OPIOID RESTITUTION FUND

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2023

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

I. Welcome and Introductions

ORF Council Chair, Tiffinee Scott, welcomed advisory council members and those viewing the meeting as members of the public.

Members present: Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Opioid Response OOCC, Erin McMullen, Designee for the Deputy Secretary of the Behavioral Health Administration, Brian Edmunds, Designee for the Attorney General, Senator Dawn Gile, Maryland Senate, Lauren Levy, Maryland Association of Counties, Ryan Moran Deputy Secretary of Health Care Financing and Medicaid, Tiffinee Scott, Chair, Howard Ashkin, Marcus Webster, Kristin Thomas, Meghan Westwood

Members not in attendance: Delegate Samuel Rosenberg, Maryland House of Delegates, Dr. David Myles, Maryland Municipal League, Carlos Hardy

II. Motion to Approve April Meeting Minutes

ORF council approves minutes

IV. ORF Advisory Council Overview

Special Secretary Emily Keller provided an overview of the advisory council's purpose and expectations.

The Opioid Restitution Fund was created to ensure that funds received from opioid litigation are used to address the opioid crisis. Ordinarily, when not specifically reserved for subdivisions, these funds are available for spending by the state.

The council's purpose is to make recommendations for how funds should be utilized.

"On of before November 1 each year, the council shall provide specific findings and recommendations in writing to the Governor and the Secretary regarding the allocations of money from the fund for expenditures consistent with uses of the fund and considering the following criteria:

1. The number of people per capita with a substance use disorder in a jurisdiction;

2. Disparities in access to care in a jurisdiction that may preclude persons;

3. The number of overdose deaths per capita in a jurisdiction;

4. The programs, services, supports, or other resources currently available to individuals with substance use disorders in a jurisdiction; and

5. Disparities in access to care and health outcomes in a jurisdiction."

State Allocation & State Discretionary Abatement Funds

- The State may use funds to pay directly for state programs.
- The State may also award discretionary abatement grants to public entities and private organizations in a competitive manner
- Approximately 30%
- The council will make recommendations for this funding.
- Currently approximately $23 million

Targeted Abatement Grants

- The State must make Targeted Abatement Grants to qualifying subdivisions, according to a formula set by the settlements
- Predetermined amounts to local governments
- Approximately 45% of annual payments
- Not subject to the council's recommendations
- NOFA will be released to local governments by June 1st
- Approximately $24 million

Local Direct

- Payments to local governments directly from the settlement administrator
- Not subject to the council's recommendations

V. Discussion on Recommendations

The council reviewed the ranked priorities from the public poll conducted in March.

The discussion covered the following priority areas: Support Peer Recovery Communities, Expand Access to Evidence-Based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder, Promote Comprehensive Care Coordination, Expand Harm Reduction Services, Expand Maryland's Crisis Response System, and Increase Awareness of Substance Use Disorder.

New members noted that the categories were broad and overlapping, and requested a more granular discussion of initiatives to fund.

Members discussed not removing any of the priority areas from funding

consideration, rather working to develop a plan to fund the most pressing needs first.

Support Recovery Communities

The importance of peers was discussed and members expressed their interest in funding recovery services outside of hospitals and detention centers.

It was noted that Medicaid is rolling out a new reimbursement model for peer support specialists in certain settings. They already have a billing structure and the federal government announced an opportunity for the state Medicaid programs to work with their correctional partners to cover certain services 90-day pre-release.

Expand Access to Evidence-Based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

Transportation was discussed as a means to increase access to evidence-based treatment. Individuals need reliable transportation in order to remain engaged in treatment and services. The council may consider a pilot program.

Washington DC is using SOR funds to provide transportation to and from certain levels of care.

Cecil County's COMPASS program should be further examined to determine scalability.

Buprenorphine access in pharmacies was mentioned as a challenge.

Promote Comprehensive Care Coordination

Resources are needed to improve linkages to care between crisis services and SUD or mental health treatment.

Funding is needed to support individuals being released from incarceration, to ensure that they are connected to the appropriate supportive resources in the community, including access to MOUD, harm reduction and recovery support.

Comprehensive care coordination is about the whole person and the council should consider the social determinants of health when prioritizing funding.

Expand Harm Reduction Services

Harm reduction education is needed for youth and their families.

Peer overdose response teams were suggested as an intervention to explore, in addition to funding harm reduction supplies that are not covered by other funding sources.

Expand Maryland's Crisis Response System

Better linkages between crisis response and longer term treatment/services is needed.

Increase Awareness of Substance Use Disorder

The council discussed the importance of spreading awareness around substance use disorder, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. Some ideas shared included billboards, radio, and digital fencing.

Topics tabled for future meetings:

- Priority 6: Improve Infrastructure for Opioid Initiatives
- Priority 8: Promote Youth Resiliency
- Recovery high schools
- Discussion on grant period
- Discussion of services offered in local detention centers

VI. Motions

The council voted to recommend the strategies listed in the interagency coordination plan.

The council voted to recommend that ORF funds be used for overdose prevention sites, if legislation passes in Maryland allowing such programs. .

VII. Public Feedback / Recommendations

Q: When do we anticipate the funds to be rolled out to organizations?
A: Targeted abatement grants which is approximately 45% of the annual payments will be released to local governments on June 1st.

Comment: Consider what types of recommendations would be better suited for different pots of money?

Comment: Funding for detention centers should come from funds allocated directly to the local governments, rather than the 30% that the council is advising on.

VIII. Motion to Adjourn

- Next meeting May 22, 2023 at 3pm
- Next public listening session needs scheduled