**OPIOID ABATEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION OFFICIAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES (DRAFT)**

**January 15, 2025**

The Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission was held at District of Columbia Hospital

Association, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005 on Wednesday, January 15, 2025. Members of the public were also invited to attend in-person and virtually via WebEx.

Recording of the meeting can be found at the following link: <https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m718dc26d06f90fe30a44699387659bef>

**ATTENDEES**

Present

1. Christopher Watson, MD as designee for Ayanna Bennett, Ph.D., Director, DC Health
2. Christina Okereke, Representative of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia
3. The Honorable Christina Henderson (Marcia Huff as the Designee), Chair, DC Council Committee on Health
4. Jacqueline Bowens, Chief Executive Officer, District of Columbia Hospital Association
5. Michael Pickering, District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
6. LaVerne Adams, DMin, Chief Executive Coach, Total Life Consultancy LLC (virtual)
7. Demetrius Jones, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Wards 7 & 8 DC Prevention Center/DC Recovery Community Alliance
8. Larry Gourdine, Program Manager, Psychiatric Institute of Washington (virtual)
9. J. Chad Jackson, MS, CEO, Ardan Community Living, LLC
10. Beverlyn Settles-Reaves, PhD, Program Manager, Howard University (virtual)
11. Juanita Price, M.Ed, Chief Executive Officer, Hillcrest Children and Family Center (virtual)
12. Senora Simpson, PTMPH, DrPH
13. Melisa Byrd, Senior Deputy Director/Medicaid Director, DC Department of Health Care Finance/Office of the Deputy Director (virtual)
14. Patricia Quinn, Designated Representative, District of Columbia Primary Care Association (virtual)
15. Nnemdi Elias, MD, MPH, Addiction/Internal Medicine

Absent

1. Alexis Squire, Designee, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
2. Larry Bing, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Leadership Council for Healthy Communities
3. Franciso Diaz, MD, FACP, DC Chief Medical Examiner
4. Barbara Bazron, Ph.D., Director, Department of Behavioral Health
5. Ciana Creighton, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

**Welcome and introductions**

* Commissioners did introductions in person and virtually.

**Call to Order**

* Chair J. Chad Jackson called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM.

**Quorum Declaration**

* Chair Jackson conducted a roll call for quorum declaration.

**Approval of Minutes**

• Chair Jackson presented the minutes for the October 16, 2024, Commission meeting.  
• A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Council Member, Dr. Laverne Adams and seconded, with the correction of the spelling and title of two (2) of the commissioners was carried by unanimous vote.

1. **Office of Opioid Abatement Updates-** *Presented by Dr. Orlando Barker*

* **The presentation will be attached to the minutes.**
* **Key takeaways:**
* 40 initiatives funded, including 27 new projects under the Strategic Impact Grant.

* Faith-based organizations expanded SUD prevention efforts under a modified SOAR grant.
* Emergency declaration was reinstated in February 2024 to allow procedural waivers.
* Grant process emphasized support for small, community-based organizations.
* Enhanced fairness with a 15-member review panel from DBH.
* **Discussion Points:**
* Clarification on funding timelines, missed deadlines, and notification processes.
* Suggestions to improve transparency, such as creating an FAQ and publishing grant summaries.
* Emphasis on cultural competence and equitable applicant support.
* Proposal to reconvene the Steering Committee to strengthen Commission engagement.

1. **FEMS Mobile Integrated Health Update**- *Presented by David A. Vitberg, MD*

* **The presentation will be attached to the minutes.**
* **Key takeaways:**
* FEMS now integrates into healthcare, collaborating with DBH and Care Bridges to reduce ER overcrowding.
* The Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) team administers buprenorphine, provides harm reduction outreach, and ensures patient transitions to treatment.
* Investments were made in equipment, dashboards, and electronic health records for efficiency and security.
* MIH members received motivational interviewing and simulation training. The program responded to over 400 incidents and expanded its capacity.
* **Discussion Points:**
* Commissioners suggested expanding outreach efforts, particularly to senior centers, and recommended integrating peer specialists more deeply into the program.
* The program’s existing community engagement strategies—such as neighborhood walks and board outreach—were highlighted as key touchpoints.
* Questions were raised about the sustainability of funding beyond current grant cycles. It was confirmed that future support will come from the department’s operational budget.
* The role of peer specialists was discussed, including their function as outreach staff and their involvement in follow-up care for discharged patients.
* Recommendations were made to enhance coordination among peer specialists and to explore how the Commission could further support the program’s development.

1. **Octane Social Marketing Update-** *Presented by Everett Hamilton*

* **The presentation will be attached to the minutes.**
* **Key takeaways:**
  + Octane utilizes comprehensive research and focus groups to identify information gaps and community preferences, emphasizing personal stories and individual journeys over traditional opioid-related imagery.
  + The campaign employs a multi-channel approach, including digital platforms, out-of-home advertising in shelters and metro systems, and active community engagement through partnerships with local organizations to reach a diverse audience.
  + The initiative educates Washington D.C. residents about the opioid crisis, empowers individuals with hope and strength, and connects them to available resources and support services, with the campaign set to launch on March 1, 2025.

**New Business Proposal**

* Due to time constraints, **AIM Health Institute** was unable to give their scheduled presentation and will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

**Public Comment**

* Judy Ashburn Provided public comment.
* Mark Johnson, MD provided public comment via Webex.
* Gordon Simmons provided public comment via Webex**.**

**Adjournment**

* Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 11:16 A.M.