CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE

MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON OPIOID USE DISORDER (OUD) TASKFORCE COMMITTEE MEETING

July 24, 2026, at 5:00 PM [FRIDAY]

City Hall Council Chambers, 15 Loockerman Plaza, Dover, Delaware

AGENDA

INVOCATION – Mrs. Toni Jordan

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Honorable Eric L. Buckson

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Approval of All Meeting Minutes of 2025 and 2026
2. Review of Organizations Recommended for Invitation – Dover Opioid Settlement Grant Process

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The final award amounts, specific budget line items, and formalized Scopes of Work will be fully developed post-approval. This vote does not constitute a blanket approval of every requested line item, as adjustments may be made during contract negotiations.

Carry Their Light

- **Project Name:** Carry Their Light Youth Opioid Prevention Media & Education Initiative
- **Project Summary:** This 12-month program targets high-risk youth and young adults ages 12–24 in Dover and Kent County who are disproportionately impacted by trauma, poverty, and substance use. Operating on an initial two-month setup timeline with full implementation by Month 3, the initiative will conduct weekly prevention workshops and mentorship sessions, training 5 to 10 youth participants in media production and public speaking. Grant funds will support production equipment, digital campaign outreach, and participation-based workforce development stipends to produce 20 short-form media segments featuring community leaders and recovery advocates. The project aims to improve opioid and fentanyl risk awareness while generating an estimated 50,000 to 150,000 social media impressions, tracking monthly outputs via attendance logs, pre/post surveys, and platform streaming analytics.
- **Budget Request:** $50,000
- **Recommendation:** Approved

THE AGENDA ITEMS AS LISTED MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED IN SEQUENCE. PURSUANT TO 29 DEL. C. §10004(e)(2), THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OR THE DELETION OF ITEMS, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS, WHICH ARISE AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING

Firm Foundation

- **Project Name:** DE Recovery Advocacy Program
- **Budget Requested:** $101,725
- **Project Summary:** A peer-driven initiative designed to bridge professional addiction treatment models with community recovery support. Over a 12-month timeline, the project will fund a full-time State Care Coordinator/Peer Recovery Advocate ($75,000) with extensive lived 12-step experience to conduct in-person patient rights education directly within partner treatment networks, including Banyan Delaware and RCA. Backed by a budget allocating $14,100 for materials and $9,125 for driving compensation, the program aims to design and distribute 25,000 informational packages and facilitate voluntary care coordination for Delaware residents facing high barriers to treatment and care fragmentation. Monitored by the organization's Board of Directors and tracked monthly using google spreadsheets, the initiative intends to transition into a self-sustaining peer-service model by empowering its active participants within the final two months of the grant cycle.
- **Concerns:** The primary intent of the Local Government Grants allocation for the City of Dover is to fund initiatives that directly serve that specific municipal jurisdiction; however, this proposal completely omits any mention of the City of Dover. Instead, the application explicitly requests a "State Care Coordinator" position to deliver statewide services, and the organization's Board Director failed to integrate a localized focus despite being previously notified of this core requirement. **While the Commission does not recommend moving forward with the proposal in its current state, we are entirely open to allowing Firm Foundation to submit a revised application that redirects its operations to focus on the Dover community before September 2026. Please see the attached denial letter, the original application, and budget worksheet for more details.**
- **Recommendation:** Denied

NorthNode Group Counseling

- **Project Name:** Downtown Dover Recovery Engagement & Stabilization Initiative
- **Budget Requested:** $30,000
- **Project Summary:** Operating as a localized, low-barrier public health alternative to incarceration, this community-based project utilizes a Community Recovery Liaison and a Certified Peer Support Specialist to engage adults experiencing active opioid and polysubstance use disorders in high-need areas of downtown Dover. Backed by NorthNode's existing clinical infrastructure—including outpatient counseling, intensive outpatient programs (IOP), and their Journey Forward stabilization network—the initiative deploys grant funding toward staff allocations, transportation assistance, and immediate stabilization incentives like hygiene kits and food support. Supervised "Recovery Community Ambassadors" (program graduates) will provide peer mentorship and lead recovery-oriented community events. The initiative seeks to convert street-level outreach into immediate clinical intakes over its 12-month timeline, aiming to engage at least 75 unique individuals, facilitate 30 rapid substance use assessments, link 25 participants directly to treatment, remove transportation barriers for 40 clients, and systematically track all monthly outputs through existing electronic health record systems and outreach logs.

- **Recommendation:** Approved

Our R.O.O.T.S. Foundation

- **Project Name:** The Healing Lens Project: Dover Youth Opioid Prevention & Community Awareness Initiative.
- **Budget Requested:** $67,600
- **Project Summary:** Led by Program Director Cammerin Norwood, this six-month initiative blends community outreach with media production to deliver opioid prevention, trauma education, and overdose awareness to 75 to 100 at-risk youth and young adults ages 13–24 in Dover and Kent County neighborhoods impacted by violence and drug activity. Following a two-month administrative setup phase, the project moves into active implementation from Months 2 to 5, deploying its budget toward staff salaries, youth engagement supplies, travel, and contractual videography services to create weekly youth prevention groups and documentary-style digital content focused on the dangers of fentanyl and counterfeit pills. The project serves as a low-barrier mechanism for local prevention and care connections, evaluating its public health impact by Month 6 through a standardized review of attendance sheets, field outreach logs, and social media engagement analytics.
- **Recommendation:** Approved

Women of Value

- **Project Name:** House of Refuge Recovery Scholarship Program
- **Budget Requested:** $50,000
- **Project Summary:** This initiative expands access to safe, stable, and recovery-supportive residential housing for uninsured and underinsured adult women recovering from opioid and substance use disorders in Kent County. Operating on a 12-month timeline with immediate post-award implementation, the project allocates grant funds toward housing scholarships for room and board, recovery-focused case management, life skills training, and transportation assistance. The program integrates with existing local healthcare and behavioral health providers to coordinate direct substance use treatment referrals and clinical continuity. Residents typically stay for a 90-day stabilization window aimed at building employment readiness and establishing long-term self-sufficiency, with all participant intakes, housing utilization metrics, and financial scholarship data tracked monthly via internal digital spreadsheets and service logs.
- **FSARR Certification or Clinical Licensure Requirements:** Pursuant to Delaware state law, any organization receiving public remediation funds for the provision of recovery housing services must maintain appropriate institutional verification. Accordingly, the continuation of funding for this initiative is strictly contingent upon the following licensing criteria:
    - **Licensure Status and Conditional Allowance**: Women of Value Inc. currently holds a provisional license issued by the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to

provide clinical services. Funding for the House of Refuge Recovery Scholarship Program will be permitted to proceed under this clinical exception, provided that the organization actively maintains its valid DSAMH licensure/certification throughout the life of the grant cycle.

- **FSARR Certification Mandate:** In the event that the organization's DSAMH clinical licensure lapses, terminates, or fails to transition from provisional status, the project must immediately comply with standard state housing mandates. This requires formal certification by the First State Alliance of Recovery Residences (FSARR).
- Please be advised that failure to maintain DSAMH clinical licensure prior to achieving active FSARR certification will result in an immediate administrative suspension of grant disbursements, which may delay project funding until full regulatory compliance is verified.

- **Recommendation:** Approved

CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE

EXHIBIT E List of Opioid Remediation Uses Schedule A Core Strategies

Schedule A

file:///C:/Users/Roysu/OneDrive/Documents/Exhibit-E-Final-Distributor-Settlement-Agreement-8-11-21.pdf

A. NALOXONE OR OTHER FDA-APPROVED DRUG TO REVERSE OPIOID OVERDOSES
B. MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT ("MAT") DISTRIBUTION AND OTHER OPIOID-RELATED TREATMENT
C. PREGNANT & POSTPARTUM WOMEN
D. EXPANDING TREATMENT FOR NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME ("NAS")
E. EXPANSION OF WARM HAND-OFF PROGRAMS AND RECOVERY SERVICES
F. TREATMENT FOR INCARCERATED POPULA TION
G. PREVENTION PROGRAMS
H. EXPANDING SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS

Schedule B

PART ONE: TREATMENT

A. TREAT OPIOID USE DISORDER (OUD)
B. SUPPORT PEOPLE IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY
C. CONNECT PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP TO THE HELP THEY NEED (CONNECTIONS TO CARE)
D. ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE-INVOLVED PERSONS
E. ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PREGNANT OR PARENTING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES, INCLUDING BABIES WITH NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME

PART TWO: PREVENTION

F. PREVENT OVER-PRESCRIBING AND ENSURE APPROPRIATE PRESCRIBING AND DISPENSING OF OPIOIDS
G. PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS
H. PREVENT OVERDOSE DEATHS AND OTHER HARMS (HARM REDUCTION)

PART THREE: OTHER STRATEGIES

I. FIRST RESPONDERS
J. LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND COORDINATION

CONSTITUENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

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CITY OF DOVER
DELAWARE

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

OCTOBER 29, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The Mayor's **Blue Ribbon** Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee was held on **October 29, 2025, at 6:30** p.m. with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding. OUD Taskforce members present were the Honorable Eric L. Buckson, Mr. James Oxford Sr., Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Toni Jordan, and Mrs. Chelle Paul. Mr. Benard Pratt was absent.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

Councilpersons Donyale Hall and David Anderson.

