



**Substance Abuse Trend &
Response Task Force**

**Annual
Report**

2023



Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force 2023 Annual Report

This report is respectfully submitted to the Judiciary Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado in accordance with Colorado Revised Statute § 18-18.5-103(6)(d)(I-III).

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Dear Partners in Substance Abuse Prevention:

As we close this year, I am thankful for each of our partners in the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force and the hard work you all did to meet the challenges of COVID-19 and the related mental health and substance use disorder trends. This year, we transitioned back to in-person meetings with a hybrid option, and it has been a joy serving with many of you face-to-face for the first time in years. I appreciate your partnership and look forward to continuing the Task Force's work on substance abuse trends and response in the year ahead.

Abating the opioid crisis continues to be a top priority for my office and of the Task Force. In the past few years, the challenge of fentanyl poisoning has grown to a crisis in Colorado. This past year, the Department of Law secured another \$250 + million dollars in settlements to abate Colorado's opioid and fentanyl crisis. To date, our office has recovered over \$750 million dollars for Colorado in opioid settlement funds. Now, more than ever, we must remain vigilant to ensure that we help those affected by the opioid crisis and prevent our youth from facing addiction. We will continue to hold responsible those accountable for fueling the opioid crisis while working with stakeholders around Colorado on the distribution of settlement funds.

This year, we reached several major milestones in the distribution of settlement funds. The Opioid Response Unit (ORU), led by Director Heidi Williams and Deputy Director Jamie Feld, worked with Colorado Counties, Inc. and the Colorado Municipal

League to form the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council (COAC). The COAC met several times in 2022 and reached major milestones by approving new COAC policies, releasing funding requests by the opioid regions, setting up an infrastructure share (10% of all opioid settlement funds) application process, and much more. We also created a national model dashboard to allow the public to track these dollars in Colorado. Visit the links for more information on the [COAC](#), and to view [Colorado's Opioid Settlement Framework](#) dashboard.

Our office also supported the Task Force as it took actions related to the fentanyl crisis. With your partnership, we convened thought leaders from around the state to discuss current and future initiatives to protect Coloradans from fentanyl. Our office identified school aged children 11-18 and their parents, caregivers, and trusted adults as the main audience for our opioid and fentanyl awareness campaign. We will dedicate opioid settlement funds to design and launch this campaign statewide. Ending the fentanyl crisis is no small task, and I am grateful for your partnership; we will only continue to make meaningful progress by working together.

In closing, please allow me to thank all our partners, community leaders, state departments, affected individuals, and many others for the hard work through the pandemic. We look forward to working with you all to address these crises through initiatives to provide awareness, treatment, recovery, harm reduction, and solutions for justice involved individuals throughout Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip J. Weiser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil Weiser
Colorado Attorney General

II. Task Force Background

Overview of the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force

In 2013, the Colorado General Assembly reauthorized the Colorado State Methamphetamine Task Force under the name “Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force” (Senate Bill 2013-244), with representatives of state government, local governments, and the private sectors, including legislators, child advocates, public health officials, drug treatment providers, child welfare workers, law enforcement officers, judges, and prosecutors.

In 2018, the Colorado General Assembly reauthorized the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force for a period of 10 years.

By statute, the core purpose of the State Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force and partners is to:

- a. Assist local communities in implementing the most effective models and practices for substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment and in developing the responses by the criminal justice system;
- b. Review model programs that have shown the best results in Colorado and across the United States and provide information on the programs to local communities and local drug task forces;
- c. Assist and augment local drug task forces without supplanting them;
- d. Investigate collaborative models on protecting children and other victims of substance abuse and nonfederal- drug-administration-regulated pharmaceutical drug production and distribution;
- e. Measure and evaluate the progress of the state and local jurisdictions in preventing substance abuse and nonfederal-drug-administration-regulated pharmaceutical drug production and distribution and in prosecuting persons engaging in these acts;
- f. Evaluate and promote approaches to increase public awareness of current and emerging substance abuse problems and strategies for addressing those problems;
- g. Assist local communities with implementation of the most effective practices to respond to current and emerging substance abuse problems and nonfederal-drug-administration-regulated pharmaceutical drug production and distribution;
- h. Consider any other issues concerning substance abuse problems and nonfederal-drug-administration- regulated pharmaceutical drug production and distribution that arise during the task force study;

- i. Develop a definition of a "drug-endangered child" to be used in the context of the definition of "child abuse or neglect" as set forth in section 19-1-103 (1), C.R.S.; and include the definition in its January 1, 2014, report to the judiciary committees of the senate and the house of representatives, or any successor committees.

C.R.S. § 18-18.5-103(4).

Task Force Membership and Meetings

The membership of the Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force is set forth in C.R.S. § 18-18.5-103 and consists of a chair, three vice-chairs, and 29 members.

- Phil Weiser, Colorado Attorney General, serves as Chair of the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force, as specified in C.R.S. § 18-18.5-103(2)(a)(I).
- Dr. Lesley Brooks, Chief of Addiction Medicine at SummitStone Health Partners, serves as Vice-Chair for Treatment by appointment of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- Matt Baca, Director of the Office of Community Engagement, Colorado Department of Law, serves as Vice Chair for Prevention by appointment of the Colorado President of the Senate.
- Rick Brandt, Chief, Evans Police Department, and past President of the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police serves as Vice Chair for the Criminal Justice System by appointment of the Governor.

The list of current members is found in Appendix A of this report.

Task Force Committees:

- The [Colorado State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup](#) (SEOW) serves as the Data Committee of the Task Force. The SEOW consists of representatives of several state departments and other partners that manage and analyze data relevant to substance use and abuse. Tiasha Fernando-Bachrach and Shaina Riciputi Swain, Research Associate at Butler Institute, co-chair the SEOW/Data Committee. See Appendix B for a summary of the charter of the SEOW.
- The [Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment \(SBIRT\) Advisory Council](#) identifies best practice approaches and barriers to implementing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment as a standard of care throughout Colorado's health and mental health care systems. The council is chaired by Ellen

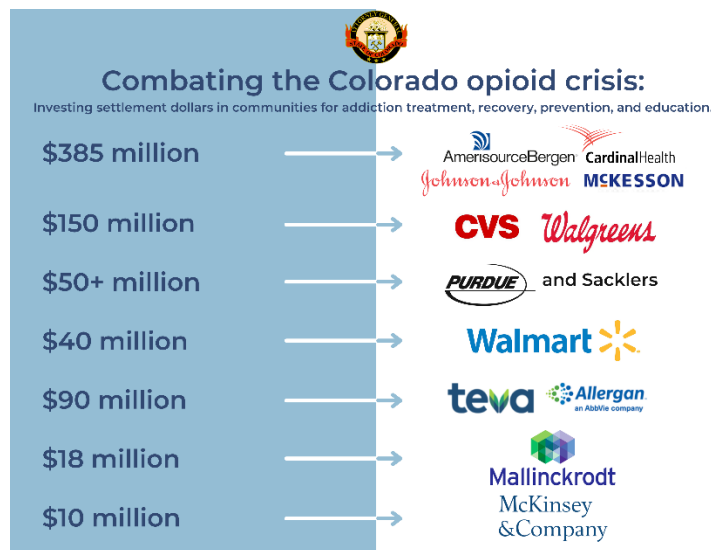
Velez, SBIRT Program Manager at Peer Assistance. *See* Appendix C for a diagram of the structure of the SBIRT Advisory Council.

