

## Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee

**Date:** 2/23/2026

**Location and Time:** Via Microsoft Teams 10:00 - noon

**Present:** Rick Hildebrant, Shawn Burke, Jess Kirby, Monica Hutt, Deb Wright, Ruth Hardy, Liz McLoughlin, Madeline Motta, Tim Tanner, Amie Wunderlich

**Absent:** Daniel Franklin, Eric Maguire, Thomas Davis, Matt Prouty, Stacey Sigmon, Tim Tanner

**Meeting Facilitator and Note Taker:** Rick Hildebrant, MD, Sarah Gregorek

Agenda Item	Discussion	Next Steps
Introduction of Rick Hildebrant, MD	Dr. Hildebrant is an internal medicine physician and was appointed Commissioner to the Department of Health in October 2025. He will be chairing this committee going forward.	
Approve January 12, 2026, Minutes	Deb Wright made a motion to approve the 1/12/2026 minutes, and Amy Wunderlich seconded, the motion passed unanimously.	
OSAC and VDH Funding Recommendations to the Legislature Discussion – Kelly Dougherty	<p>There are two funding recommendation letters sent to legislature per statute, one from the Committee and one from the Vermont Department of Health. There were some differences between the two letters (see below). As a reminder, the Department does not have voting privileges on the committee.</p> <p>The Department asked for funding for the following projects that the Committee did not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer Recovery Services \$1.2M</li> <li>Emergency Shelter Substance Use Service Supports: \$250,000</li> </ul> <p>The Department did not recommend the following projects for new funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate Youth Services</li> <li>Greater Falls Connection</li> <li>Interaction: Friends for Change</li> </ul>	

	<p>Winooski Partnership for Prevention</p> <p>The Department wanted to focus on projects that have a systemic impact on the opioid crisis where there is no other source of funding available.</p>	
<p>Legislative Update on OSAC Funds Presentation – Jessica Schifano</p>	<p>Jessica walked through the H.660 Opioid Abatement Special Fund Bill</p> <p>The bill passed out of House Human Service and is now with House Appropriations. They will take up testimony on 2/26.</p> <p>The following projects were funded through the Opioid Abatement Special Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$455,000 for outreach and engagement workers and that the positions continue to be funded annually.</li> <li>• \$1.6M for recovery residence and that they be funded annually.</li> <li>• \$850,000 for syringe service program funding which was not recommend by either the Department or Committee.</li> <li>• \$1.1M for DOC Peer Recovery Coaches.</li> <li>• \$250,000 for DCF to support long term programs at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, including harm reduction supports, transportation to recovery meetings/appointments and clinical nursing programs.</li> <li>• \$248,00 for PREVENT program</li> </ul> <p>New recovering residences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$900,000 for new recovery resident beds at National Alliance for Recovery (NARR) certification of level 3 or above.</li> <li>• \$300,000 for new NARR recovery resident beds in Brattleboro, Middlebury, Addison, Randolph, Chester, St. Albans and any other identified region in the State.</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee requested an update at a future meeting on the status on the execution of FY 26 grants.</p>