AGEND[illegible]ONS/D[illegible]

Chairman [illegible]udler revi[illegible]ved [illegible]e agenda [illegible]ms and exp[illegible]ned the [illegible]Guideline Subhead[illegible]gs and Commen[illegible] Feedback [illegible]ea t[illegible]e pu[illegible]ic.

No additi[illegible]s or del[illegible]ons w[illegible]e propos[illegible] for [illegible]e meeting.

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INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III,

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Chelle Paul.

PURPOSE:

Chairman Sudler initiated the meeting by outlining the objectives of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) Taskforce Committee, including its fiduciary responsibilities and an overview of the committee members. Following this introduction, he presented the Ad hoc committee chairs for the 2025-2027 term. Each chairperson then provided a succinct overview of their strategies and goals for leading their respective committees. During this segment, Ad-hoc Chairperson Mr. James Oxford Sr. (Team Dover Coach) asked about the financial parameters for obtaining certain types of grants. Chairman Sudler clarified that the committee's recommendations would determine how settlement funds are allocated to organizations demonstrating effective, evidence-based programs in accordance with established guidelines. He then redirected attention to Councilman David Anderson, who noted that these funds, derived

from a lawsuit against specific pharmaceutical companies initiated by the Department of Justice, are neither federal nor state funds and must be disbursed under local or state oversight.



After this exchange, Chairman Sudler opened the floor for questions. A representative from the Firm Foundation Recovery expressed appreciation for the OUD Task Force's efforts to pursue grant funding. He inquired whether the previous framework and strategic plan would be utilized in the current Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force approach, as well as the status of funding awards. In response, Chairman Sudler noted that the City of Dover has not yet received the next round of funds. The city has been tasked with formulating recommendations through a comprehensive plan that adheres to the OUD Settlement Guidelines. He then introduced the Ad-hoc Chairs, who outlined their integrated plans to fulfill their committee objectives. Chairman Sudler called upon Senator Eric Buckston, Ad-hoc Chair of the Legislative & Finance Issue Committee, to articulate his leadership role within the OUD Taskforce Committee. Senator Buckston shared his perspective on prioritizing quality outcomes over speed in securing funding, emphasizing the importance of being "last and best" in the effective use of OUD funds in Delaware.

He further discussed the restructuring efforts of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Commission (POSDC) regarding oversight and accountability for the usage of these funds. Following his presentation, Councilwoman Donyale Hall posed several questions about funding rounds, guidelines, grant recipients' responsibilities, and the distribution percentages among municipalities. Senator Buckston responded by indicating a desire to return control over fund allocation to local municipalities while implementing performance appraisals. He indicated that

fifteen percent (15%) of the total amount disbursed in the current funding round would be allocated among eligible municipalities that qualify for the OUD Settlement Funds. He also outlined the various grant sizes—macro and micro—accessible to organizations seeking financial support. This comprehensive dialogue underscored the OUD Taskforce Committee's commitment to ensuring effective stewardship of the funds and maintaining transparency in the disbursement process. After much discussion regarding the grant process, Chairman Sudler introduced Mrs. Chelle Paul, the Chair of the OUD Taskforce's Workforce Development & Safety Issues Ad hoc Committee, to present her strategic vision for workforce engagement. Mrs. Paul's initiative champions a robust, data-driven approach that aligns with the Biopsychosocial Framework.

By focusing on comprehensive assessments of chronic pain, trauma, and mental health issues, this initiative seeks to deliver targeted support to those most in need, reinforcing our commitment to effectively addressing the OUD crisis in Delaware's capital. Upon completion of Mrs. Paul's vision plan for her committee, a community member from Firm Foundation Recovery approached the podium to inquire about how the Proposed Recommendations for the Abatement of OUD in the Capital of Delaware were identified **1. Investment in Detox Treatment Center Infrastructure, 2. Enhancement of Behavioral Health, 3. Expansion of Telehealth Services, 4. Data and Research, 5. Mobile Intervention Units, and 6. Youth-Focused Campaigns),** and whether any of these strategies are linked to the previous funders. Chair Sudler responded to the questions and emphasized that the proposed recommendations were derived from various community and OUD Taskforce committee members, which Chair Sudler orchestrated into six proposed strategies aligned with the **EXHIBIT E. List of Opioid Remediation Uses**.

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He also explained that the recommendations would be voted on based on feedback from the community and task force members. During the discussion, community representative Mr. Stratton Bay raised essential concerns about the criteria for recruiting individuals with substance use backgrounds who wish to contribute to the OUD response actively. Mrs. Paul emphasized the committee's dedication to ensuring compliance with grant requirements, recognizing that while many eager organizations stand ready to assist, some may lack the essential staffing or proposal quality needed to secure funding. Chair Sudler then recognized Councilman Anderson, who reminded attendees of the microphone's accessibility for those unable to approach the podium, underscoring the meeting's community-focused nature. Mr. Stratton continued his point of interest and emphasized the importance of focusing on past practices and on organizations that were qualified to provide OUD services but failed to fulfill their obligations under the terms of

the grant awarded, as this was a significant concern for consideration in the next round of funding.

Mr. Stratton further elaborated on the imperative for the OUD Taskforce to be proactive in workforce development and in addressing the OUD epidemic challenges in our community, by monitoring the use of Settlement funds to ensure that the guidelines are adhered to and that the Settlement funds are traceable and utilized effectively. Chair Sudler responded by elaborating on the task force's duties: to review all micro- or macro-grant proposals and assess the best approach to selecting evidence-based programs that address the whole individual. Chair Sudler then recognized Senator Buckson, who suggested that Mr. Bradley Owens, Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission, provide further insights to clarify the funding and grant processes. Senator Buckson then yielded the floor back to Chairman Sudler for further discussion. Chair Sudler then referred to a community member who inquired about assistance for orchestrating a grant proposal due to the complexity of the requirements. Chair Sudler responded that Delaware State University has students willing to assist individuals with the grant-writing process through workforce development and partnership initiatives. He also referred to Mr. Bobby Wilson, who offered his sources to help individuals with the knowledge to complete a grant application successfully.

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Chair Sudler then recognized the founder of Firm Foundation Recovery Inc., who focused on treatment models rather than peer-to-peer conceptual models, and he felt that peer-to-peer recovery programs are a better investment for long-term treatment and recovery strategies. He also specified that the medication assisted treatment plan keeps people dependent on Meds rather than addressing the core issue for long-term successful impact. Arresting individuals and forcing individuals to treatment fails to address the core issue; hence, impeding upon recovery initiatives; subsequently, contributing to some individuals continuing to abuse pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical drugs. Responding to the representative of Firm Foundation Recovery Inc. (FFRI) was Mrs. Pual who clarified the OUD Taskforce Committee's mission, emphasizing the importance of aiding individuals on the Medians rather than resorting to punitive measures. She highlighted the dual goals of ensuring safety for both drivers and pedestrians while also reinforcing the illegality of walking on the median. The representative from FFRI expressed gratitude for Mrs. Pual's insights and encouraged the Committee to leverage his organization's resources to further their objectives. His concluding remarks echoed Senator Buckson's sentiment that the committee should maintain a broad, visionary perspective in addressing this issue.