- The [Supporting Perinatal substance use Prevention, Recovery, and Treatment in Colorado \(SuPPORT Colorado\) Steering Committee](#), formerly known as the Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN) Steering Committee, is co-chaired by Kathryn Wells, MD, Medical Director, Denver Family Crisis Center, and Jade Woodard, Executive Director of Illuminate Colorado. The Colorado Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Commission became integrated into this committee in 2015. In 2016, the Colorado Hospital Learning Collaborative was established as part of this committee. *See* Appendix D for a diagram of the structure of the SuPPoRT Colorado Steering Committee.
- The [Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention \(Consortium\)](#) serves as the Prescription Drug Abuse Committee of the Task Force. This committee is chaired by Robert Valuck, Ph.D., Director for the Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention. The Consortium consists of 10 workgroups responsible for implementing the goals and strategies to mitigate the impact of the opioid crisis in Colorado. *See* Appendix E for a diagram of the Consortium workgroups.

III. Progress on 2022 Task Force Strategic Priorities

The Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force listed opioid settlement distribution, fentanyl public awareness, and strengthening links to schools as this year’s priorities.

Last year, the Department of Law obtained sign-on to the Colorado Opioid Settlement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with 312 of Colorado Municipalities and Counties. To date, Attorney General Weiser and the Department of Law have secured over \$732 million. This money will be paid out over 18 years, which gives Colorado a once in a generation chance to mitigate the opioid crisis.



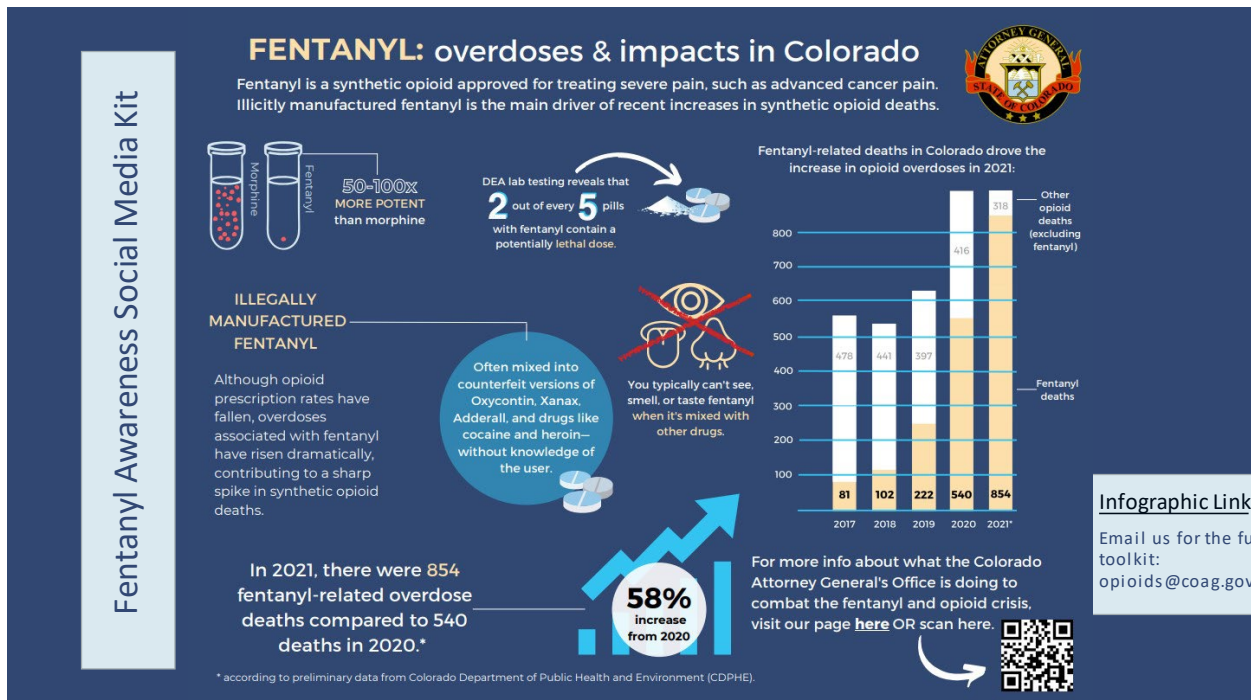
The distribution to local governments and [19 opioid regions](#) created by the MOU is a model unique to Colorado.

In addition to the very engaged participation of municipal and county governments around the state, the 19 opioid regions are in the planning stages as they prepare for their first distribution of funds. The Task Force and the Consortium have partnered on opioid settlement work in several ways, and it is anticipated that the partnership with the Department of Law will continue. For more information about the opioid settlement dollars, please visit the [opioid settlement framework dashboard](#) created by the Department of Law to ensure the distribution and expenditure of opioid settlement funds are fully transparent.

Awareness around opioid and fentanyl risk are urgent needs in Colorado. The Task Force asked the Department of Law to set up a meeting to convene all those around the state who currently or in the future were managing an opioid and/or fentanyl awareness campaign. Twenty people attended this meeting virtually and discussed initiatives that they were already participating in or were planning. The Department of Law determined from this and other meetings to focus on middle and high school students and their parents or caregivers for the campaign. Safe2Tell, a program of the Department of Law, will be a partner to get the urgent messaging out about opioids and fentanyl.

We also heard from Rise Above Colorado at the May and November Task Force meetings. Rise Above Colorado promotes healthy youth behavior and substance misuse prevention in Colorado Schools. Kent MacLennan, Executive Director of Rise Above shared resources to the Task Force related to Fentanyl and Opioid Prevention, including the [Not Prescribed](#) campaign. More information is available on the [Rise Above Colorado website](#).

Finally, the Department of Law created and shared with Task Force members a social media awareness toolkit that other organizations may use. For more information or to obtain the toolkit, please contact opioids@coag.gov.



IV. Committee Work and Accomplishments

A. Data Committee

The [Colorado State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup \(SEOW\)](#) serves as the Data Committee of the Task Force.

The mission of the Colorado State Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) is to provide partners, communities, and policymakers with comprehensive data on the patterns, context, and impact of substance use in Colorado to inform interventions at the local, tribal, state, and federal levels.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Prevention Services Division (PSD), Violence and Injury Prevention and Mental Health Promotion (VIP-MHP) Branch, Community Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI) unit supports the SEOW through the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SAPT) funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The SAPT funding is a five-year funding cycle that started July 1, 2020 and will go until June 30, 2025.

The Steering Committee for the SEOW includes representation from multiple branches of the CDPHE, the newly founded Colorado Behavioral Health Administration, the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, and subject matter experts from The Evaluation Center at the University of Colorado Denver and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver.

Needs Assessment

In conjunction with The Evaluation Center at the University of Colorado, Denver, the SEOW Steering Committee conducted a needs assessment to understand current data use and competencies among organizations addressing substance use in Colorado, along with the use of data in decision-making, the confluence of data and health equity efforts, and engagement with the SEOW. The following five needs surfaced as the most feasible and important for the SEOW Steering Committee to continue working towards:

1. Providing information on substance use trends, including continuation of current efforts and publications;
2. Promoting data sharing among community and state partners;
3. Identifying and accessing quality data sets;
4. Understanding advantages and limitations among existing data sets;

5. Developing data products for the public.

The Steering Committee will continue to shape its work around these needs with its ongoing efforts in 2023 and has partnered with The Evaluation Center to continue to evaluate progress towards addressing them.

