

## Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Misuse Prevention

### Recovery Work Group Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2026 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

*(The following minutes and discussion are for informational purposes only and do not represent the position of the University of Colorado.)*

#### **Present:**

Victor King, Co-chair  
April Wise, Denver Recovery Group  
Cody Gamet, North Colorado Health Alliance  
Darin Valdez, Colorado Artists in Recovery  
Eric Repsis, Clinica Family Health  
Ian Keith, Bicycle Health  
Laura Indermuehle, Hope COS  
Precious Collins, COPA  
Rebecca Hickman, Avenues Recovery Center  
Rica Rodriguez, Promotores de Esperanza  
Rourke Weaver, OHR  
Sarah Honstein, Recovery Café Longmont  
Zoe Breen Mohr, CU ARTS  
Antoinette Sanchez  
CHEF, Denver: Jeff Koch, Cheyanne Deines  
Crossroads Turning Points: Jacquelyn McDonald, Crystal Dickerson  
Hazelbrook: Hailima Yates, Chelsea Secord, Kenneth Freeman  
Advocates for Recovery Colorado: Dara Mendoza, Valentina Atencio, Manual Loera Lomeli  
Consortium: Jen Place, Hilary Bryant, Shayna Micucci, Kristin Carpenter, Eric Barker, Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached

Co-chair Victor King called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made to approve the February 2026 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

#### **Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) Recovery Services in Colorado - Roundtable Discussion:**

Co-chair Victor King opened the discussion. The BIPOC community faces barriers to recovery services that are often due to cultural and financial issues. One of the goals of the Recovery Work Group is to find ways to close these barriers, bring the community and professionals together, and advocate for policies that assure services are inclusive and available to those in need. Currently, while reports indicate overdose rates are generally decreasing, they are not decreasing in the BIPOC population.

Work group members joined several breakout sessions to discuss the following questions:

- In your recovery work, what is working for BIPOC communities that should be celebrated?
- What are the structural or cultural barriers in your work that individuals in the BIPOC community consistently face and how should these barriers be addressed?

**Post-Breakout Comments/Discussion:**

Jen Place: Advocates for Recovery Colorado has new projects and efforts worth celebrating. Manual Loera Lomeli participates in ARC’s cultural program focused on the Latino community. He is bi-lingual and able to assist with the Spanish-speaking participants.

April Wise: Denver Recovery Group has approximately 800 patients now, but they are mainly Caucasian.

Eric Barker: Advocates for Recovery Colorado is in the process of changing their website and expanding Spanish-speaking services. There is a gap in in-patient service options for the Spanish-speaking community.

Jeff Koch: There is room to improve diversity within the CHEF organization. Bicycle Health is expanding their peer and provider services in BIPOC-specific communities. Bicycle Health operates in 49 states and offers telehealth services.

Valentina Atencio: Advocates for Recovery Colorado offers free services and has two bilingual peer recovery coaches on staff offering telehealth appointments. Spanish-speaking mental health providers are lacking in the western part of the state. Many Spanish-speaking patients do not seek assistance outside of their family unit.

Chelsea Secord: There is a lot of burn-out among providers now because of changes in Medicaid and funding. Some barriers are decreasing compared to prior generations.

Eric Repsis: Clinica Family Health has peer support professionals and case managers within jail settings. Caseload has declined due to patients failing drug tests. They have few Spanish-speaking bi-lingual providers and are seeing various languages, including individuals of Thai and Chinese origin.

Sarah Honstein: Recovery Cafe Longmont has a dedicated night for their Spanish-speaking community members. They have two bilingual peer professionals. Sarah mentioned a translation app that has been used in healthcare settings when communicating in other languages. <https://www.languageline.com/interpreting-services/interpreting-app>

Rourke Weaver: Ohio Recovery Housing lacks bilingual services. He suggested funding to support technical assistance and business building assistance for individuals.

Rica Rodriguez: Promotores de Esperanza opened a location in southwest Denver. They have partnered with Kaizen Food Rescue to supply surplus food for the unhoused and others in need. Promotores de Esperanza also has a clothing bank serving many Spanish-speaking individuals.

**BHA Recovery Strategic Plan (Jen Place):**

In 2019, the Consortium, BHA, Mental Health Colorado, and the Colorado Health Institute were tasked with creating a strategic plan for substance use disorder recovery. Rourke Weaver

participated in this work. The majority of the work was accomplished pre-COVID. BHA has requested the work group update the plan by July 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. Jen asked work group members to consider recovery needs and priorities for 2026 through 2030 and suggested putting together a subcommittee to work on the project. A copy of the August 2019 Recovery Strategic Plan is attached to the minutes.

The following work group members expressed an interest in working on the plan update: Sarah Honstein, Rourke Weaver, Jeff Koch, Cheyanne Deines, Precious Collins, Rica Rodriguez, and Ian Keith.

### **Member Updates/Announcements:**

Kristin Carpenter updated work group members regarding funding and support of ongoing peer education. She suggested the work group assume a more in-depth role in the peer education scope of work. Hilary asked work group members to provide their email addresses if they are interested in participating in peer education. [Hilary.bryant@cuanschultz.edu](mailto:Hilary.bryant@cuanschultz.edu)

Victor reviewed the 2025 Peer Support Professionals Lunch and Learns sessions and suggested coordination with the Peer Workforce Collaborative in order to avoid education duplications. He also spoke about the importance of maintaining a sufficient level of participation by choosing engaging presenters and making the sessions more interactive. Kristin suggested pre- and post-speaker surveys. <https://corxconsortium.org/peer-support-lunch-and-learns/>

Hilary asked how work group members prefer to receive announcements and other information, noting that emails were not being read and a monthly information spreadsheet had not generated interest. Chelsea Secord suggested resource fairs as an option. Sarah Honstein suggested specifically designated emails (e.g., entitled "Recovery Announcements") once per month. Adding a resource page to the website was also discussed.

Valentina Atencio reported that Advocates for Recovery Colorado peers participate in Montrose and Delta family courts and within the La Plata jail. AFRC plans to expand services in the Gunnison area and are seeking a Spanish-speaking peer for their criminal justice unit. AFRC peers will be attending the upcoming Advocacy Day at the state capitol.

Darin Valdez updated members on CAiR activities. Information is available on the organization's website: <https://www.coloradoartistsinrecovery.org/>

Dara Mendoza spoke about Colorado Peer Policy Action Network's (C2PAN) statewide efforts. C2PAN is a grassroots coalition of peer support professionals collaborating with law enforcement and community partners to expand access to peer support services in Colorado jails to reduce systemic barriers through evidence-informed policy and peer-informed solutions. Approximately 70 peers across the state participate in the coalition.

Colorado Peer Policy Action Network:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JW0emEp9PjwhovBuMGr6DhOtLJ7ueWf0/view>

Contact Form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHjCvjyaSEzJNaIQXFxeh133YueUsNHkqNj74neAVokme4bQ/viewform>

For additional information: [daramendoza@advocatesforrecovery.org](mailto:daramendoza@advocatesforrecovery.org)

Shayna Micucci, Consortium Program Manager, is supporting Black community efforts related to substance use services. An in-person Black community forum is planned for April 23<sup>rd</sup> in Denver. Shayna asked work group members to let her know if they are interested in attending the forum or if they can suggest others who would like to be involved. Contact [Shayna.micucci@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:Shayna.micucci@cuanschutz.edu)

**Adjournment/Next Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Friday, April 10, 2026, from 12 to 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

Attachments: Work group roster, 2019 Recovery Strategic Plan