Chair Sudler responded appreciatively, reiterating the Taskforce's adoption of the Biopsychosocial Framework, which advocates for a comprehensive approach to tackling addiction and chronic pain by addressing biological, psychological, behavioral, and social factors. Following this, Senator Buckson shared his personal views on coerced versus voluntary treatment, clarifying that his opinions do not necessarily represent the committee's collective stance. Chairman Sudler then called on Mrs. Toni Jordan, the Ad hoc Committee Chair and Optimal Well-being Advisor from North Node Counseling Agency, who expressed her excitement about contributing to the Taskforce. She emphasized the multifaceted approach to recovery, acknowledging that some individuals may not be ready or willing to accept help. Nonetheless, she is committed to the peer support model and looks forward to collaborating with the committee and the community. After Mrs. Jordan's presentation, Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III was introduced by Chairman Sudler as the Community and Youth Engagement Ad hoc Committe[illegible]r. Bedf[illegible]d stress[illegible]the impor[illegible]ce of incr[illegible]ng [illegible]ment in these dis[illegible]ssions. He [illegible]ighl[illegible]ted his w[illegible]k with [illegible]ou[illegible] urging [illegible]tendees to promo[illegible] awareness of available [illegible]sources. M[illegible] Be[illegible]d[illegible]ated for[illegible]oster[illegible]g a pos[illegible]tionship be[illegible]ween the police an[illegible]he comm[illegible]ity t[illegible]enhanc[illegible]engage[illegible]very[illegible]fforts, emphasizin[illegible] collaboration and suppo[illegible] over bl[illegible]e as [illegible]sential fo[illegible]ffec[illegible]e outreac[illegible] and[illegible]olution-building.

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He further focused on the big picture, and his vision, dream, and prayer are for everyone to work together and reach individuals through community outreach, not pointing fingers, but being willing to help resolve the matter via program resources and networking. In a significant move towards addressing the challenges posed by opioid use disorder (OUD) in Delaware's capital, Mr. Bedford articulated a vision centered on healing and community support. Following this, Chairman Sudler introduced Mr. Benard Pratt as part of the OUD Taskforce, where Mr. Pratt will serve as the assistant researcher alongside Chairman Sudler, who will lead the research efforts. Chairman Sudler underscored the importance of advancing scientific understanding of OUD treatment and recovery methods. The research committee intends to delve into the multifaceted aspects of the disorder and their implications for the overall well-being of individuals. He elaborated on the adoption of the Biopsychosocial (BPS) Framework as a foundational approach, recognizing its significance in comprehensively addressing addiction and chronic pain through a holistic lens that considers biological, psychological, behavioral, and social components. Emphasizing the necessity of teamwork in this endeavor, Chairman Sudler introduced Mr. James Oxford Sr. as the Team Coach for the OUD Taskforce Ad hoc Committee.

Mr. Oxford, a retired educator and athletic director with deep personal insights into the challenges posed by OUD—especially as a parent who has experienced this epidemic—shared his commitment to helping those in need. He highlighted the gaps in insurance coverage for recovery addiction and the lack of adequate support programs within the prison system. Mr. Oxford brought attention to initiatives like the "Fisherman of Men," spearheaded by Frank Parks, which aims to assist young individuals in their recovery journeys. He also spoke passionately about the Dover Elks program, which extends advocacy and resources into schools to support those facing OUD-related challenges. Following Mr. Oxford's valuable contributions, Chairman Sudler drew attention to the QR Code linked to EXHIBIT E: List of Opioid Remediation Uses, facilitating access to essential information. He then revisited the Biopsychosocial framework and presented six Proposed Recommendations aimed at the abatement of OUD in the capital. He stressed the importance for potential grant applicants align their services with the remediation uses outli[illegible] OUD g[illegible]. Moreover, C[illegible]irman Su[illegible] addressed the p[illegible] Traffic Safety Co[illegible]cerns rega[illegible]ding [illegible]dividuals [illegible] highw[illegible] m[illegible]dians, v[illegible]wing this as a vita[illegible] opportunity for the O[illegible]D Taskforc[illegible] to g[illegible] [illegible]h data [illegible]d im[illegible]ement[illegible] initiatives [illegible]at direct individua[illegible] in need to[illegible]ards [illegible]afe spa[illegible]s equip[illegible]e nec[illegible]sary resources for[illegible]eir specific challenge[illegible]

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Constituents Recommendations consisted of the following:

****Firm Foundation Recovery**: This organization emphasizes the 12 principles of recovery and takes purposeful steps to foster positive community change. For more information, visit [firmfoundationrecovery.org] (https://firmfoundationrecovery.org/).

****Carry Their Light Project**: No one outside Dover can effectively address the challenges faced there—the people of Dover must do it. This organization provides essential assistance at night, filling a service gap in both Capital and Kent County. More details can be found [here](https://www.facebook.com/share/1BvRrVbxVy/?mibextid=wwXIfr).

****Our Roots Foundation**: Their peer-to-peer approach, along with the efforts of small organizations on the ground, is critical for reducing stress and helping individuals be more receptive to recovery and treatment. Collaboration is vital, as we all share the same goals. Learn more at [ourrootsfoundation.com] (https://ourrootsfoundation.com/).

****Community Member (Matt)**: He advocates for a focus on long-term recovery—lasting five months or more—through supportive organizations like Fishermen of Men and Firm Foundation Recovery. He encourages exploring new strategies to guide individuals in the capital and calls

for increased funding to address substance use and mental health challenges throughout the state of Delaware.

Community Member (Justin**): He argues that Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is not a sustainable long-term recovery strategy, as individuals can become resistant to the treatment after prolonged use. He also suggests examining Carl Jung's research on the "Uresis of the Mind."

Community Member (Robert**, 30 years of recovery): He recommends focusing on a spiritual foundation and emphasizes the importance of relying on God. He states that the Firm Foundation Recovery program is highly effective in helping others.

Hope Ministry (Pastor**) – People need to see that you care for them to want to change. Helping people avoid incarceration and getting the help they need. We need to focus on the youth because the Drug War over territory needs to be addressed by focusing on the youth, not becoming another statistic in the usage of illicit drugs. We need to come together and educate each other throughout the state with a sentiment of community of compassion.

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After recommendations from the Constituents, Sudler recognized Senator Bryan Hudson, who focused on addressing the acute phase of addiction and on providing wraparound services. He further explained that Kent County does not have a recovery facility in lower Kent County, and that his objective is to change that. He believes that if you cannot control your OUD situation, then someone should do it for you. He invites conversation but not confrontation. Chair Sudler then recognized Mrs. Chelle Paul, who elaborated on the different needs of individuals battling addiction based on circumstances and age of individuals confronted with OUD determinants.

Chair Sudler responded to Mrs. Paul, stating that one of the six proposals addresses youth awareness and campaigns. Councilwoman Donyale Hall congratulated individuals for coming out and letting their voices be heard and confirmed the need for further outreach to youth and other community members for assistance. She believes wraparound services are very much needed, and she is happy to hear that there are programs that can be sustained through collaborative efforts for a long-term solution to individuals' recovery.

Councilman Anderson concurred with Councilwoman Hall and emphasized the importance of staying connected and advocating for positive change. He offered his contact information and noted that all council members' contact information is on the City of Dover's Website.

Firm Foundation Recovery (Representative**) - Asked for a group picture in the spirit of unity and transparency.

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MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON OUD TASKFORCE ACTION:

After the final remarks, Chairman Sudler recognized OUD Taskforce Member Toni Jordan, moved to accept the six Proposed Recommendations for the Abatement of OUD in the Capital of Delaware (Investment in Detox Treatment Center Infrastructure, 2. Enhancement of Behavioral Health, 3. Expansion of Telehealth Services, 4. Data and Research, 5. Mobile Intervention Units, and 6. Youth-Focused Campaigns, which was properly seconded by OUD Taskforce Member Mrs. Chelle Paul. The motion was adopted unanimously. The Chair then recognized Team Dover Coach Oxford, who ended the meeting by stating that he is both encouraged and surprised that individuals have organizations with boots on the ground. He further stated that we need to focus on funding individuals and organizations to continue their support in addressing the OUD challenges, as he is very impressed and encouraged.

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SYNOPSIS:

The conversation ultimately underscored the existing tension between traditional treatment models and the efficacy of peer-to-peer recovery programs. The need for substantial investment in practices that promote long-term recovery without the risk of medication dependence was a central theme, reflecting a community commitment to innovative approaches in addressing OUD. In addressing the challenges associated with opioid use disorder (OUD) in our community, it is essential that we approach solutions with both assertiveness and diplomacy. As discussed in the recent meeting, the involvement of peer-to-peer organizations and the insights shared by community leaders highlight the urgent need for compassionate support and resources, particularly focusing on our youth.

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- The meeting was opened (6:30 **p.m.**) and adjourned (9:[illegible]) with a Prayer.

Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman

Mayor's **Blue Ribbon** OUD Taskforce Committee

CITY OF DOVER
DELAWARE

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

November 17, 2025, at 7:06 P.M.