Publications - Topic Briefs

Each year, the SEOW publishes briefs that focus on a specific topic. The briefs include data from state and national data sources on topics of public health and public safety. For each publication, the most recent data is used and a search for academic literature for relevant research is conducted. Currently, there are seven SEOW briefs published on its website, including the two briefs published in 2022:

- [Opioid Use Disorder - Identifying Factors that Increase Risk of Developing an Opioid Use Disorder](#)
- [Fentanyl - Overview of Trends](#)

The audience for these topic briefs includes substance use professionals (prevention, treatment, recovery) and policy makers to understand recent trends around pressing issues. Information contained in the briefs is intended to be easily communicated and shared through networks.

Data Dashboards

As part of a successful effort in 2022 to launch an updated website to match ongoing branding efforts by the SEOW, a new data dashboard hub was added to the [SEOW website](#). The dashboard page features links to substance use dashboards from both state and national data sources. The dashboards compiled are specific to substance use in Colorado and the United States. The SEOW supports using data in service of equity and has also developed a data equity checklist to support data users in considering how structural inequities, cultural bias, and stereotypes interact with data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The dashboards web page meets one of the SEOW goals to connect people to data. In addition, the SEOW Steering Committee remains committed to ensuring that the page remains up to date and solicits member suggestions for inclusion of new dashboards on the page.

Meetings

Every other month, the SEOW provides opportunities for substance use professionals, data analysts, and community partners to meet, learn from one another, and discuss

substance use issues within Colorado. Within these bimonthly meeting spaces, presenters are invited to share new data sources or products, or discuss ongoing substance use work through a data lens. In turn, the presenter has a chance to receive feedback, identify next steps, and answer questions from a group that includes data experts and encourages a group discussion on substance use trends in our state. The presentation topics in 2022 included:

- The Massachusetts Experience: Building a Public Health Data Warehouse to Combat the Opioid Epidemic
- The SEOW Needs Assessment Results
- An Impaired Driving Panel
- The 2020 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey Supplemental Results
- Data Concerns and Steps for Improvement for American Indian and Alaska Natives
- Establishment of the Colorado Behavioral Health Administration
- Alcohol Outlet Density Storymaps

B. Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment Advisory Council



The [Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment](#) (SBIRT) Advisory Council, was established in January 2019 with the objective of strengthening and expanding the practice of SBIRT throughout various settings in Colorado. SBIRT is an evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategy to identify, reduce, or prevent use of alcohol and other substances. When combined with community-level prevention strategies, SBIRT contributes to the prevention of physical and mental health issues as a result of substance use. The SBIRT Advisory Council takes a collaborative approach in identifying best practices and reducing barriers to implementing SBIRT as a standard of care throughout Colorado's health care systems.

Advisory Council Overview

The Council is led by the SBIRT Advisory Steering Committee and has two established work groups: Adolescent SBIRT and SBIRT Training and Education. The SBIRT Advisory Council meets quarterly, providing opportunities for council members and community partners to present national and state-wide updates regarding substance use and the expansion of SBIRT.

The SBIRT Advisory Council was created by and continues to be supported by Peer Assistance Services, Inc., SBIRT in Colorado, and has engagement from over 50 members ranging from medical, nursing, and public health professionals, social workers, educators, administrators, substance use community prevention specialists, SBIRT program managers and trainers, and school-based health center administrators.

Adolescent SBIRT Work Group

Goal: To assess the level of adolescent SBIRT awareness and practice in healthcare settings. Work group members have identified SBIRT needs and gaps, with the main objective of expanding SBIRT implementation to primary care professionals serving adolescents, such as pediatricians, nurse practitioners, and health professionals within schools.

In 2021-2022, the group:

- Disseminated a white paper titled [The Status of Adolescent SBIRT and Implementation in Colorado: What We Know and Why We Need to Know More](#) (January 2021)
- Developed the *Youth substance use prevention survey and key informant interview project*. Youth mental health, including substance use, has been identified as a high priority in Colorado. This research project, led by Peer Assistance Services, Inc. in collaboration with NORC, aims to assess the landscape of youth-focused substance use prevention efforts within school, primary care, and emergency department settings, specifically engaging front-line health professionals who play a critical role in prevention and early intervention. Research methods include a short, 5-10-minute-long survey and subsequent, more focused, key informant interviews.

The **specific goals** of the project are to:

- Assess how Colorado health professionals currently approach youth alcohol and other substance use prevention in their practice settings, including the use of SBIRT.
- Identify opportunities to support SBIRT implementation with training, technical assistance, and clinical tools.

The project aims to better understand the barriers and facilitators of addressing youth substance use in primary care, K-12 schools, and emergency departments, and assess the fidelity of best practices associated with SBIRT implementation in those settings. This project aims to provide the SBIRT Advisory Council with insights to expand SBIRT in Colorado, improve existing technical assistance and training services, customize clinical and patient-facing tools to support SBIRT implementation, and better understand the dynamics between health professionals and youth patients when discussing substance use.

The survey will be followed by key informant interviews to provide more in-depth insights into SBIRT implementation challenges and opportunities. Participants in the research project will have access to the findings as well as future technical assistance and training opportunities. After the survey and key informant interviews are complete, the research analysis will be conducted by NORC of the University of Chicago, who will generate a final report. Findings will be made public, and the report will be presented to the SBIRT Advisory Council and other key stakeholders in Colorado to help influence decisions and policies regarding prevention and early intervention practices in healthcare settings.

The project is funded by Peer Assistance Services, Inc. and is approved by NORC at the University of Chicago IRB Protocol # 22-06-840.

Recruitment efforts include outreach to professional organizations, healthcare networks and systems, including: Colorado Academy of Family Physicians, CO Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Rocky Mountain NAPNAP (pediatric nurse practitioners), CO Academy of Physician Assistants, Office of Primary Care (CDPHE), Colorado Department of Education School Health Professional Grantees, Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care (CASBHC), several hospital systems, Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN).

Training and Education Work Group

Goal: To expand SBIRT training and education throughout the state. This work group aims to collaborate with Colorado colleges and universities to increase the administration of SBIRT. This group's work has focused on Colorado's Community College System.

As COVID-19 unfolded, opportunities for the work group to provide actionable services to organizations were limited. To be responsive to the evolving priorities of higher education due to the pandemic, this work was put on hold. While the work group planned to revamp this effort in 2022, turnover in the group delayed action steps. The Advisory Council's Steering Committee and current work group members will continue recruitment efforts, strategically reassess goals and identify next steps for the Training and Education Work Group in early 2023.

Previous Workgroup Accomplishments:

- Developed a proposal, "Substance Use Prevention & Early Intervention in Community College Settings: Proposal for Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment Capacity Building Services".
 - This proposal aims to enhance the capacity of community college health professionals to implement SBIRT through training and education and build upon current substance use prevention and intervention activities in community colleges throughout the state.
 - The proposal was shared with the Colorado Community College System at the end of April 2020.
- In the fall of 2021, the group reviewed past plans for targeted outreach to offer training and technical assistance to community colleges in Colorado and identified steps towards implementation. The group also reviewed targeted training opportunities that could be pursued in the coming year. Attention was paid to high need populations – especially related to unhealthy alcohol use.

