

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Recovery Work Group Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2025 from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present:

Rica Rodriguez and Betsy Craft, Co-chairs
Alia Andrews, Behavioral Health Administration
Hope Hyatt, Colorado Mental Wellness Network
Duke Rumely, Sober AF Entertainment
Rob Shearon, Reconnected Foundation
Dara Mendoza, Advocates for Recovery Colorado
Coreen Johnson, Young People in Recovery
Amy Walker, Ke'nekt Recovery
Rourke Weaver, Colorado Agency for Recovery Residences
Angie Bertrand, Peer 180
Erik Olson, We Face it Together
Shelley Marie, Health District of Northern Larimer County
April Wise, Denver Recovery Group
Parker LaCombe, DDPHE
Katie Moon, Grand County Rural Health Network
Darin Valdez, Colorado Artists in Recovery
Ashley Heathfield, Office of e-Health Innovation
Colorado Providers Association: Precious Collins, Breeah Kinsella
Indigenous Wellbriety: Tess Lynston, Marco Yazzie, Chelsea High Elk
Cross Purpose: Jazmyn Gray, Anthony Rodriguez
HardBeauty: Suzanne Plenus, Tiffany K.
Consortium: José Esquibel, Jennifer Place, Eric Barker, Rosemarie MacDowell
Absent: See attached roster

Co-Chair Betsy Craft called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the December 2024 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

State Partner Update (Alia Andrews):

The Lift the Label public awareness campaign is seeking two individuals on the western slope with a hospitality background to share their stories as part of the campaign. Compensation will be provided. Email katelyn@ameliecompany.com

Alia reviewed the quarterly report of funding provided for peer training and certification. One hundred twenty certifications and credentials were completed. Two hundred twenty-seven people are enrolled in credentialed training programs and nine credentialed training programs were added along with 17 apprenticeships. Twenty-two health care workers were added and 122 scholarships and stipends were awarded. Thirty-nine jobs have been added. Funding was allocated to 14 recipients. The grant was extended to June 30th. Betsy asked if the peer support workforce standards developed by peers who served on the year-long Next Steps

Related to the BHA Peer Support Steering Committee had been disseminated (the last steering committee meeting was in June 2024). Alia said they had not, but she would follow up and provide additional information when available.

Peer Support Professionals Association Update (Hope Hyatt/CMWN):

The association is no longer offering a one-year free trial for new members. Currently, credits for recertification through COPA are being implemented. Training sessions will be recorded and hosted on the association website. CEUs will be updated on a yearly basis to align with certification. The association will continue to focus on advancing and supporting the peer support workforce, national standards, and best practices. The website has a calendar of networking events and training. Additional information: <https://coloradopeersupport.com/>

Hope mentioned the controversy associated with a Colorado Public Radio report written by Ben Markus and the necessity of educating the public and legislators about treatment and recovery efforts and programs.

Jose Esquibel spoke about the importance of public awareness regarding stigma and recovery stories, particularly given that pending legislation is now attempting to further criminalize possession of opiates to eliminate the under four-gram misdemeanor charge and make possession of any amount a felony. If the bill fails, the supporters are planning to file a ballot initiative, which would require public votes. Both Betsy and Rica suggested organizing community awareness activities and capitol hill testimony to counter this type of legislation.

CPR Report: Cash for Caring: Unlicensed, inexperienced providers take on mental health and drug addiction in Denver, Ben Markus: <https://www.cpr.org/2024/12/02/cash-for-caring-denver-mental-health-unlicensed-providers/> <https://www.cpr.org/2024/12/02/cash-for-caring-denver-mental-health-investigative-series/>

Community responses to the Ben Markus CPR articles on KGNU:

<https://kgnu.org/shows/metro/01-08-2025/>

<https://kgnu.org/shows/metro/01-15-2025/>

COPA Update (Precious Collins & Breeah Kinsella):

The CPFS Committee is in the process of reviewing and updating the manual and certification application. The goal is to streamline the application process so that applicants are better equipped with tools and skills. Katie is COPA's credential specialist and can assist applicants with technical assistance and training.