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The Mayor's **Blue Ribbon** Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee was held on **November 17, 2025, at 7:06** p.m. with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding. OUD Taskforce members present were the Honorable Eric L. Buckson, Mr. James Oxford Sr., Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Toni Jordan, Mrs. Chelle Paul, and Mr. Benard Pratt was absent.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

District 4 Councilman David Anderson.

No additions or deletions were proposed for the meeting.

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INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mrs. Chelle Paul.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. James Oxford Sr.

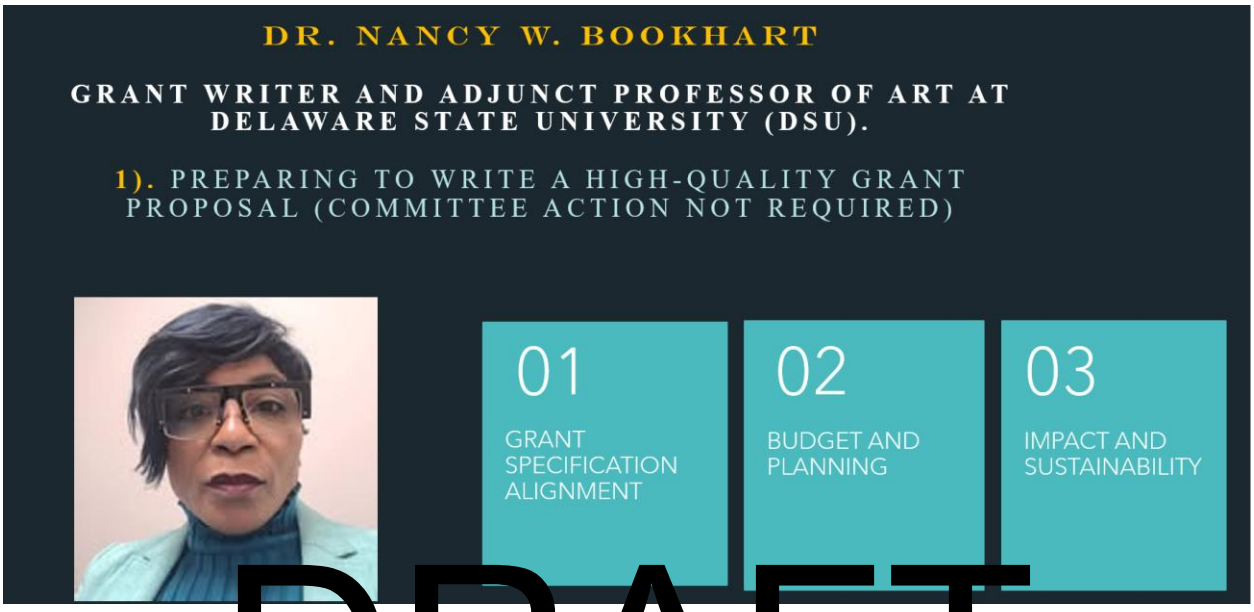
AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Chairman Sudler reviewed the agenda items and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. James Oxford Sr. moved to adopt the meeting agenda for November 17, 2025. The motion was properly seconded by Mrs. Paul. There was no discussion on the agenda item; hence, the motion was unanimously adopted.

PURPOSE:

Chairman Sudler discussed the purpose of the agenda items and recognized Dr. Nancy Bookhart to introduce herself and elaborate on item number one (**Preparing to Write a High-Quality Grant Proposal)** in which Committee Action was not required.

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Dr. Nancy W. Bookhart - Grant Writer and Adjunct Professor of Art at Delaware State University (DSU) who thanked Chairman Sutler for the opportunity to speak with the community regarding Grant Specification Alignment, Budget/Planning, and Impact and Sustainability Plan. She explained her role on the Grant Writing Team at Delaware State University and highlighted one of their significant accomplishments. She shared with the committee that DSU received a major grant called INTERNET FOR ALL, which aided the institution in rendering internet services to the students. She also mentioned that DSU competes for grants at three primary levels (State, Federal, and Private), and that each member performs a specific role when addressing the grant specifications. Dr. Bookhart then emphasized that when individuals first approach achieving the Grant Specification Alignments, they should not be intimidated by the process but focus on what the grant requires, be direct and to the point, and not exceed the number of pages required for the response. Exceeding the allotted number of pages can hurt your chance of being a grant awardee. Therefore, grant writers must be very detailed and concise, which is why many individuals fail to secure funding.

Additionally, she zoomed in on the point that often relies on ambiguity and on applicants not being explicit about the scope of their plan for addressing the order in which the grant's specifics are being solicited. Dr. Bookhart asserted that an applicant's Budget and Planning Approach should mimic the Grant's Executive Summary notion to determine what to budget for and how to have your plan synchronized with the aims of the executive summary. She stated that following the guidelines and knowing what to include and what to exclude in your plan affects your

planning and budgeting process. After much discussion concerning the aforesaid, Chairman Sudler recognized a community member (Cleve Wilson) who inquired about her contact information at DSU and how they can seek additional mentorship or advisement on getting started in the grant process. Dr. Bookhart responded by providing her contact information to the audience. She then emphasized how crucial it is to adhere to the professional font size (12) and page count in conjunction with the planning and budgeting process, as they are interlocked.

She stated that when it comes to justifying the budget for the grant's purpose, it should be like a grocery list. You should know precisely what you want and how much it costs before you go shopping. In other words, she advised potential grant writers to outline their plans and justify the funds requested to cover their operating expenses and activities in accordance with their proposals. As Dr. Bookhart concluded her presentation, she reviewed the Impact and Sustainability Plan Approach for grant writers to consider. She began by discussing the goals and implementation process of your plan, and how it will impact the community you aim to serve. The aforementioned are the fundamentals of writing a grant. Dr. Bookhart then concluded her proposal and yielded to Chairman Sudler, who then proceeded with the meeting. Chair Sudler thanked Dr. Bookhart for her presentation and asked the community if there were any questions.

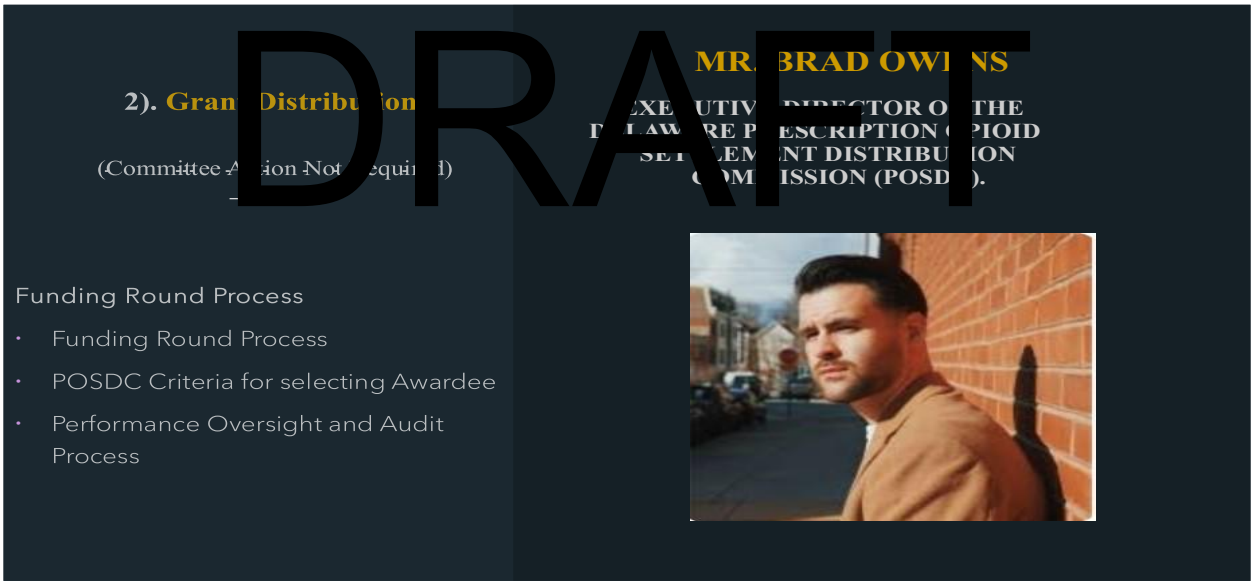
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Community Member (Cleveland Wilson) asked which sources list the diverse grants an individual may be eligible to apply for. Dr. Bookhart responded by saying that different websites provide an array of grants one could apply for, whether local or regional, such as Pivot, Grant Station, and Grant.Gov, which one may have to become a member of via monetary means (18 to 20 per week), which she believes is worth it. Another Community Member (Cynthia Taylor), who represented the organization called First Step Community Reform, asked if this grant is for 501 (c) (3) or open to other public or private entities. Chairman Sudler responded that her question could be better answered by the next presenter, **Mr. Brad Owens, Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission (POSDC).** Then Chair Sudler recognized another Community Member (Ronda Smack), who asked about how long an organization must be established before being eligible for a grant, based on the notion that an organization representing the LGBT community applied for a grant and was denied due to their period of establishment (5 years) not being long enough.