Next Steps:

With significant turnover in the Steering Committee, work groups, and within the larger Advisory Council, the group will begin a strategic planning phase in early 2023 to recenter its work, regain focus and move forward with intention. Through this process, the Steering Committee will lead the SBIRT Advisory Council in gaining feedback both through a survey and strategic planning sessions for the group. The Council will welcome new leadership, bringing new voices to the table.

The SBIRT Advisory Council will launch its [website](#) and further develop a strategic outreach plan to ensure the group has representation and holds wide perspectives throughout all regions of the state. The Council will determine its main priorities by working with key stakeholders and using data to drive the group's focus. The SBIRT Advisory Council will work with other prevention and early intervention leaders to combat the impacts of substance use on Coloradans.

C. Supporting Perinatal substance use Prevention, Recovery and Treatment in Colorado (SuPPoRT Colorado) Steering Committee

Our collaborative effort has a new name! Moving forward, the groups that were previously referred to as the Colorado Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN) Steering Committee, Family Advisory Board, and associated Work/Advisory Groups will be collectively known as Supporting Perinatal substance use Prevention, Recovery, and Treatment in Colorado (SuPPoRT Colorado).

SuPPoRT Colorado will continue to work toward the same vision of a Colorado that equitably serves all families through prevention and reduction of substance use during pregnancy and provides multigenerational support for families to thrive, under a name that more accurately reflects our mission, values, and the work we do. The Illuminate Colorado Strategic Initiatives team continues to provide backbone support for all of SuPPoRT Colorado.

The Steering Committee and Family Advisory Board

The SuPPoRT Colorado Steering Committee seeks to identify and implement strategies for reducing the number of families impacted by substance use during pregnancy and for improving outcomes for families across the lifespan. The SuPPoRT Colorado Steering Committee is co-chaired by Kathryn Wells, MD, Executive Director of the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect, and Jade Woodard, Executive Director of Illuminate Colorado.

The purpose of the Family Advisory Board (FAB) is to elevate the voices of families who have experienced, directly or indirectly, the impacts of substance use during pregnancy, to understand barriers in seeking support and health care (including treatment and other services). The FAB is chaired by Diane Smith.

The FAB and Steering Committee make strategic decisions together and collaborate on projects to ensure both lived and professional experience inform how to address the impacts of substance use and to best serve the needs of families impacted by substance use during pregnancy. In January 2021, the FAB and Steering Committee finalized their 2021-2022 priorities:

- Reduce stigma around accessing substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports for those who are pregnant and/or parenting

- Ensure systems, and the people who work within them, develop policies and practices with families that support warm handoffs and standardize practices to address inequalities
- Build Colorado’s statewide capacity to align efforts, apply lessons from our data, and recognize and respond to emerging needs
- Build Colorado’s statewide capacity to identify Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and support impacted families

Across all priorities, strategies, and activities are the following foundations:

- Family voice experiences and leadership
- Data-informed strategic planning, activity engagement, and impact

More detail about 2022 priority progress can be found below.

Throughout 2022, all Work Groups under the Steering Committee and FAB continued to meet on a regular basis to drive action toward the goals and activities outlined in each respective Work Group Action Plan. The working and advisory groups each have a core group of multidisciplinary participants who are dedicated to achieving the goals and objectives of the group.

SuPPoRT Colorado 2022 Priority Area Progress

Priority: Reduce stigma around accessing substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports for those who are pregnant and/or parenting

The Family Advisory Board (FAB) has worked to build capacity around storytelling to reduce stigma. The FAB identified and developed opportunities for elevating lived experience—including through speaking at Fall CHoSEN Collaborative Forum. The FAB is currently developing a quarterly newsletter and see this as an opportunity to share the work of the FAB and expand their reach. A new member joined the FAB in April 2022. The group has shifted the priority from recruitment to story sharing opportunities and connecting their experiences to systems improvement work.

The Provider Education Work Group is working to expand healthcare provider education resources related to substance use and pregnancy with an emphasis on family leadership and addressing implicit bias. The Work Group has continued to share the multi-part series focused on having trauma-informed, non-stigmatizing patient communication about substance use and pregnancy. In 2022, the work group identified a need for provider education on the nuances of the child welfare

system in order to enhance communication and collaboration. With the support of the Data and Research Advisory Group, the Provider Education group created a survey for healthcare professionals to better assess the need for education around the child welfare system. The survey is currently being disseminated and there will be focus groups following the analysis of the survey results. The Provider Education Work Group aims to use the survey and focus group information to identify if the education needs exists and there is a need to increase access or identify if curriculum needs to be created to support this effort.

Priority: Ensure systems, and the people who work within them, develop policies and practices with families that support warm handoffs and standardize practices to address inequalities

The Colorado Hospital Substance Exposed Newborns Collaborative better known as **the CHoSEN Collaborative** is an effort to increase consistency in implementation of best practice in the identification of and response to newborns prenatally exposed to substances throughout the Rocky Mountain region. The cornerstone initiative of the CHoSEN Collaborative is focused on quality improvement. Known as “CHoSEN QIC”, this work is built around multidisciplinary hospital-based improvement teams working collaboratively to achieve measurable improvements. Twenty-four Colorado birthing hospitals continue to be committed to the formal statewide quality improvement initiative of the CHoSEN Collaborative (with additional hospitals in Wyoming and Montana bringing the total number to thirty-one). In 2022, the CHoSEN Collaborative has worked to broaden the collaborative to include practice change opportunities related to all substances as well as to focus on additional recruitment. Learn more at CHoSENCollaborative.org.

Two CHoSEN Forums were held in 2022 and included speakers on the following topics:

- Toxicology Testing
- Early Intervention
- Coordinated Discharge for Opioid Exposed Newborns
- SCL Health System wide SUD AIM/Maternal Mental Health Rollout and
- the Recovery Nurse Advocate Program
- Naloxone

The Plans of Safe Care Work Group is near finalization of the recommendations and best practices for implementation of Plans of Safe Care guide. The group has created a plan for dissemination for when the guide is complete. A breakout group at the Fall

CHoSEN Forum reviewed the draft guide and provided feedback on the guide and plan for dissemination. The Work Group continues to monitor progress of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act reauthorization and will continue engaging in discussions about what implications the proposed reauthorization bill version might have for the work group.

Priority: Build Colorado’s statewide capacity to align efforts, apply lessons from our data, and recognize and respond to emerging needs

The Data and Research Advisory Group is working to build data and research capacity in the state through the Colorado Perinatal Substance Use Data Linkage Project and Qualitative Study and other emergent opportunities.

The Advisory Group’s goals include:

- Advise on the data and research components of statewide and SuPPoRT Colorado Priority Areas
- Create opportunities for cross-sector collaborative learning and action
- Build awareness of existing data and sources to better leverage data in driving priorities and solutions

The Steering Committee identified the need for a statewide data snapshot that provides a high-level understanding of perinatal substance use in Colorado, and worked closely with the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect as the strategic partner and project lead for this project. The Kempe Center conducted a comprehensive review of existing data sources as well as the outcomes, indicators, and data sources collaboratively identified by the Steering Committee, Family Advisory Board, and Data & Research Advisory Group in order to propose a final selection of outcomes and indicators to be incorporated in the data snapshot. Kempe then worked closely with Illuminate to draft and refine the data snapshot. The snapshot follows the perinatal period from pre-pregnancy to post-pregnancy and includes health, substance use, and resource-related indicators from three administrative datasets in 2020. In fall of 2022, the Kempe Center presented the snapshot for feedback at the Strengthening Colorado Families and Communities Conference in Pueblo, Colorado, as well as to the Data and Research Advisory Group.