Since July, 164 tests have been taken. Precious reviewed scores in areas such as ethics, mentoring, recovery, and wellness and reviewed other program updates expected to be finalized by September. Supervisor certifications are still under consideration, and there has been an increase in peers who have attained their CPFS credential and are interested in obtaining their prevention specialist credential. There are currently 1,500 peers in Colorado waiting to test for their CPFS credential, according to Breeah.

Other specialized peer positions were discussed (youth peers, family, Doula, carceral specialists). The ICRC has an entry level and a harm reduction certificate. While specialist certification would be more expensive, the cost could be offset by higher fees. Precious said she could look into specialized certifications with the ICRC if necessary.

Breeah oversees statewide training and explained how the program is organized. Training is sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Health Plans and Signal Behavioral Health. Over a thousand people have been trained at no cost. Training schedules are posted on COPA's LinkedIn page.

Breeah spoke about recent legislative activity pertaining to alcohol rules and their effect on individuals in recovery. A bill passed that required the Department of Revenue to work with a recovery work group to establish rules related to alcohol displays in stores. The work group is heavily represented by alcohol industry members with very few representatives from the recovery community. Breeah recently met with the Executive Director of the Department of Revenue, who is a person with lived experience and has worked as a provider at Arapahoe House. Arapahoe House is one of the Colorado Providers Association's founding organizations. Breeah encouraged work group participants and members of the recovery community to attend the meetings in order to increase recovery community representation.

Regulation 47-316. Advertising Practices:

https://sbq.colorado.gov/sites/sbg/files/documents/Regulations_47-316_and_47-950_0.pdf

CARR Update (Rourke Weaver):

New standards have been published. There is a cost increase due to the rapid expansion of recovery residences in the state. The increase (\$100 per bed and a \$500 annual fee per organization) is being passed on to members. For additional information:

rourkeweaver@gmail.com

Office of e-Health Innovation Update (Ashley Heathfield):

The Office of e-Health Innovation is part of the Colorado Lieutenant Governor's office. Ashley reported on a project in collaboration with the Colorado State Library related to the funding of rural libraries to increase community access to telehealth and other virtual services. The project will leverage existing broadband, infrastructure, and core services that libraries provide to help communities connect virtually and provide support and access. Funding for the project's next phase will allow libraries to turn space within the library to house equipment required for a telehealth appointment or job-related matter. Funding can be used to purchase equipment. Plans are to create more partnerships between libraries and healthcare providers to benefit communities, particularly from a behavioral health standpoint. For additional information: Ashley.heathfield@state.co.us

Connect to Health @ Your Library: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12Ai1VXkiYWkRhN-7ldCsEAG0I5zUoQYQ/edit#slide=id.p2>

Comments:

Jose Esquibel said the collaboration could provide a great resource for peers across the state to help connect people to services, including individuals exiting incarceration in frontier rural areas. Jose suggested passing this information on to Brooke Bender and her team, as they are working on continuity of care for individuals leaving incarceration.

Interim Study Committee Policy Ideas:

Meetings to discuss policy recommendations will be scheduled in February and March.

Funding Announcements:

- SAMHSA - Tribal Behavioral Health program (Short Title: Native Connections): <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/pdf/fy-2024-tbh-nofo.pdf>
- SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) program - chrome-extension: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/pdf/fy-2024-spf-pfs-communities-tribes-nofo.pdf>

Consortium Announcements/Updates:

Policy ideas for the Interim Study Committee on Opioids and Other Substance Use Disorders can be emailed to: jennifer.place@cuanschutz.edu. For more information about the ISC and its aims/accomplishments: <https://leg.colorado.gov/committees/opioid-and-other-substance-use-disorders-study-committee/2023-regular-session>

Suggested policies ideas:

- Updating definitions of peer support
- Medicaid requiring certification by state or national association to bill for peer services
- Medicaid covering auricular acupuncture
- Alcohol tax
- Alcohol law change to update on advertising (collateral in supermarkets)
- Preventing liability insurance from discriminating against those with legal histories

Guest & Member Announcements:

- The Foundry is offering two Love in Action training sessions for both [Admissions](#) and [Intervention](#) individuals (cost associated) at their Broomfield location in February. See links for more information.
- Free COPA-approved peer support professional training opportunities for those living in Denver, Boulder, Mesa, or Weld counties. Four different cohorts (each starting in March/May/August/October) <https://soberafe.com/peer-training/>
- Sober tailgates and other recovery-supportive spaces and events: <https://soberafe.com/events/>
- YPR Arapahoe Chapter All Recovery Meeting for Peer Professionals in collaboration with Advocates for Recovery.
Flyer: https://www.canva.com/design/DAGXlqITIUY/G75s6uJTIHrN3r1VowhuRA/view?utm_content=DAGXlqITIUY&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=unique_links&utm_id=h96810e8a85
- Colorado Artists in Recovery: Two open mic nights at Red Rock Recovery Center and Free Recovery Community at The Phoenix: <https://www.coloradoartistsinrecovery.org/denver-events>
- Cross Purpose Summer Jam Committee sign up link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ztDuG1h2qM-ajhChFVryadTXrPrY3fvW7ODm2xzPV7c/preview>
- Colorado has joined states like NM, CA, NC, PA in a national call-to-action for compassionate overdose response and use of only low-dose naloxone products.
 - Reminder: harm reduction best practices come from the voices of PWUD, not pharmaceutical representatives.
 - 10 years of data from three states proves the standard dose of naloxone is between 1-2 doses of 4 mg nasal or the .4 ml of IM naloxone.

- [A call for compassionate opioid overdose response](#)
- [Compassionate Overdose Response Summit and Naloxone Dosing Meeting](#)
- The Colorado Drug Policy Coalition is partnering with the Drug Policy Alliance for a Colorado-specific media vetting workshop to enable recovery and harm reduction specialists feel confident when speaking to media on the topic of Colorado's commitment to compassionate overdose response and low-dose naloxone products as best practices for responding to opioid overdoses.

To post events on Facebook Page (email the info/graphic):

<https://www.facebook.com/RecoveryReadyColorado>

Recovery-related Job Announcements:

- The College of Nursing has an opening for a Peer Recovery Coach to be trained as a Doula. The position is located in Pueblo and will be a full-time University employee of the CON. <https://cu.taleo.net/careersection/2/jobdetail.ftl?job=35127>
- NAATP Member Specialist: <https://www.naatp.org/member-specialist>
- Denver Health: [R9737 - Peer Recovery Coach I](#) and [R9635 - Peer Support Specialist II](#)
- CU School of Medicine Hospital Follow-Up Program & others: <https://cu.taleo.net/careersection/2/moresearch.ftl?lang=en> Search term: "Peer"
- Advocates for Recovery Colorado: <https://www.advocatesforrecovery.org/job-postings>
- Adams County Public Health: harm reduction peer support specialist: [https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/adams/jobs/4672302/harm-reduction-specialist-peer-support?department\[0\]=Public%20Health%20Department&sort=PositionTitle%7CAscending&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/adams/jobs/4672302/harm-reduction-specialist-peer-support?department[0]=Public%20Health%20Department&sort=PositionTitle%7CAscending&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs)
- HardBeauty: <https://hardbeauty.zohorecruit.com/jobs/Careers>
- [AllHealth Network](#): scroll down to find peer support positions
- [Colorado Village Collaborative](#)
- Advance Pathways: <https://advancepathways.org/careers/>
- Support for returning to the workforce: <https://www.crosspurpose.org/career-tracks/> and <https://wageesco.org/>

Recovery Resources:

- National Association of Peer Supporters: <https://www.peersupportworks.org/membership/>
- The National Peer-Run Training and Technical Assistance Center for Addiction Recovery Support (CARS) is open. Website to access Technical Assistance, Resource Directories, and Helpful Tools: www.carsrecovery.org
- The Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) Network is a multidisciplinary resource for professionals in the addiction treatment and recovery services field: <https://attcnetwork.org/training-and-events-calendar/>
- Mobilize Recovery (national advocacy and resources): workshops recorded through their [Interconnected Recovery Community Classroom](#).
- Recovery Research Institute recorded Seminar Series on a variety of topics: <https://www.recoveryanswers.org/addiction-research-summaries/seminar-series/>

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster