant RFP funding timeline (see slide 21). Documents will be shared with council members on proposed changes to OERAC meeting schedule and cadence prior to the June meeting. DHS requests feedback from council members prior to June meeting for discussion.

Legislative Update

Presenter: Rep. Dave Baker

Baker shared updates from the current legislative session on the following items:

- Naloxone in schools bill
- Fentanyl prosecution bill
- OPIP – Opioid Prescribing Improvement Program
- Cannabis House File 100
- OERAC Council make-up
- Sunset provision and its possible repeal

Quarterly OERAC Financial Summary

Presenters: Eric Grumdahl and Kari Irber

A newly developed OERAC "checkbook" by fiscal year was reviewed. See meeting handouts for copy. Key takeaway: this will be provided to Advisory Council on quarterly basis. Feedback was requested to ensure content is useful. There is \$25,001,738 available from SFY 23 Settlement and Licensing Fees revenue. The RFP will be the \$25,001,738 less the \$1.1M OERAC Special Tribal Appropriation and approximately \$3.3M needed for contract extensions.

Follow up action: Baker requested more information be included related to the administrative OERAC accounts.

Department of Corrections video

Rebertus shared brief video available on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/QjKZQ5mJ1ww>) about new Harm Reduction Kits for those leaving prison with a history of addiction.

RX and Illicit Drug Conference Report Out

Presenters: Kathy Nevins and Heather Bell

Nevins and Bell attended the conference and shared some of the highlights. See slides 25-30. Xylazine is now present in Minnesota. Members from various professional perspectives shared how they are seeing Xylazine show up in their areas of responsibility.

Public Comment

The following member of the public shared comments with the Council:

- Jessie Saavedra, Ramsey Council Public Health

Adjourn

Next meeting: Friday, June 16 10:00-2:00, location to be announced.

Nevins moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Prescott. Meeting was adjourned at 1:47 p.m.