As a publicly accessible and easily digestible resource, the goal of the data snapshot is to help drive data-informed policy and practice related to perinatal substance use prevention, treatment, and support systems throughout the state. The Kempe

Center is creating a sustainability guide in order for Illuminate to update the snapshot yearly. The snapshot will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and Family Advisory Board and be accessible on the Illuminate website by February 2023.

The Policy Analysis Work Group is working to develop policy guidance in response to emerging needs and best practices. Driven by an interest in supporting the development of clear statewide guidance around mandatory reporting requirements for health care providers, the Work Group has made significant progress on drafting a best practice policy guidance for toxicology testing during birth hospitalization, with a specific focus on reducing variation and bias. The group has compiled existing policies, conducted a literature review, and consulted subject matter experts to inform their guidance. The Work Group is set to finalize the guidance for piloting in early 2023.

Priority: Build Colorado’s statewide capacity to identify Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and support impacted families

The FASD Work Group: In 2022, the FASD Work Group elevated the priority area aimed at increasing awareness of FASDs among physical, mental, and behavioral health care providers, educators, and other family-serving professionals. In 2021, the Work Group created and disseminated the [List of Colorado Providers Equipped to Diagnose Under the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Umbrella](#) to various Colorado-wide professional organizations and community agencies to raise awareness about FASD and Colorado’s current diagnostic capacity, and the Work Group has continued to promote and share the list in order to support families in getting an assessment throughout 2022. The Work Group also finalized an [FASD 101 training slide deck](#) that is available on the Illuminate website. The slide deck can be presented by Work Group members as is or modified for specific audiences. Work group members have presented this training to medical residents at Denver Health, and to an adoption network for adoptive families.

Looking Ahead for SuPPoRT Colorado

In October 2022, the Steering Committee and FAB began identifying ideas and opportunities for 2023-2024 priority area setting and strategic planning. Priority areas for 2023-2024 will be finalized in January 2023.

SuPPoRT Colorado Steering Committee, Family Advisory Board, Work Groups and Advisory Groups will continue to build on almost 15 years of work on this effort and continue to make progress in supporting families impacted by substance use disorder by enhancing systems education, collaboration, and practice change.

Working groups and advisory groups will prioritize piloting and disseminating best practice guides and deliverables developed in 2022. Warm handoffs, Plan of Safe Care implementation, policy guidance, stigma reduction, and FASD awareness will continue to be areas of focus in 2023.

For more information on SuPPoRT Colorado or to join SuPPoRT Colorado working or advisory groups, [use this link](#). Reach out to Kelli Sutton at ksutton@illuminatecolorado.org to get involved in 2023-2024 efforts.

D. Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Illicit fentanyl continues to drive overdose deaths in Colorado and across the country. Data from the period of 2019 to 2021 indicates a sharp acceleration of drug overdose deaths. A recent report of the [U.S. Commission on Combatting Synthetic Opioids](#) (February 2022) emphasized the need for “a stronger understanding of the demand for opioids as a critical underlying factor that attracts illegal suppliers”. The final report offers several actions to reduce demand and mitigate drug overdose. The report is clear that reducing demand for illegally manufactured synthetic opioids is paramount to stemming the flow of these drugs.

The recommended strategies of that the U.S. Commission related to demand-reduction are the same strategies that form the core efforts of the Consortium’s work on the statewide opioid response efforts:

- Increasing public awareness of the pervasiveness and deadliness of synthetic opioids
- Expanding treatment for opioid use disorders, including with medication-assisted treatment
- Bolstering appropriate harm-reduction interventions to prevent fatalities
- Giving people with substance-use disorder more opportunities to enter high-quality treatment

[The Consortium](#) works closely with numerous partners from various disciplines in communities across the state, across professional associations, and across state departments, as well as with local and state elected officials.

Community Opioid Response

The staff of the Consortium worked with partners of various community coalitions, community organizations, and with local government leaders on planning and connection to resources for implementing strategies to address the opioid crisis in local communities. Of particular focus was work with members of the newly established Regional Opioid Abatement Councils formed to receive and utilize opioid litigation settlement funds awarded to the State of Colorado.

The teams also work with recipients of Rural Community Opioid Response Program grants and the CDC’s Overdose to Action grantees funded through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, providing technical assistance and

connections to related resources to enhance implementation of local strategies to mitigate the impact of the opioid crisis.

Affected Families and Friends

Individuals with an opioid or other substance use disorder can be helped. Treatment works and recovery is possible. Unfortunately, the lives of some individuals are cut short by the tragedy of a drug-related death. Every number in the count of drug overdose deaths represents an individual, and there are people in the lives of those individuals who cared about them and loved them.

The Affected Families & Friends Work Group brings together people who lost loved ones to a drug overdose. This past year, the members of the work group hosted speakers at community events to bring awareness to the drug overdose crisis. The work group also conducted public speaking training for individuals who want to speak with community members and who also want to be involved in advocacy work. A partnership was established with the Colorado Office of the Attorney General for the work group to serve as a resource for affected families and friends who interact with the Attorney General.

Provider Education

With funding from COBank, the Consortium collaborated with the Colorado Farm Bureau and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union to produce online training modules to educate healthcare and behavioral health providers on the nuances of farming and ranching populations. Topics include alternative approaches to treating pain in farmers and ranchers and behavioral health issues specific to that population and understanding cultural aspects of the agricultural lifestyle.

The [2021 Consortium Lunch and Learn webinars](#) are available for viewing online and address a variety of topics, such as safe opioid prescribing for dental providers, marijuana and the opioid crisis, buprenorphine for pain management, and addiction in the LGBT+ population.

There are also 20 online training modules that are planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the partnership of Colorado Medical Society and North Colorado Health Alliance. These modules help provide the continuing education required for licensure in various professional fields.

Harm Reduction

This past year, efforts in harm reduction strategies focused on:

- Community education sessions about harm reduction strategies to better inform community members about the value of various strategies in assisting people who are most at risk for drug overdose.
- Providing information on harm reduction services for behavioral health innovation.
- Forming messaging about the Colorado Good Samaritan law and fentanyl, given that this law does not apply in situations in which an individual who is in possession of less than 4 grams of fentanyl and calls 911 to report a drug overdose, is not immune from arrest and prosecution of possession of fentanyl.

Addressing Benzodiazepines

The Benzodiazepine Action Work Group addresses concerns about overprescribing of benzodiazepines and the adverse effects associated with the discontinuation of benzodiazepine without proper tapering. This work group developed and conducted a 4-part Lunch and Learn series for medical providers regarding benzodiazepine-related issues as mandated in House Bill 21-1276. The work group also developed a peer support curriculum to train peers in helping others who have been harmed by prescribed benzodiazepines and is develop provider education modules.

