

# OPIOID ABATEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

## OFFICIAL PUBLIC MEETING

### APPROVED MINUTES

JANUARY 19, 2023

The Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission was held virtually via WebEx on Friday, January 19, 2023. Members of the public were also invited to attend virtually. The recording of the meeting can be found: [Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission Meeting-20240119 1408-1](#)

### ATTENDEES

#### Present

1. Barbara Bazron, Ph.D., Director, Department of Behavioral Health
2. Ayanna Bennett, Ph.D., Director, DC Health (virtual)
3. Melisa Byrd, Interim Director, DC Department of Health Care Finance
4. Ciana Creighton, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
5. Christina Okereke, Representative of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia
6. Marcia Huff, Representative of the Chair, DC Council Committee on Health
7. Edwin Chapman, MD, President Designee, Medical Society of the District of Columbia
8. Jacqueline Bowens, Chief Executive Officer, District of Columbia Hospital Association
9. Mark LeVota, Executive Director, District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
10. Patricia Quinn, Designated Representative, District of Columbia Primary Care Association
11. LaVerne Adams, DMin, Chief Executive Coach, Total Life Consultancy LLC (virtual)
12. Demetrius Jones, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Wards 7 & 8 DC Prevention Center/DC Recovery Community Alliance
13. Larry Bing, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Leadership Council for Healthy Communities
14. Larry Gourdine, Program Manager, Psychiatric Institute of Washington
15. J. Chad Jackson, MS, CEO, Ardan Community Living, LLC
16. Beverly Settles-Reaves, PhD, Program Manager, Howard University (virtual)
17. Nnemdi Elias, MD, MPH, Addiction/Internal Medicine
18. Franciso Diaz, MD, FACP, DC Chief Medical Examiner
19. Queen Anunay, MPH MCHES, Designee, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
20. Juanita Price, M.Ed, Chief Executive Officer, Hillcrest Children and Family Center
21. Senora Simpson, PTMPH, DrPH

Chair J. Chad Jackson called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Chair Jackson conducted a roll call for quorum declaration.

## **Agenda**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Jackson presented the minutes for the December 15, 2023, Commission meeting.

Dr. Laverne Adams motioned to vote on approving the minutes. Dr. Beverly Settles-Reaves seconded the motion.

The Commission approved the minutes by unanimous vote.

### **Overview of the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission's Powers and Duties and the District's Grants and Procurement Law**

Attorney General, Brian Schwalb presented the "Overview of the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission's Powers and Duties and the District's Grants and Procurement Law." The full report is available.

Mark LeVota asked whether the Commission can recommend that the Mayor or Council make awards in the manner that is most expedient.

Attorney General, Brian Schwalb stated that he did not think that there is anything in the statute that prohibits that being the Commission's recommendation.

Dr. Edwin Chapman stated that more data is needed on the outcomes of previous programs under LiveLongDC. Dr. Senora Simpson agreed.

Dr. Senora Simpson asked if the subcommittees, when making recommendations for grants or contracts, have to address areas (e.g. prevention, harm reduction or treatment) or whether the money can be directed to the greatest need.

### **Prevention Subcommittee Progress Report**

Dr. Ayanna Bennett conducted a presentation on enhancing DC Health's Opioid Data Inventory. Chad Jackson proposed budget allocation for interns and open-ended grants to foster community-driven solutions to address opioid-related issues.

Dr. Ayanna Bennett proposed a motion to allocate \$1 million for foundational projects such as data improvement and hiring interns. Dr. Francisco Diaz seconded the motion.

Jacqueline Bowens raised concerns about the approval process for budget allocation, seeking clarity on the timeline and involved parties.

Dr. Ayanna Bennett explained that the allocated funds would pass through the Department of Public Health to support existing contracts for data coding and analysis.

Demetrius Jones raised an issue of talk that \$1 million could be spent without hearing the proposals from the subcommittees. He highlighted a sense of repetition in the decision-making process and pointed out discrepancies in fund usage, suggesting the presence of systemic issues such as a buddy system or kickback system.

Chair Jackson proposed tabling the current motion until more detailed reports on fund usage are provided. He stressed the importance of analyzing real data to understand expenditure patterns effectively.

Ayanna Bennett withdrew the motion to allocate \$1 million for foundational projects such as data improvement and hiring interns.

Ayanna Bennett elaborated on the prevention activities discussed, specifically the enhancement of grants for faith-based organizations.

#### **Harm Reduction Subcommittee Progress Report**

Demetrius Jones presented recommendations from the Reduction Subcommittee, highlighting expanding the Peer Emergency Response Team, expand harm reduction vending machines and expand harm reduction messages in community settings. The full list is available.

#### **Treatment and Recovery Subcommittee Progress Report**

Dr. Nmendi Elias presented recommendations from the Treatment and Recovery Subcommittee, emphasizing the importance of peers and contingency management. The full list is available.

Chair Jackson recognized the common themes of peer-driven initiatives and direct community interaction across subcommittees.

Dr. Beverly Settles-Reaves provided additional insights into the importance of peers in emergency response and community outreach.

Larry Gourdine added context to the treatment and recovery committee's focus on deploying peers and emphasizing their role in various contexts.

#### **Initial Recommendation Discussion**

Chad Jackson initiated the meeting with a temporary panel setup. He proposed a discussion among two representatives from each subcommittee to address issues related to peers, budgeting, and organizational structure.

Dr. LaVerne Adams raises concerns about potential duplication of efforts and funding allocation regarding a data system connecting agencies, particularly regarding the use of money from the opioid abatement.

Dr. Adams also discusses limitations faced by faith-based organizations due to Substance Abuse

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and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) funding restrictions.

Dr. Adams also emphasizes the importance of budget allocation for each issue and the need to prioritize where the money is directed.

Chair Jackson acknowledged Dr. Adams' points and emphasized the importance of effective fund allocation, avoiding duplication, and utilizing federal money efficiently.

Jacqueline Bowens suggested organizing non-monetary recommendations into a single document for consideration, followed by a review of budgetary implications by subcommittees.

Dr. Ayanna Bennett proposed that the office present a budget proposal with limitations and considerations before subcommittees assess and prioritize items accordingly.

Larry Bing stressed the importance of firsthand observation of peer navigation systems and requested a group visit to Dr. Chapman's office.

Chair Jackson expressed openness to the idea of visiting Dr. Chapman's office but emphasized constraints due to open meeting regulations.

Senora Simpson reflected on the historical context of similar initiatives and emphasized the importance of peer support programs.

#### **Public comments**

Ambrose Lane, Judy Ashburn, Dr. Adaku, Dr. Ocella Pearsall, Roach Brown,

Chris Thomas and Dr. M. Lawson made comments virtually through Webex.

#### **Adjournment**

At 11:31 AM, J. Chad Jackson adjourned the meeting.