Dr. Bookhart stated that five years established is more than enough, and, according to her knowledge, eighteen months is typically long enough. Once the community questions were answered, Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III. (Committee Member) asked Dr. Bookhart what is available for individuals without financial resources to seek grants, where free resources are available, and how to connect with individuals who can help someone out. Chairman Sudler recognized

Councilman Anderson, who addressed the question by offering free resources to community members via his City of Dover Sources, which lists grants available through the National League of Cities. Then Mrs. Chelle Paul (Committee Member) further elaborated on the need for non-profit organizations to have the same access and source mentioned by Councilman Anderson. Dr. Bookhart responded to the question by stating that, whether for-profit or non-profit, she would be available to assist in any way possible. Then the Chair recognized Mr. Cleveland Wilson (Community Member), who asked Councilman Anderson for his contact information for another community member to take advantage of the resources mentioned earlier. Chairman Sudler moved on to item number two, titled "Grant Distribution." In this section, Mr. Brad Owens, Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission (POSDC), discussed the funding round process, the criteria POSDC uses to select awardees, and the oversight involved in the POSDC audit process.

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Mr. Owens expressed his gratitude to the OUD Taskforce for the opportunity to address the community. He explained that he was appointed as the Director of the Commission by Governor Matt Myers in March 2025. The commission was initially established under Governor John Carney's administration, with the Lt. Governor serving as Chair during its early years. Governor Myers later restructured the commission's aims and duties during his administration. Mr. Owens clarified that the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission (POSDC) was created under Senate Bill 166 in 2021.

Its purpose is to determine the best practices for the utilization of the OUD settlement funds, which Delaware is expected to receive and allocate over $200 million in the next twelve years because of litigation against opioid manufacturers and distributors due to the harm caused in communities. He explained that states, counties, and cities exercised their legal right to join the lawsuit to address the substantial financial burdens resulting from the over-prescription of opioids. Mr. Owens detailed how the funds would be managed and distributed through three funding cycles, with the State of Delaware designated as the governing body for the portions of the settlement awarded to municipalities that participated in the lawsuit.

He emphasized that in the case of Dover, Mayor Christiansen would be responsible for providing the City of Dover's recommendations to the POSDC through the OUD Taskforce. He also explained how the annual distribution of ten to fifteen million would be disbursed throughout the year. He reviewed the financial snapshot of the funds already disbursed to contracts and the contracts they are preparing for 2026 and mentioned that the perception of the state having 250 million dollars to spend from the settlement was inaccurate. He noted that in 2026, fifteen million dollars will be disbursed in the base amount, and fifty percent of that will go to local governments, with twelve million dollars disbursed to competitive grants. He further mentioned that back pay of two million dollars will be available for two years, one million for one year, and one million for the second year in the rear. Mr. Owens further elaborated that the capital of Delaware and other municipalities can propose whom they want to award the grants to, if the awards align with the OUD abatement remediation guidelines. Dover could hire staff and be accountable for tracking the money, or they could instruct the State committee to distribute the money directly to a specific committee, which would avoid the monthly accountability and reporting of the money, subject to IRS auditing.

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Mr. Owens stated that he would rather work directly with the organizations that the municipalities awarded funds to, as it would mitigate potential confusion. He also emphasized the importance of the Taskforce Committee strategizing how to disburse the settlement funds over the next 10 years and how your municipalities have already appropriated the funds to organizations to date. He recommended that the task force invest in other alternatives that have yet to be explored; additionally, he noted that he serves on another committee, DSAMH, under the Chairmanship **of Joanna Champney,** whose abbreviation represents the Division Director of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

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Champney serves as the Co-Chair of the Prescription Opioid Settlement Commission and established and led the Department's Office of Reentry after Governor Carney issued Executive Order 27, which aims to improve the state's service infrastructure for formerly incarcerated individuals. Mr. Owens highlighted the benefits of having committee members from both the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) and the Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Committee (POSDC) collaborating. This collaboration allows for better information sharing between committees, reduces redundant resources, and fosters more innovative strategies for awarding State Opioid Response (SOR) grants to competitive organizations. After a thorough discussion on the initiatives of both DSAMH and POSDC, Mr. Owens paused to invite further comment.

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Chair Sudler recognized Mr. James Oxford Sr. (OUD Committee Member), who inquired whether the City of Dover was managing its portion of the SOR grants or if it was instructing the state commission to allocate grant funds to specific organizations. Mr. Owens replied that the City of Dover is currently directing its portion of the settlement funds to specific organizations instead of receiving them directly. Committee Member Chelle Paul asked if there were an additional $500,000 in opioid funds being awarded to the County and how much of that would be distributed to the Capital. Mr. Owens stated that he was not aware of any additional funds. Mrs. Paul also inquired whether the baseline funds of fifteen million and the fifteen percent reference would be received in 2026. Mr. Owens confirmed that the capital of Delaware is expected to receive an estimate of over $300,000 in 2026, which represents 15% of the baseline funds available. He noted, however, that Kent County comprises various municipalities, and these municipalities could choose to contribute their portion to Kent County. This could potentially increase the County's share to around two million dollars in SOR (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration) grants. Mr. Owens further explained that additional funding is available from other committees, such as the DSAMH (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health) committee, which administers thousands of federal grants with different requirements for municipalities, non-profit organizations, and for-profit entities.

He also mentioned that organizations can collaborate to create a facility that integrates various healthcare delivery systems, provided that their strategy aligns with remediation guidelines. This approach could be an innovative way to secure SOR grants. Additionally, under the competitive grant process, municipalities could receive more funding and expand on the non-competitive grant money they are assured under the lawsuit, if they adhere to legal guidelines following extensive discussion. During the meeting, Chair Sudler acknowledged a community member, Mathew, who shared his journey through addiction and recovery, as well as his desire to establish a peer-support recovery organization to help individuals throughout New Castle and Kent counties in Delaware. Mr. Owens believes that the most effective way to help individuals off the streets is through prayer and peer support. He envisions a team effort to address the needs of both motorists and pedestrians in the medians. He mentioned that establishing a 501 (c) (3) foundation could assist him and allow him to secure sponsorship. However, he noted that the organization sponsoring him would be responsible for meeting IRS audit requirements and funding guidelines.

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Mr. Owens also emphasized the importance of funding and numerical data that drive the distribution of funds to counties and municipalities through both non-competitive and competitive grant options. Community member Mathew expressed gratitude to Mr. Owens for his insights and thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak about his vision and journey. Chair Sudler then introduced Frank Parks, the director of Fisherman of Men, who provided details about his program and shared a personal story highlighting its impact on participants' spiritual journeys. Mr. Parks, a Dover High School graduate with over 35 years of recovery, dedicated himself to helping individuals facing housing shortages and lacking life skills by providing essential resources and programs based on Christian principles. He inquired whether the grant process is open to Christian organizations and when it would be available. In response, Mr. Owens confirmed that several open SOR grants are accessible to all organizations, and the competitive grant application process is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2026. He added that local grant funding would be distributed before then, likely following the same annual cycle. Mr. Owens also described how the state receives distinct funding amounts from different distributors under the settlement stipulations, which help determine the total amount available each year for SOR grant distribution.

Mr. Parks then thanked the state committee for their work and offered his assistance in the state's capital. After Mr. Parks concluded his questions, Chair Sudler recognized Mr. James Oxford Sr., who asked whether it is the intent of the City of Dover (Mayor) to control funds for accountability each month, or if the grants will be written for specific allocations to organizations

in the State of Delaware? He believes that the City of Dover should award funding to organizations to help cover operational costs because they are already doing the work and are connected to the landscape of individuals in need, with boots already on the ground. Chair Sudler responded that it is the OUD Taskforce's charge to assess the best approach and organizations for recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, who will determine the course of action regarding who will monitor the SOR grants awarded via the Capital of Delaware. Chair Sudler stated that he is in favor of distributing the funds to organizations with boots on the ground, and then acknowledged Councilman David Anderson, who stated that it is an issue that will have to be discussed among the Council. Mr. James Oxford Sr. reiterated his position that the money should be awarded to the organizations already serving the community. Mr. Owens followed up on the point just made, stating that you can customize your strategy by examining key points in your application process to determine your final plan of action and service points.