Safe Disposal

After another successful year of the [Colorado Household Medication and Sharps Takeback Program](#), a total of 232,000 pounds of prescription drugs have been collected in Colorado since 2016. Efforts will continue to expand and promote the medication take-back program in communities across the state. Efforts this past year also focused on expansion of the statewide sharps disposal program, increasing the number of sites for safely disposing of syringes.

Public Awareness

The Public Awareness Work Group and the communications staff of the Consortium worked with Amelie Company, a creative agency, to develop the consortium's new fentanyl overdose prevention campaign, [Keep the Party Safe](#). This campaign, which is about the danger of fentanyl and how to keep safe from overdose, is aimed at individuals ages 18-35.

This work group also created a new and improved website for EndOverdoseCO.com, initiated a new Instagram feed to support International Overdose Awareness Day and ongoing overdose prevention work, and redesigned and retargeted advertising for the Bring Naloxone Home awareness campaign.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)

The Consortium's PDMP Work Group focuses on issues relating to the use and improvement of the state's [prescription drug monitoring program](#) and works closely in partnership with the Colorado Department of Regulatory Affairs (DORA), which manages the PDMP.

The request for proposal for a new vendor for the PDMP was formulated in the first half of the year, published in September, and will be going through the procurement process in the coming months.

The Office of the State Auditor published their report and recommendations of the 2020 PDMP Audit in June of 2021 and DORA is working on implementation.

The PDMP had numerous changes that resulted from this year's legislative session, including HB21-1012 "Expand Prescription Drug Monitoring Program," which expands the PDMP to track all prescription drugs dispensed in Colorado and SB21-098 "Sunset Prescription Drug Monitoring Program," which provided further updates to statute and gave the Board of Pharmacy authority to track some non-controlled drugs in the PDMP through the Rulemaking process.

The Colorado PDMP is working to implement HB21-1276 that will offer RxCheck for PDMP integration with electronic medical records and health systems in Colorado by December 1, 2021.

Recovery

The Consortium worked with subject matter experts to develop the Colorado Recovery Friendly Workplace Toolkit and is working with The Center for Health, Work & Environment at the University of Colorado's School of Public Health to launch the toolkit. This project works with partners and employers to educate businesses, guiding them in creating workplaces that support workers struggling with common behavioral health conditions including substance use and addiction.

The Consortium's Recovery Work Group supported a rural peer professional symposium in Glenwood Springs and there are plans for additional symposia in other regions of the state. The Consortium also coordinated efforts to convene peer support professionals to generate recommendations for advancing the peer support profession in Colorado and to inform the use of \$5.9 million dollars of federal American Rescue Plan funds for increasing the number of certified peer support professionals.

Treatment

The Consortium's Treatment Work Group contributed to the review of state rule changes for Outpatient Treatment Programs, which provide methadone treatment for individuals with an opioid use disorder. The Work Group also focused on educating substance use disorder treatment providers on the intersection of treatment and harm reduction strategies and on integration of primary care in treating opioid use disorders.

Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion Program

With funding from the state legislature, the Consortium, working in partnership with the University of Colorado's College of Nursing and the School of Medicine Practice Innovation program, completed the two-year Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion Program at the end of June 2021. Eight health services organizations were awarded funds in 2019 and those organizations provided medication-assistance treatment in 21 frontier and rural counties for individuals with an opioid use disorder. Fifty-six medication-assisted treatment clinicians served over 1,500 patients with demonstrated outcomes in reduction of other substance use, improvement in employment status, and improved self-reported health, and connections to community-based support services. The Consortium received additional funding to continue the program.

V. Colorado Substance Abuse Trends

The Task Force reviews data from various sources to understand the trends in substance use and abuse in Colorado. This section provides a summary of key trends and presentations, as presented to the Task Force. Below are the titles, short summaries, and links to this year's presentations when relevant.

Discussion of Fentanyl Awareness Campaigns

Various entities discussed the urgency of fentanyl awareness. The following groups identified interest in pursuing this work, including the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, the Behavioral Health Administration through the existing Lift the Label campaign, Rise Above Colorado, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Department of Law. A discussion on the importance of coordination between organizations followed. Links to the major statewide fentanyl awareness campaigns will be shared here: <https://coag.gov/opioid-response-resources/>

Supporting Perinatal Substance Use Prevention, Recovery and Treatment in Colorado (SuPPoRT Colorado)

The SuPPoRT Colorado, formerly known as SEN (Substance Effected Newborns) sub-committee discussed how they will now be referred to as SuPPoRT (Supporting Perinatal substance use Prevention, Recovery, and Treatment in Colorado). The name change better reflects the work being done, and recognizes the role of support, recovery, and treatment.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-SuPPoRT-Colorado.pdf>

Partnership with the Affected Families and Friends Work Group

The Department of Law is beginning to partner with the Affected Families and Friend Work Group of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention to provide support and navigation of resources for affected families and friends. Workgroup Co-Chairs Sarah Werner and Tracey Ritter discussed how the Workgroup provides opportunities for families and friends to share hope and reduce stigma, referrals for families seeking support, and create a forum to gather information and collect resources for families. It includes participants who have lost family members, and participants with family members in recovery, allies, and professionals. Information on how to find support as family member or friend was added to the Colorado Department of Law website here: <https://coag.gov/opioid-response-resources/>

Discussion of Fentanyl Awareness in Schools

The Department of Law convened a fentanyl awareness in schools sub-meeting of the Substance Abuse and Response Task Force on May 29, 2022, to receive feedback from community stakeholders on the current state of curriculum and programming in fentanyl awareness in schools across the state. Twenty-two individuals from metro and rural Colorado attended the virtual sub-meeting to share about current grassroots efforts to address fentanyl awareness in schools.

Representatives from Rise Above Colorado, EverFi and Natural Highs, Youth in Recovery – Parent and Peer Recovery Counseling, Advocates for Recovery, Collegiate Recovery Program at University of Denver, Project Aware, Voices for Awareness, Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Community Reinforcement and Family Training all shared work they are doing to educate students as a preventative measure. Several representatives highlighted stories of recent loss of youth from opioids in their communities.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-Fentanyl-Awareness-in-Schools-Discussion.pdf>

Fentanyl Legislation

Colorado Department of Law Director of Legislative Affairs & Assistant Attorney General Jefferey Riester led a discussion of the recent Fentanyl legislation.

Jefferey noted that the discussion of HB 22-1326 and impact on Good Samaritan laws does not reflect the Attorney General's opinion and ultimately is a question for District Attorneys who enforce this law along with local law enforcement.

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention is preparing a brief on the Good Samaritan Law to disseminate publicly.

Healthy Kids Colorado Survey

The School and Youth Survey Manager Emily Fine and Ashley Brooks-Russell with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) discussed the purpose and methodology of the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS).

Emily noted that policies and systems have a greater impact than individual choices in youth. Inequities include geography, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and gender identity. Emily stressed a need to focus on the systems that create and perpetuate these inequities in Colorado.

Overall, for all students, there was an increase in the percentage of students who experienced depression in the past year. There was a higher rate of mental health risk

factors for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students than straight peers. Females had a higher risk of mental health risk factors than males. LGBTQ+, youth of color, and disabled youth all had lower rates of feeling like they belong at school or have a trusted adult.

In terms of substances, there was a reported decrease in the percentage of youth who currently use substances. In addition, there was an increase in youth perception that it is harder to access substances and an increase in perceived risk of harm by substances.