	<p>Community grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$35K for Rutland Mental Health Services transitional housing program.</li> <li>• \$237,646 for Springfield Action for public safety enhancement team coordinator positions.</li> </ul> <p>Four prevention community projects will be funded through Substance Misuse Special Fund versus the Opioid Abatement Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$288,935 for Elevate Youth Services</li> <li>• \$124,999 for Greater Falls Connection</li> <li>• \$200,000 for Interaction: Friends for Change</li> <li>• \$26,697 for Winooski Partnership for Prevention</li> </ul> <p>Not funded by House Human Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$200,000 for Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences Scholarships but there will be money available through the rural health transformation grant that will fund this program.</li> <li>• \$287,000 for the Public Safety Enhancement Team Community Convenings.</li> </ul> <p>Reversion money: this reversion is due to two changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Corrections no longer needs the full \$500,000 appropriated from this Fund to establish a medication dosing unit and instead is using existing systems for opioid medication delivery inside of correctional facilities. This resulted in \$444,000 being reverted into the fund.</li> <li>• The Department of Health received a base general fund appropriation in SFY26 for re-engagement beds (implementation date of July 1, 2025) and no longer needs the \$1 million special fund appropriation for this work. \$1M FY 26 appropriation for stabilization beds and they received base funding and they no longer need this money.</li> </ul>	
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	<p>House Human Services Committee proposed changes to the powers and duties to OSAC by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request OSAC consult with the Health Equity Advisory Commission on funding recommendations.</li> <li>• Each ongoing funding proposal considered by OSAC shall include a sustainability plan from the applicants.</li> <li>• Request OSAC not accept new funding proposals for FY28; unless it is previously identified in statute for annual funding but review outcomes of the programs.</li> </ul> <p>The bill is seeking \$5.9M and reverting \$1.4M totaling \$ 4.5M plus \$640,631 from the Substance misuse Prevention Special Fund totals \$5,1M.</p> <p>Balance of approximately \$11.8M left in Abatement Fund.</p> <p>Useful comparison table available that lays out what was recommended by OSAC, what was recommended by the Department, what H. Human Services recommended:  - <a href="https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Human%20Services/Bills/H.660/Draf...">https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Human%20Services/Bills/H.660/Draf...</a></p> <p>Fiscal note:  <a href="https://lifo.vermont.gov/assets/Publications/2025-2026-House-Bills/H.660-As-Amended-by-HHS-ID-40365...">https://lifo.vermont.gov/assets/Publications/2025-2026-House-Bills/H.660-As-Amended-by-HHS-ID-40365...</a></p>	
<p>Overdose Prevention Center Discussion Rick Hildebrant, MD</p>	<p>The Overdose Prevention Center (OPC) was funded for \$2.2M through OSAC for the period of 7/1/25 – 6/30/27. When appropriated, the Governor did not support it so the Department cannot make decisions on the OPC grant.</p> <p>The City of Burlington and Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform (VCJR) focused on a budget of \$1.1M, developed a work plan for 12 months and set agreement with</p>	

	<p>VCJR to operate, PIRE conducted assessments with guidelines to be completed by the end of April 2026. They also did outreach to the Burlington community and received 1200 responses, engaged in biweekly technical assistance sessions, they contacted a commercial real estate broker for site planning, hosted a live webinar with experts to build trust and transparency with the Burlington Community and reviewed policies and procedures with the OPC operating guidelines to ensure there is no gaps with compliance.</p> <p>VCJR had trouble finding a building to lease for the OPC and 7 weeks ago, VCJR reached out to the Department to find out if there is anything in the grant that disallowed them to purchase a building with the appropriations. The purchase is allowable but unusual and the legislature said that it wasn't their intent for the funding to be used to purchase a property. There are other ways to pay for this, usually through a monthly mortgage payment.</p> <p>Last week the legislature heard testimony about the City of Burlington wanting to purchase a building and they suggested that the OSAC weigh in on the decision. What do the committee members think about this?</p> <p>Senator Hardy – supportive of funding the OPC. It's premature for the committee to weigh in and would like to see a proposal. Should the Department reach out to the City of Burlington to get a proposal?</p> <p>Liz suggested that the OPC consider a vacant state building.</p>	
Public Comment	<p>Theresa Vezina OPC - City of Burlington - Wants to share the history of the purchase discussion and would like to present it to the committee at the next meeting.</p> <p>Ed Baker</p>	

	<p>The OPC is not a project that would be dying but Vermonters at risk for overdose death if the OPC does not get up and running. I want to commend Dr. Hildebrant regarding your frankness at the HHS committee hearing saying that we have a biased opinion on OPC due to the Governor. There are many biases about the OPC's, but the Governor's veto was overturned, and Burlington city council and other Vermonters have voted positively.</p> <p><i>Per OSAC legislation - Section 5c the advisory committee shall demonstrate broad ongoing consultation with individuals living with opioid use disorder about their direct experience with related systems, including medication-assisted treatment, residential treatment, recovery services, harm reduction services, overdose, supervision by the Department of Corrections, and involvement with the Department for Children and Families' Family Services Division. The committee has been remiss on inviting people with lived experience to meetings and need to get more in touch with the people whose lives we are committed to saving.</i></p>	
Next Meeting	March 23, 2026, 10 - noon	