Chair Sudler then recognized Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III (OUD-Committee Member), who strongly supported the boots-on-the-ground approach because he believes that faith without work is dead, and we need to move forward in helping individuals, including those on the medians, for positive, cohesive movement. Mrs. Shelle Paul (OUD-Committee Member) concurred with Mr. Bedford. He moved to have the OUD Taskforce contact peer-to-peer staff at organizations to help the taskforce usher individuals off the medians and to other locations in the Capital of Delaware for recovery/public health services. Toni Jordan properly seconded it. There was a call for discussion by Mr. James Oxford Sr., who asked, "Do we have a list of the organizations referred to in the motion, and what the process will be. Mrs. Paul responded that we do have a list of organizations with peer-to-peer staff to help the OUD-Task Force achieve this mission. Mr. James Oxford Sr. then asked, "Is Mrs. Paul willing to be the contact person for this initiative? Her response was Yes! Chair Sudler then stated that her response was aligned with her duties as the Ad-hoc Chair of the Workforce Development Committee. Then Chair Sudler recognized Mrs. Toni Jordan, who stated that we have two issues: she agrees with the committee's responsibility to make recommendations, and that funding should be disbursed to boots on the ground, in addition to aiding individuals in the median, in conjunction with outreach initiatives throughout the City of Dover. Councilman Anderson was recognized and stated that it must be on the record that this is an outreach and that everyone is allowed to participate, but this is not a prerequisite for receiving the SOR grants.

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Chair Sudler reinforced Councilman Anderson's sentiment and noted that we have reached out to Chief Johnson for assistance from the Behavioral Health Unit of the Dover Police Department. He emphasized that there are many ways to come together to help individuals in need, beyond

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waiting for opioid funds to be disbursed to organizations willing to assist. Chair Sudler echoed Mr. Bedford's sentiment and encouraged those who can provide financial or non-financial support for the proposed outreach initiative to step forward now rather than wait. He expressed his willingness to donate food and secure public health mobile units to assess needs and gather data for our research initiative on Biopsychosocial Approaches to addressing Chronic Pain and Trauma. He believes that acting now demonstrates our commitment to addressing the needs of the Capital of Delaware. After Chair Sudler's comments, the committee unanimously voted to adopt the motion. He then moved on to item number three, where the Community Engagement Ad-hoc Chair, Mr. Bedford, presented a visual and audio slideshow highlighting the critical shortage of recovery housing for women facing challenges such as trauma, substance abuse, addiction, or family crises, particularly those with minimal resources to begin their recovery journey. Following the discussion of all three agenda items and the sharing of valuable information with the committee, the meeting concluded on a high note, with everyone excited to contribute.

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SYNOPSIS:

The discussion emphasized the complexities of the grant-writing process required to secure State Opioid Response (SOR) funding. It is crucial to invest significantly in innovative strategies aimed at addressing opioid remediation and Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Participants recognized the challenges presented by strict financial audit requirements, which are essential for ensuring the responsible use of federal funds. Moreover, the conversation highlighted the importance of establishing concrete best practices for allocating opioid settlement funds. Insights from faith-based organizations and community stakeholders underscored an urgent need for compassionate support and resources. This support is vital for individuals struggling with OUD, particularly those who fall outside the median demographic in Delaware's capital. Prioritizing community feedback and evidence-based practices is essential to developing effective interventions and to efficiently allocating resources to meet the needs of affected populations.

The meeting was adjourned at **9:16 p.m.**

Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman of Mayor's

OUD Taskforce Committee

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MAYOR'S BLUE-RIBBON OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE

MEETING MINUTES

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The **Mayor's Blue Ribbon Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee** was held on **January 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding.

OUD Taskforce members present were Mr. Benard Pratt Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Chelle Paul, absent was Mr. James Oxford Sr., Mrs. Toni Jordan and Honorable Eric L. Buckson,

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

No additions or deletions were proposed for the meeting.

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INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mr. Benard Pratt

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler I.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. **Approval of October and November's 2025 Meeting Minutes.**
2. **Discussion Regarding Recommendation number 1 to the Mayor for Abatement of Opioid Use Disorder Settlement Funds in the Capital of Delaware.**

Proposed Recommendations for the Abatement of OUD in the Capital of Delaware:

1. **Investment in Detox Treatment Center Infrastructure:** Develop a state-of-the-art Detox Treatment Center that incorporates comprehensive wrap-around services. This facility should be staffed with specialized addiction therapists and social workers and utilize evidence-based therapeutic programs to address opioid use disorder (OUD) effectively.

Mr. Chris Devane - Detox Consultant

3. **Discussion Regarding Recommendation number 6 to the Mayor for Abatement of Opioid Use Disorder Settlement Funds in the Capital of Delaware.**

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Chairman Sudler reviewed the agenda items and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

Mr. Bernard Pratt moved to adopt the meeting agenda for **January 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** The motion was properly seconded by Mrs. Chelle Paul there was no discussion on the agenda item; hence, the motion was unanimously adopted.

CHAIRMAN SUDLER'S ANALYSIS:

Here is the matrix breakdown of the meeting text, categorized by objectives, care levels, challenges, solutions, and community action items.

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Core Strategic Matrix

Category	Key Details & Focus Areas
Meeting Objectives	• Align Kent County detox infrastructure with National Exhibit E OUD guidelines. • Evaluate local service gaps and identify funding sources for remediation. • Foster cross-agency collaboration to mitigate the OUD crisis.
Care Levels & Gaps	• **High-Level Needed**: Hospital Level (4.0) and Medically Monitored (3.7) facilities are critically missing in Kent County. • **Continuum Advocacy**: Strong push to establish High-Intensity Inpatient (3.5) and Low-Intensity (3.1) facilities. • **Lower-Level Present**: Outpatient and prevention tiers (1.0 to 2.5) exist but lack integrated clinical treatment.
District & Youth Challenges	• **Education**: Urgent need for proactive drug awareness initiatives (e.g., DARE) in schools. • **Vulnerable Groups**: Severe service gaps for youth needing detox, and foster youth facing homelessness after aging out. • **Engagement**: Outdated youth engagement methods fail to address current modern realities.

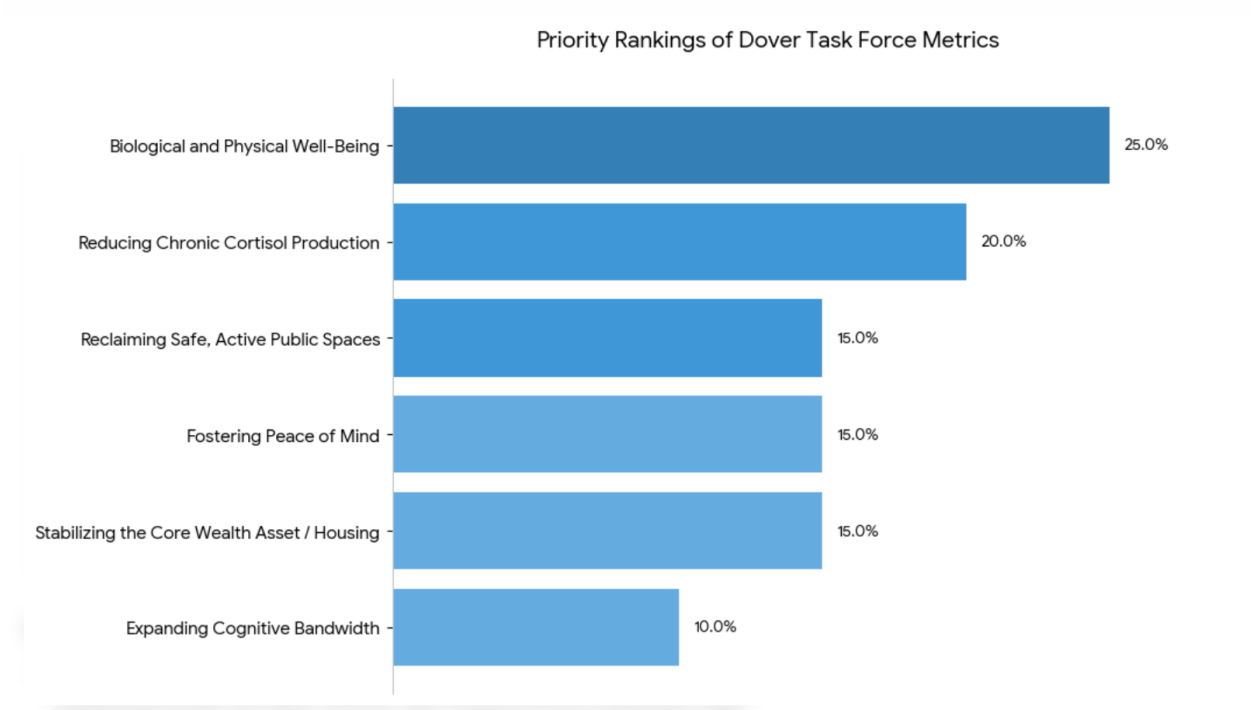
Financial & Operational Hurdles	• **Infrastructure Costs**: High capital considerations required to physically build and fill the care gaps. • **Insurance Red Tape**: Restrictive coverage limits the duration of detox (5–7 days) and inpatient care (28 days). • **Sustainability**: Lack of long-term funding for wraparound services and individuals without active insurance.
Proposed Solutions	• **Braided Funding**: Combine National OUD settlement funds with various state agency resources. • **Support Services**: Utilize stable housing initiatives to sustain crucial wraparound recovery services. • **Modern Outreach**: Leverage social media platforms to effectively connect with students regarding drug dangers.
Community & Next Steps	• **Framework Advancement**: Local calls to action to support the conceptual design of the Dover Detox Center. • **Voluntary Engagement**: Maximize existing halfway houses, noting success relies heavily on individual willingness. • **Active Partnerships**: Collaboration between the City of Dover, Capital School District, and Delaware State University programs.