Presenters emphasized the importance of having a trusted adult, as youth are less likely to engage in substance abuse and have poor mental health if they can communicate with a trusted adult.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-Healthy-Kids-Colorado-Survey.pdf>

Colorado Public Safety Data Trends

Colorado Department of Public Safety DUI Statistical Analyst Allison Rosenthal discussed trends and demographics related to drug arrests, noting that while drug-related arrests have decreased overall, Black and Hispanic individuals continue to be arrested at higher rates than White Non-Hispanic individuals. Allison noted large increases in seizures for fentanyl and an increase in drug arrests for synthetic narcotics. Driving under the influence arrests and case filings have decreased in recent years, which might not be reflective of a decreased public safety threat of impaired driving. However, alcohol and cannabis continue to be the most detected substances in driving under the influence filings and reducing driving after excessive alcohol consumption and/or co-occurring use of cannabis and other impairing substances remains a public safety priority.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-Colorado-Public-Safety-Data-Trends.pdf>

Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey

Kent MacLennan shared findings from the 2022 Rise Above Colorado Youth survey. Most Colorado teens are still not using substances. However, household use is up significantly. Life is likely more challenging for Colorado teens today than before. Attitudes towards drug use have relaxed, particularly amongst female teens. Fortunately, most teens understand there are some risks associated with taking unknown pills and about half have talked with their parents about fentanyl.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-Rise-Above-Youth-Survey.pdf>

Substance Use Trends & Health Outcomes from Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

Kylie Yocum shared key data points on opioid related deaths and alcohol use. Age-adjusted drug overdose death rates increased for cocaine, methamphetamines, and synthetic opioids, with the greatest increase for synthetic opioids. There were 1,881 deaths of Colorado residents from drug overdose in 2021; of these 912 were related to fentanyl. Compared to 2020, the fentanyl death rate in 2021 nearly doubled in one year. Alcohol is still the most prevalently used substance in Colorado. Binge drinking is not just a youth or young adult issue, but younger people tend to consume more alcohol when they binge drink.

DeLayna Goulding shared data on marijuana use in both adults and youth. From 2019 to 2021, there were decreases in marijuana use and marijuana-related vehicle safety in youth, but no changes in adults. There were no changes in methods of marijuana use. There were decreases in emergency department/hospital discharges with marijuana-related codes and unfortunate increases in marijuana-related outcomes among children 5 years old or younger.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-Substance-Use-Trends-Health-Outcomes-CDPHE.pdf>

Substance Exposed Newborns Data Linkage

Dr. Courtney Everson and Dr. Elysia Clemens highlighted key findings from the Substance Exposed Newborns Data Linkage project. The goals of the Substance Exposed Newborn Data Linkage project are to connect data from multiple state-administered data sources to comprehensively understand perinatal substance use disorder and its effects on family health and well-being. The aims are to generate population estimates of prenatal substance use that can be used to guide investments and track progress. Dr. Everson and Dr. Clemens highlighted key trends and policy recommendations.

Link to presentation → <http://coag.gov/app/uploads/2022/11/2022-SATF-Substance-Exposed-Newborns-Data-Linkage.pdf>

VI. Appendix A: Task Force Member Roster

Chair

Colorado Attorney General, Phil Weiser

Vice-Chairs

Dr. Lesley Brooks, Vice Chair, Treatment

Chief of Addiction Medicine, Summitstone Health Partners

Assistant Medical Director, North Colorado Health Alliance

Chief Rick Brandt, Vice Chair, Criminal Justice System

Police Chief, Evans Police Department

City of Evans

Matt Baca, Vice Chair, Prevention

Director, Office of Community Engagement

Office of the Attorney General

Members

Governor's Policy Staff Representative: Brandon Davis, Policy Advisor

President of the Senate Designee: Sen. Brittany Pettersen, Senate District 22

Senate Minority Leader Designee: Sen. Kevin Priola, Senate District 25

Speaker of the House Designee: Representative Meg Froelich, House District 3

House Minority Leader Designee: *Vacant*

Local Child and Family Service Provider: Julia Roguski, Director of Child Protection Services

Youth Representative: Former Representative, Stazi Snelling, Youth Advisor, Rise Above Colorado

Major Health Facility: Dr. Kathryn Wells, Medical Director, Denver Family Crisis Center

Human Service Agency: Matt Holtman, Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Welfare

Criminal Defense Bar: Liz Krupa, Attorney, Law Office of Elizabeth Espinosa Krupa, LLC

Mental Health Treatment Provider: Dr. Liz Hickman, Centennial Mental Health Center, Inc., Sterling

Colorado Department of Education: Dr. Ashley Idrees, Director, Dropout Prevention & Student Re-engagement

Colorado District Attorneys Council: John Kellner, 18th Judicial District Attorney

County Sheriffs of Colorado: Sheriff Jaime FitzSimons, Summit County

Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police: George Dingfelder, Chief of Police, City of Monte Vista

County Commissioner from a Rural County: Wendy Buxton-Andrade, Prowers County Commissioner

Organization Providing Advocacy and Support to Rural Municipalities: Jessica Sandgren, City of Thornton

Licensed Pharmacist: Dr. Robert J. Valuck, R.Ph., University of Colorado, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Colorado Department of Public Safety: Peggy Heil, Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Research and Statistics

Office of The Child's Representative: Alex Wolff, Case Consultant Coordinator, The Office of The Child's Representative

Colorado Department of Corrections/Adult Parole: Melissa Gallardo, Manager, Division of Adult Parole, Community Corrections and Youth Offender Systems

Colorado Drug Investigators Association: Ray Padilla, Westminster Police Department/DEA Task Force

Substance Abuse Recovery Community Organization: Tonya Wheeler, Executive Director, Advocates for Recovery Colorado

Environmental Protection: Lynette Meyers, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Community Prevention Coalition: José Esquibel, Director, Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention; Associate Director, Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Andrés Guerrero, Manager, Overdose Prevention Unit, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health: Claudia Zundel, Director, Community Prevention and Early Intervention, Colorado Department of Human Services

