

Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee

Date: 9/21/2026

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

Present: Rick Hildebrant, Shawn Burke, Daniel Franklin, Monica Hutt, Martine Gulick, Nels Kloster, Stephanie LaRock, Eric Maguire, Gail Rose, Kenn Stransky

Absent: Amy Wunderlich, Thomas Davis, Matt Prouty, Deb Wright

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

Agenda Item	Discussion	Next Steps
Introduction of New Members and overview of the mission, goals and accomplishments of OSAC – Dr. Hildebrant	The Committee has five new members: 1. Senator Martine Gulick 2. Primary Care Prescriber Nels Kloster, MD 3. Academic Researcher Gail Rose, MD 4. Howard Center’s Safe Recovery Program, Stephanie LaRock 5. Judge Kenn Stransky The committee members introduced themselves and Dr. Hildebrant described the charge of the committee: provide advice and recommendations regarding remediation spending from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. He also explained the recent funding guardrails implemented by the legislature and the annual funding recommendation process to the legislature.	
Overview Statute governing OSAC and Operating Procedures – Lauren Layman	Lauren gave an overview of the Statute and Operating Procedures for the Committee: https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/18/093/04772 OSAC Operating Policies and Procedures The legislature has asked the committee to narrow the scope of the funding in FY28 and only fund the following four programs:	

	1. outreach workers 2. syringe service programs, SSPs 3. recovery residences 4. overdose prevention center The legislature also asked the committee to review all previous funded programs to hear about their effectiveness and sustainability plan before FY29. The Committee and the Department will provide a funding recommendation letter to the Legislature in January.	
Substance Misuse Big picture overview of funding, and report due 10/1/2026 – Jessica Schifano	Opioid Abatement Special Fund Expenditures Pursuant to the opioid Abatement Special Fund appropriations legislation that was passed this year, ACT 141 the Department of Health is now required to prepare quarterly reports to the legislature regarding expenditures from the opioid abatement Special Fund, and the first report is due to the legislature on October 1. We are reporting the quarter ending June 30, 2026, so this includes expenditures for the lifetime of the fund through the end of fiscal year 2026. Total revenue in the Special Fund \$37 million Total appropriations to date \$24 million through fiscal year 2026 Total spent \$10.5 million Cash balance of about \$27 million but an unappropriated balance of \$13 million. The funding report also shows all the appropriations that have been made in previous fiscal years to the Special Fund and it shows the total appropriations for those projects.	
Discuss Program Review Form - Rep Maguire	Representative Maguire created a program review/sustainability planning form for the committee to consider when reviewing funding proposals, Opioid Settlement	

	Advisory Committee Program Review and explained the information that will be collected. Act 141 directs the committee to consider sustainability planning for ongoing funding including future expenses and resources available apart from the opioid abatement special fund. It also directs the Committee to review previously funded programs to assess the long-term sustainability and the appropriateness of the opioid abatement special fund as the funding source. The review intentionally does not replicate traditional results-based accountability questions or request agencies to reproduce information already available through existing state grant reporting. Organizations may reference existing reports or evaluations when providing evidence of effectiveness and the sustainability questions are designed to move beyond simply asking whether it intends to seek additional grant funding. Organizations that ask to identify the central services anticipated future expenses resources available apart from the opioid abatement Special fund and what portions of the program could realistically continue if settlement funding were no longer available. The review also asked organizations to describe the potential impact on individuals, families, and communities that these services were no longer available including potential service gaps and barriers to care. This provides this committee with important context regarding not only organization sustainability, but the consequences for the population being served. Finally, the document deliberately does not ask organizations to determine whether continued funding through the fund is appropriate, that determination belongs to the committee develops its recommendations to the General Assembly. Dr. Hildebrant asked the committee to vote on adopting this form. Daniel Franklin made a motion to adopt the form, and Chief Burke seconded the motion, the motion	
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	passed, Senator Gulick abstained. The motion passed with the understanding the form may be edited to limit how much information can be entered in the form.	
Approve 7/27/2026 Minutes – Vote	Daniel Franklin made a motion to approve the 7/27/26 minutes, and Eric Maguire seconded, the motion passed, Gail Rose abstained.	
Discuss Vice Chair opening – Dr. Hildebrant	The Vice Chair is open due to Jessica Kirby leaving the committee. The role of the vice chair is authorized to testify to the General Assembly and to General Assembly committees regarding the opioid settlement funding proposals and any other matters about which the committee authorizes the Vice Chair to testify. Daniel Franklin has expressed interest in the Vice Chair and Dr. Hildebrant asked the committee if anyone else wanted to be considered. No one stepped forward so the committee voted. Monica Hutt made a motion to appoint Daniel Franklin to the Vice Chair seat and Chief Burke seconded. The motion passed unanimously.	
Public Comment	Tad Montgomery is in the process of starting an acupuncture clinic in White River Junction. They are currently offering free ear acupuncture (auricular therapy) at a community dining hall. They applied for a grant through the town of Hartford's opioid settlement fund, and we were declined and is looking for alternative funding. If anyone wants to contact him, his E-mail is eco@tadmontgomery.com and phone number 802-304-8716. Rory Van Tuinen is a person with lived experience and is becoming increasingly involved in advocacy around recovery, harm reduction and ensuring that people with lived experience have a meaningful voice in the systems and policies intending to serve them. He is also the author of a memoir just published about his life experience called <i>Awakening the Heart</i> reclaiming identity after addiction.	

	Bella Fern asked the committee to move the public comment to the beginning of the meeting so that the public can be prioritized. Ed Baker read a brief piece from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, <i>open meeting law and its requirements are meant to empower the public to plan effective role is not only an active participant in government, but also a check on it as well.</i> I believe this is my role with OSAC, to be a participant in a check on what goes on. I looked over the expenditures to date and the programs to date, it's balanced and I want to commend you for your hard work. I remain concerned about the gubernatorial appointment of the Vermont Department of Health Commissioner as non-voting chair of OSAC. I just think this is a terrible conflict of interest. It's compliant with Vermont legislation but I think this can work against due diligence at times, especially when the appointing governor is publicly and staunchly opposed to specific health interventions for political or personal reasons. In other words, people beholden to a governor who is against harm reduction and the overdose prevention center. I appeal to the members to continue to stay current on available mortality and morbidity data in Vermont and to also please include recognized experts, hear from people with lived experience and overdose prevention.	
Next Meeting	October 26, 2026, 10 - noon	