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Dover Task Force Resource Priority Breakdown

- **Biological and Physical Well-Being (25.0%)**: Focuses on core medical care levels, establishing missing local detox facilities, and correcting clinical infrastructure gaps.
- **Reducing Chronic Cortisol Production (20.0%)**: Targets trauma mitigation, preventative care, and baseline stress reduction among affected individuals.
- **Stabilizing the Core Wealth Asset / Housing (15.0%)**: Secures stable housing as a framework to anchor community recovery and wraparound services.
- **Fostering Peace of Mind (15.0%)**: Establishes multi-agency state funding stabilization and dedicated care for vulnerable family units.

- **Reclaiming Safe, Active Public Spaces (15.0%)**: Deploys youth prevention initiatives, juvenile delinquency reduction strategies, and school system partnerships.
- **Expanding Cognitive Bandwidth (10.0%)**: Creates modern youth engagement channels, social media safety awareness, and active peer mentorship networks.



Here are three social media outreach templates designed for the **Expanding Cognitive Bandwidth (10.0%)** and **Reclaiming Safe, Active Public Spaces (15.0%)** metrics. They are optimized for different platforms to engage local youth, parents, and community stakeholders in Dover.

Template 1: Instagram / TikTok (Focus: Youth Engagement)

- **Visual Idea**: A short, high-energy video featuring student leaders from Delaware State University or local high schools sharing a quick "Did you know?" text overlay.
- **Caption Copy**:
  Your mind is your most valuable asset—don't let illicit drugs take away your focus or your future. Whether you are balancing school, sports, or planning your next big move, your mental bandwidth matters. Real strength is knowing when to protect your peace and where to find support. Tap the link in our bio to check

out active youth summer initiatives, peer mentorship programs, and safe spaces happening right here in Dover. Let's build together. #DoverYouth #MindsetMatters #DSU #CapitalSchoolDistrict #ProtectYourBandwidth #YouthRise

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Template 2: Facebook / Community Group (Focus: Parents & Foster Advocates)

- **Visual Idea**: A clean, supportive infographic highlighting local resources, contact lines, and upcoming school district workshops.
- **Caption Copy**:
  Building a safer Dover starts with empowering our youth before challenges arise. 🤝 We are working closely with the Capital School District and local community advocates to expand youth prevention initiatives, juvenile delinquency reduction strategies, and targeted support for youth aging out of foster care. Every young person deserves a safe, active space to grow, learn, and thrive. Want to get involved or know a student who could benefit from peer mentorship? Join our upcoming community workshop this Thursday at 6:00 PM at the Dover Public Library to learn about new youth programs and tools to discuss drug awareness safely at home Read the full youth outreach strategy here: [Insert Link]#DoverCommunity #CapitalSD #YouthPrevention #FosterSupport #DoverDE #ActiveSpaces

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Template 3: X (Formerly Twitter) (Focus: Quick Awareness & Resource Link)

- **Visual Idea**: A bold graphic pairing a strong quote from the Superintendent with a direct link to the modern digital outreach toolkit.
- **Post Copy**:
  Real connection starts where our youth are. 📱 Capital School District is teaming up with the City of Dover to use social media platforms for positive drug awareness and youth delinquency prevention. Let's claim safe spaces together. Check out the new toolkit: [Insert Link] Dover DE #YouthOutreach #PreventionFirst

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MEETING DIALOGUE:

Chairman Sudler commenced the meeting by articulating the objectives of the Detox infrastructure in alignment with the Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) guidelines and remediation practices as referenced in Exhibit E of the national standards. Upon conclusion of the standards review, he acknowledged Mr. Chris Devane, a Detox Center Specialist from Delaware. Mr. Devane delineated the distinctions in care levels authorized by hospitals and other healthcare systems for consumers seeking treatment. He highlighted the absence of higher-level care options, specifically medically monitored facilities (3.7) in Kent County, contrasted with lower-level medical services that don't provide clinical treatment. Patients need a medically safe environment during intake to determine appropriate treatment plans tailored to their individual circumstances.

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The care levels discussed included:

(4.0) Medically Managed - Hospital Level Care

(3.7) Medically Monitored Facility

(3.5) Medically Monitored - High Intensity (In-patient treatment) that includes biopsychosocial assessments with clinically monitored treatment, typically covered by insurance for detoxification for 5 to 7 days, or 28 days for inpatient care.

(3.1) Low-Intensity Treatment, such as outpatient services which require 26 to 30 hours per week.

(2.5) Partial Hospitalization

(2.1) Intensive Outpatient

(1.5) Prevention Services

(1.0) Outpatient Services.

Mr. Devane emphasized the necessity for a comprehensive continuum of care within Kent County, particularly advocating for the establishment of facilities at the 3.5 and 3.1 levels to better address patients' trauma. Chairman Sudler inquired about care level references, suggesting resources from the American Society of Addiction Medicine. He then introduced Dr. Chandra Jackson, President of the Capital School District, and Dr. Victor T. Cahoon, Superintendent, who shared insights into challenges faced by the district, particularly the need for DARE programs or similar initiatives to enhance students' awareness of illicit drug use and its impact on overall well-being. Committee member Joseph Bedford III raised questions about engaging youth in awareness initiatives and the unique challenges they face today compared to traditional methods.

He expressed concern regarding service gaps for youth needing detox facilities and care levels. Mr. Devane acknowledged the existence of such gaps but noted that his expertise did not extend to a comprehensive analysis of them. Mrs. Chelle Paul questioned the complexities surrounding enforced treatment and the provision of wraparound services, particularly under restrictive insurance coverage. She raised concerns about the sustainability of detox treatment for individuals lacking ongoing coverage and its implications on their recovery journey.

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Mr. Devane suggested that housing could serve as a sustainable solution to support wraparound services. At the same time, Mr. Doug Ferris, recognized by Chairman Sudler, elaborated on the infrastructure cost considerations necessary to fill the service gaps. Mrs. Paul asserted that adequate funding is crucial for the provision of comprehensive services. Dr. Travis Misoe Sudler, Chair of the Dover Human Relations Commission, expressed concern regarding foster youth dealing with homelessness and mental health issues upon aging out of the foster care system. He emphasized the need to address the OUD challenges faced by both family units and individuals.

Dr. Sudler thanked Mr. Devane and Mr. Ferris for their efforts towards establishing a Detox Center in Kent County. Committee member Joseph Bedford III continued to advocate for youth intervention from both proactive and retrospective perspectives. Mrs. Chelle Paul further discussed funding challenges stemming from City Council's budgetary constraints regarding OUD crisis interventions in Delaware's capital. Chairman Sudler clarified that funding for these initiatives would not only originate from the OUD settlement but also from various state agencies addressing substance abuse. Mr. Devane concluded his presentation by underscoring the need for enhanced community support for healthcare delivery services to mitigate the social impacts of the OUD crisis.