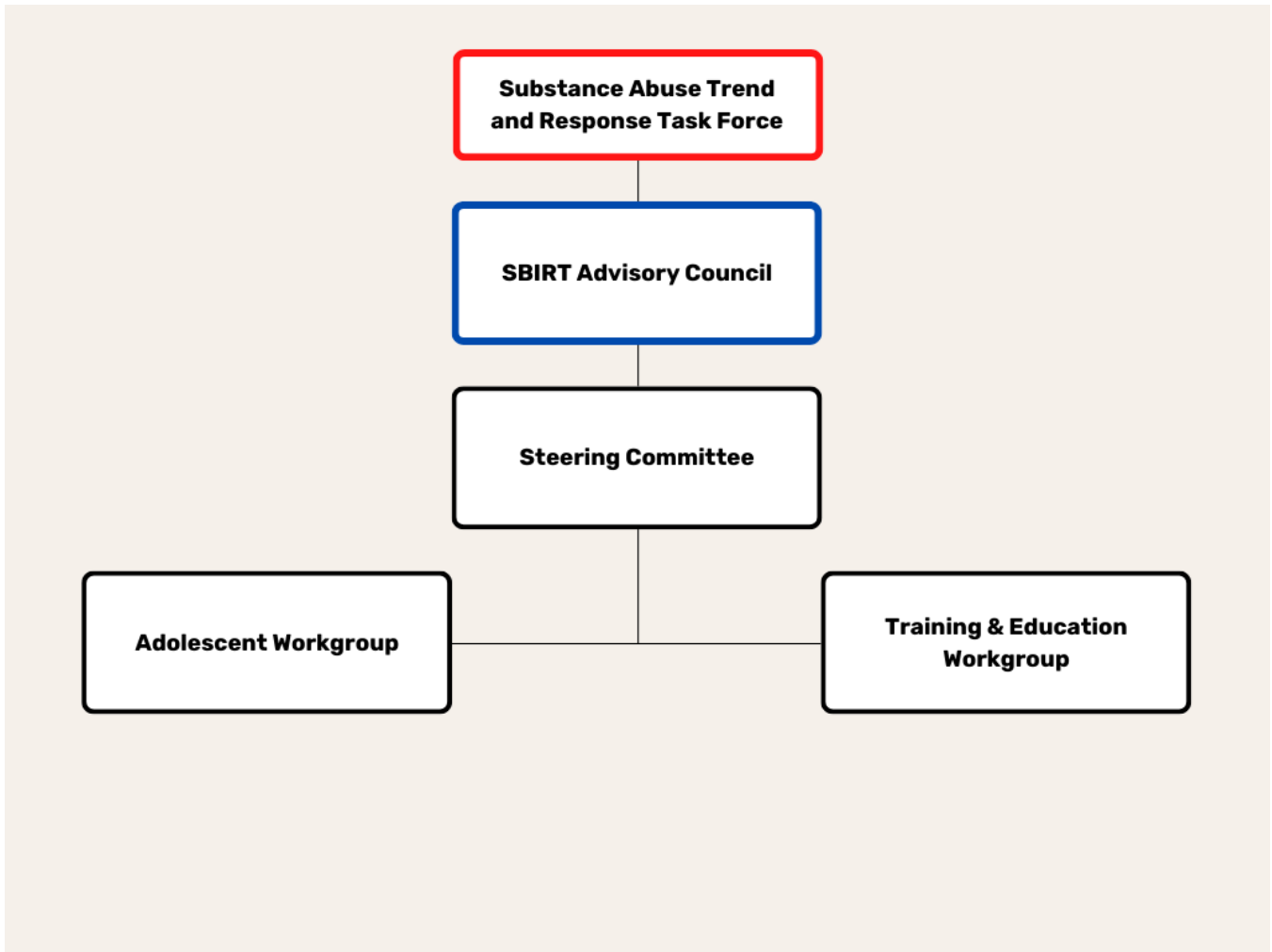
District Court Judge Experienced in Handling Cases Involving Substance Abuse: Hon. Elizabeth Weishaupl, 18th Judicial District

Judicial Department Division of Probation: Leslie Shaefer, Chief Probation Officer, 1st Judicial District

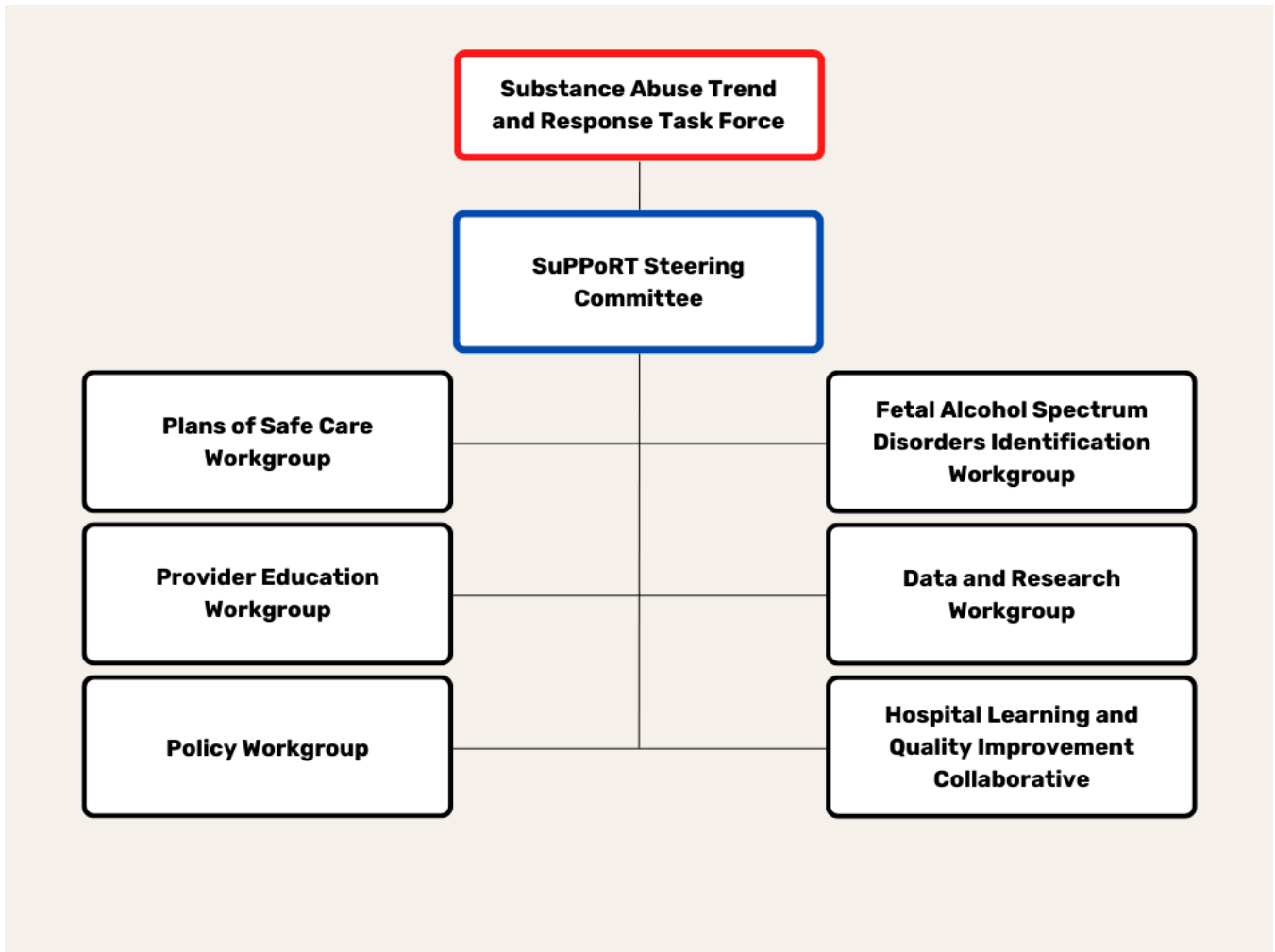
VII. Appendix B: Summary of the Charter SEOW

The Colorado State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) is a multi-disciplinary working group with the goal of promotion, collection, analysis, and clear communication of data to support improved health in Colorado. To accomplish this, the SEOW is tasked with increasing access to data and data products that address substance use and health issues to inform promotion, prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, enforcement, and broader policy.

VIII. Appendix C: Structure of the SBIRT Advisory Council



IX. Appendix D: Structure of the SuPPoRT Steering Committee



X. Appendix E: Structure of the Colorado Consortium

