

OPIOID ABATEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

OFFICIAL PUBLIC MEETING

MINUTES (DRAFT)

April 10, 2025

The Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission meeting was held virtually on Thursday, April 10, 2025. Members of the public were also invited to attend via WebEx.

Recording of the meeting can be found at the following link:

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/ldr.php?RCID=504dca6170dbc087937f5dd8d43b76db>

ATTENDEES

Present

1. Sam Hurley, DC Health, representing 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. Michael Pickering, District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
5. LaVerne Adams, DMin, Chief Executive Coach, Total Life Consultancy LLC (virtual)
6. Demetrius Jones, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Wards 7 & 8 DC Prevention Center/DC Recovery Community Alliance
7. Larry Gourdine, Program Manager, Psychiatric Institute of Washington (virtual)
8. J. Chad Jackson, MS, CEO, Ardan Community Living, LLC
9. Senora Simpson, PTMPH, DrPH
10. Patricia Quinn, Designated Representative, District of Columbia Primary Care Association (virtual)
11. Myles Davenport as designee for Franciso Diaz, MD, FACP, DC Chief Medical Examiner

Absent

12. Alexis Squire, Designee, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
13. Larry Bing, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Leadership Council for Healthy Communities
14. Franciso Diaz, MD, FACP, DC Chief Medical Examiner
15. Barbara Bazron, Ph.D., Director, Department of Behavioral Health
16. Ciana Creighton, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
17. Jacqueline Bowens, Chief Executive Officer, District of Columbia Hospital Association
18. Beverlyn Settles-Reaves, PhD, Program Manager, Howard University (virtual)
19. Juanita Price, M.Ed, Chief Executive Officer, Hillcrest Children and Family Center (virtual)
20. Melisa Byrd, Senior Deputy Director, DC Department of Health Care Finance
21. Nnemdi Elias, MD, MPH, Addiction/Internal Medicine

Call to Order

- Chair J. Chad Jackson called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

Quorum Declaration

- Chair Jackson Quorum was confirmed with 11 commissioners or authorized designees present, meeting the requirement to proceed with voting matters.

1. Overview of Proposed Motion:

Chair Jackson introduced a motion to allocate \$500,000 from the Opioid Abatement Fund as a discretionary budget for the Office of Opioid Abatement. The funds would be used to support:

- District-wide needs assessments
- Feasibility studies for innovative initiatives
- Infrastructure updates to district data systems
- Support for commission-based data and information-sharing efforts
- Travel and collaboration with other state-level commissions

a. Discussion Points

- Christina Okereke requested updated financial figures for the Fund; Dr. Orlando Barker provided a detailed breakdown of current obligations, uncommitted funds, and accessible balances.
- Marcia Huff raised concerns about whether \$500,000 would be sufficient to support all proposed activities. She cited delays in past District-sponsored studies and urged realistic deliverables and timelines.
- Commissioners expressed differing views on a proposed amendment requiring pre-spending budget documentation. Some emphasized the importance of advance oversight, while others cautioned that such a requirement could limit the Office's flexibility. The amendment did not move forward.
- Dr. LaVerne Adams introduced the amendment, stressing the need for transparency and a clear outline of intended expenditures.
- Dr. Larry Gourdine supported the amendment and recommended that the Commission review the 2021 JB Snow SUD Needs Assessment before launching new studies.
- Sam Hurley expressed concern that requiring a detailed budget before spending could slow down the Office's ability to respond to urgent needs. He emphasized that the Office should be able to act quickly when necessary, and suggested that regular reporting after funds are used would be a better way to ensure accountability.
- Chair Chad Jackson clarified that the proposed feasibility study focuses on a targeted behavioral health initiative and is not a duplication of prior assessments. He confirmed that financial updates will be a recurring item at future meetings.

b. Key Highlights

- \$500,000 discretionary fund approved. The Commission voted to support the Office of Opioid Abatement in setting aside funds for data-related efforts, including needs assessments, feasibility studies, and infrastructure improvements. The Office will provide regular expenditure updates at future meetings.

- Fund status clarified. Dr. Orlando Barker reported that approximately \$15 million has already been obligated, with \$12 million remaining and \$2 million currently accessible. The Office operates on an annual budget of approximately \$559,000.
- Amendment for pre-spending budget did not pass. A proposal to require a detailed line-item budget and timeline before use of funds was introduced during the discussion but did not receive sufficient support to move forward.
- Commissioners agreed that upcoming feasibility work should complement the findings from the 2021 JB Snow SUD Needs Assessment to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication.

Additional Motion

- Following the amendment discussion, a second motion was introduced to approve the \$500,000 allocation as originally presented.
- The motion proceeded without further changes and was approved by majority vote, formally establishing the discretionary fund in support of the Office's data-driven initiatives.

Public Comment

- No public comments were made.

Adjournment

- Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 10:40 A.M.