

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Misuse Prevention

Recovery Work Group Meeting Minutes

July 10, 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:

Coreen Johnson, Co-chair
Cara Mares, Serenity Recovery Connection
Russ Eckardt, Mindsprings Health
Jacquelyn McDonald, Crossroads Turning Points
Kylan Bain, Sober AF Entertainment
Sarah Honstein, Recovery Café Longmont
Brandi Drtina, North Colorado Health Alliance
Sydney Melson, Colorado Providers Association
Rica Rodriguez, Promotores de Esperanza
Geno Shvedov, Hazelbrook
Emily Schrader, Dimensions Counseling & Consulting
Advocates for Recovery Colorado: De Waldron, Valentina Atencio
Gerald Esparza
Consortium: Jen Place, Hilary Bryant, Jessica Eddy, Shayna Micucci, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached

Co-chair Coreen Johnson called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

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

Recovery Strategic Plan:

In 2022, the Behavioral Health Administration asked the recovery community to create a strategic plan for statewide recovery-oriented systems of care. Updated recommendations from the recovery community are currently under consideration.

The recommendations include the following goals:

1. Create a recovery-oriented system of care
2. Provide recovery-oriented clinical care
3. Equip communities with recovery support

Work group members discussed some of the measures that could be undertaken to achieve the goals, including equipping communities with recovery support, establishing a standard for recovery-focused language across systems and communities, increasing support related to substance use disorders, creating funding opportunities to support recovery services, expanding Medicaid codes for peer support specialists, better data collection to support the work being done, prioritizing recovery voices in behavioral health discussions, and fostering recovery friendly workplaces.

Discussion:

Jen Place spoke about a prior Recovery Work Group subcommittee that focused on data collection and the utilization of the BARC-10 to measure recovery capital. The Colorado Association Recovery Residences had also looked into a statewide data platform.

Kylan Bain suggested building infrastructure spaces for recovery voices to be heard and including community members in the conversation. He recently brought community members together in focus group sessions held in Mesa County.

Valentina Atencio attends many community meetings and mentioned the Stories in Black & White exhibition that has been successful in raising awareness throughout the state.

Stories in Black & White is a collaboration of the Public Awareness and Affected Families Work Group (Program Manager, Hilary Bryant) in partnership with the CDC Foundation and Rocky Mountain HIDTA. The exhibition is tailored to each local community. The upcoming Gunnison exhibition, in collaboration with Gunnison Public Health, will include Spanish translations. Other current successful public awareness campaigns include Lift the Label, Keep the Party Safe, Recovery Cards, and the Connect Effect.

Jen suggested the following goals: incorporate youth voices and messaging, social norming campaigns, build a youth peer workforce, support recovery high school's collegiate recovery programs, review efforts (if any) by the Colorado Department of Education to standardize resilience curriculum for integration in primary and secondary school settings.

The work group also discussed the importance of a standardized recovery-oriented curricula for medical students. When the Stories in Black and White exhibition was held at Rocky Vista University, a student commented about stigma conversations that were held in her classes.

Hilary spoke about recent work with state health agencies and a meeting held by the Affected Families & Friends Work Group that focused on forensic peers who work within the court system. Forensic peer specialists draw on their personal experience with the criminal justice system to support justice-impacted individuals. Forensic peer certification is available through organizations such as COPA.

Coreen asked work group member to continue to share their comments and ideas via email: Hilary.bryant@cuanschutz.edu or coreen.braden@youngpeopleinrecovery.org

Comments are due to be sent to the BHA by the end of July.

Community Partner Updates:

Brandi Drtina, North Colorado Health Alliance: The alliance will be hosting Overdose Awareness Day events: <https://northcoloradohealthalliance.org/upcoming-events/>
The alliance has an internship opening. For information: bdrtna.alliance@nocoha.org or

Dee Waldron and Valentina Atencio, ARC: ARC sponsors monthly networking events for peer support professionals and others interested in the profession. The fifth annual Overdose Awareness and Recovery Walk will be held on August 31st in Durango.

<https://www.advocatesforrecovery.org/recoverysocialevents>

ARC training: <https://www.advocatesforrecovery.org/60-hour-peer-family-support-training>

ARC Reframe Your Work Narrative <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reframe-your-work-narrative-transforming-shame-into-strength-tickets-1992950518650?aff=ebdsshcopyurl&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=>

Kylan Bain, Sober AF Entertainment: Lunch and learn sessions are held for the peer workforce. CEUs are available. <https://soberafe.com/peer-training/>

Emily Schrader, Dimensions Counseling and Consulting: Emily is available to speak with colleagues about Medicaid funding issues: emily@dimensionscc.com

Coreen will contact Emily about a future Medicaid presentation for work group members.

Russ Eckardt, Mindsprings Health, noted that progress is being made with peer work in the Mesa County jail.

Jacquelyn McDonald, Crossroads Turning Points, Alamosa: Work is progressing with the drug court. Her organization is planning a barbecue event on July 4th. For information: jmcdonald@crossroadstp.org

Sarah Honstein, Recovery Café Longmont: Sarah is working on their member leader training program. Various events are planned for the coming months: <https://recoverycafelongmont.org/events/>

Geno Shevdov, Hazelbrook: Community engagement efforts are continuing in the Boulder and Longmont areas. Residential and outpatient activities are ongoing in Boulder, Denver Metro, Aurora, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo.

Cara Mares, Serenity Recovery Connection: Monthly events are planned, including a recovery rally in September. Events calendar: <https://srchope.org/>

Rica Rodriguez, Promotores de Esperanza: Rica's organization opened a new location in Commerce City. Their southwest Denver location has a clothing bank and a food pantry available for those in need. Free training sessions are offered on Wednesdays. A free dental clinic will be available in July at the Commerce City location. Rica will send flyers to Rosemarie for distribution. More information is available on Promotores Facebook page or contact Rica directly: Promotores5280@gmail.com

Sydney Melson, Colorado Providers Association: CPFS is working on a peer supervision credential. In order to bill Medicaid, a credential application must be in process. Sydney said the BHA has introduced rule changes to ASAM. Changes include the peer workforce. She explained how to submit feedback. Oversight of recovery residences, which was under the purview of the Colorado Agency of Recovery Residences, is moving to the BHA. Stakeholder participation is expected to begin soon.

BHA Laws and Rules: <https://bha.colorado.gov/for-service-providers/laws-and-rules>
State Board of Human Services: <https://cdhs.colorado.gov/sbhs>

Young People in Recovery (YPR) upcoming events: <https://youngpeopleinrecovery.org/events/>

International Overdose Awareness Events: <https://www.overdoseday.com/>

2026 Colorado Rural Peer Conference sponsored by The Health Partnership:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-colorado-rural-peer-conference-tickets-1988047108418>
For information about scholarships: ncashmore@ncchealthpartnership.org

Other Updates:

The work group plans to extend a meeting invitation to Rep. Brittany Pederson's office in the near future.

Next month's work group meeting may be held in person and virtually. The topic of the meeting will be the Good Samaritan Law and will include a panel discussion with the Arapahoe County District Attorney. Food and beverages will be available.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. Arrangements are being made to hold the August 14, 2026 meeting in person and virtually from 12 to 1:30 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster, Strategic Plan Recommendations