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Mrs. Belinda Main requested further information on how the community could advance the initiative to support the conceptual framework for a Detox Center in Delaware's capital. Mrs. Bonnie Pennington highlighted the existence of halfway houses in Kent County, noting that success relies on the individual's willingness to engage in the process. Chairman Sudler then recognized Chelle Paul who thanked Mr. Devane for his presentation and other agencies that are working with the youth primarily those who are aging out of the foster care.

Chairman Sudler recognized the crucial contributions of Mr. Bobby Wilson, who strongly advocated for programs like the youth summer initiative and the Upward Bound program through Delaware State University. These programs are vital in helping young people become productive citizens. Mr. Wilson also called on the Capital School District to seek out additional strategies to prevent juvenile delinquency. In reply, Dr. Victoir T. Cahoon, the Superintendent, acknowledged the significant impact of these programs and highlighted the potential of social media as an essential tool for connecting with students. He supported the idea of utilizing these platforms to raise awareness about the dangers of illicit drugs and expressed his commitment to collaborating with the City of Dover on this initiative. The meeting concluded with express gratitude and a commitment to continued discussions and community engagement efforts.

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SYNOPSIS:

Chairman Sudler convened a meeting to align Detox infrastructure with OUD remediation standards, with Specialist Chris Devane highlighting a critical shortage of high-level, medically monitored (3.7) treatment facilities in Kent County. Devane outlined the spectrum of care, advocating for the establishment of 3.5 and 3.1 level facilities to address patient trauma, while referencing guidelines from the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Following a discussion on these treatment gaps, school district officials discussed the need for prevention initiatives to address local challenges.

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The meeting was adjourned at **7:13 p.m.**

Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman of Mayor's

OUD Taskforce Committee

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MAYOR'S BLUE-RIBBON OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE

MEETING MINUTES

February 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The **Mayor's Blue Ribbon Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee** was held on **February 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding. OUD Taskforce members present were Mr. Benard Pratt Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Chelle Paul, and Mrs. Toni Jordan Honorable Eric L. Buckson, Mr. James Oxford Sr., was absent.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

District 2 Councilman Brian Lewis.

No additions or deletions were proposed for the meeting.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mrs. Chelle Paul,

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Sudler.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion regarding Recommendation number **6 titled Youth-Focused Campaigns** forwarded to the Mayor for Approval; subsequently, confirmed by the Prescription Opioid Settlement (**POSDC**) for implementation.
   Research Topic- TikTok, Theatre, and Youth Art as Related to Breaking the Silence of Opioid Use Disorder's Impact on the Capital of Delaware. The Ten Strategic Points represent the foundational elements of the study.
2. **Chair's Recommendation:** To approve recommendation number **6** [**Youth-Focused Research/Campaign**] for Approval by the Mayor and forwarded to the Prescription Opioid Settlement Commission (**POSDC**) for being awarded General Grants: Over $30,000

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AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Chairman Sudler reviewed the agenda items and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mrs. Paul moved to adopt the meeting agenda for **February 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** The motion was properly seconded by Mr. Pratt. There was no discussion on the agenda item; hence, the motion was unanimously adopted.

CHAIRMAN SUDLER'S ANALYSIS:

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The Dover Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce recommendations directly aligned with the Exhibit E list of permitted opioid remediation uses by focusing on youth-focused prevention, comprehensive treatment access, and community-based support services. Specifically, proposed actions such as creative youth media campaigns, expansion of detox facilities, and hiring behavioral health professionals' maps to approved strategies under Section G (Prevention) and Section E (Treatment) of the settlement guidelines.

This breakdown establishes explicit metric tracking to ensure statutory alignment with the allowable remediation categories outlined by the Delaware Opioid Settlement Commission.

1. Prevention: Youth Campaigns & School Support

- **Taskforce Finding:** ~75% of students successfully use existing care. Early drug exposure begins in Pre-K/Kindergarten, accelerated by peer pressure.

Exhibit E Approved Strategy: *Section B.2 / Section G:* Education for school-based and youth-focused programs that discourage misuse; youth-focused creative media and preventative campaigns.

Taskforce Metric	Proposed Deliverable Tracker	Exhibit E Compliance KPI
Youth Reached via Art	Number of youths participating in "Write for Me" & "Expression in the Rain" theater/rap pilots.	Percentage increase in early-intervention program enrollment among high-risk cohorts.
Digital Preventative Engagement	Analytics of local youth-led TikTok and creative social media anti-misuse campaigns.	Total impressions, completed views, and click-through rates to local helpline resources.
School Care Expansion	Baseline of 75% student care utilization expanded to include early screening tools.	Implementation rate of early-childhood risk screenings in Pre-K and Elementary levels.

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2. Treatment: Expansion of Medical Facilities & Services

- **Taskforce Finding:** Severe deficiency in local detox options, inpatient treatment beds, and medication integration.
- **Exhibit E Approved Strategy:** *Section B.4 / Section E:* Provide and expand treatment and recovery support services including residential, inpatient, medical detox, and outpatient counseling.

Taskforce Metric	Proposed Deliverable Tracker	Exhibit E Compliance KPI
Detox/Treatment Bed Capacity	Local municipal beds funded or subsidized to handle acute, complex adolescent withdrawal.	Net reduction in average wait times for regional medical detox placement.
Clinical Staffing Levels	Number of behavioral health workers, counselors, and specialists successfully recruited.	Patient-to-clinician ratio improvements at regional centers like Concerted Care Group Dover.

3. Recovery Support & Mobile Wraparound Services

- **Taskforce Finding:** Dover youth face substantial trauma from broken homes; there is an urgent need for mobile intervention units.

Exhibit E Approved Strategy: *Section C.3 / Section F:* Comprehensive wraparound and recovery support services including mobile response teams, housing assistance, and trauma-informed care.

Taskforce Metric	Proposed Deliverable Tracker	Exhibit E Compliance KPI
Mobile Crisis Deployment	Field deployment frequency of new behavioral health mobile intervention units.	Average response time to youth-overdose alerts or acute localized family crises.
Holistic Case Management	Number of youths connected to continuous mentorship, housing security, and trauma therapy.	6-month and 12-month treatment retention and recovery stability rates.
Marginalized Outreach	Service distribution metrics targeting homeless populations and Kent County communities of color.	Demographic equity analysis matching service utilization to local overdose epidemiology.

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These structures align local Dover data with state auditing categories.

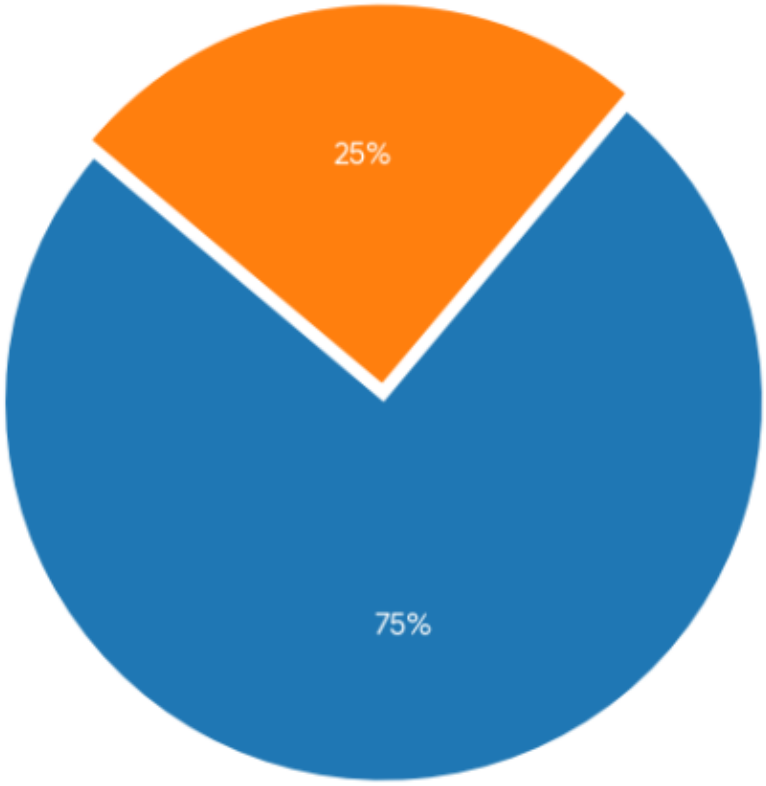
1. Institutional Care Baseline Metric

The taskforce data indicates that **75% of the student cohort** is currently served successfully by institutional care. Remediation efforts target the remaining 25% gap, addressing severe trauma and substance exposure manifesting early in the student timeline (Pre-K to Kindergarten).

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Dover Student Population Counseling Baseline

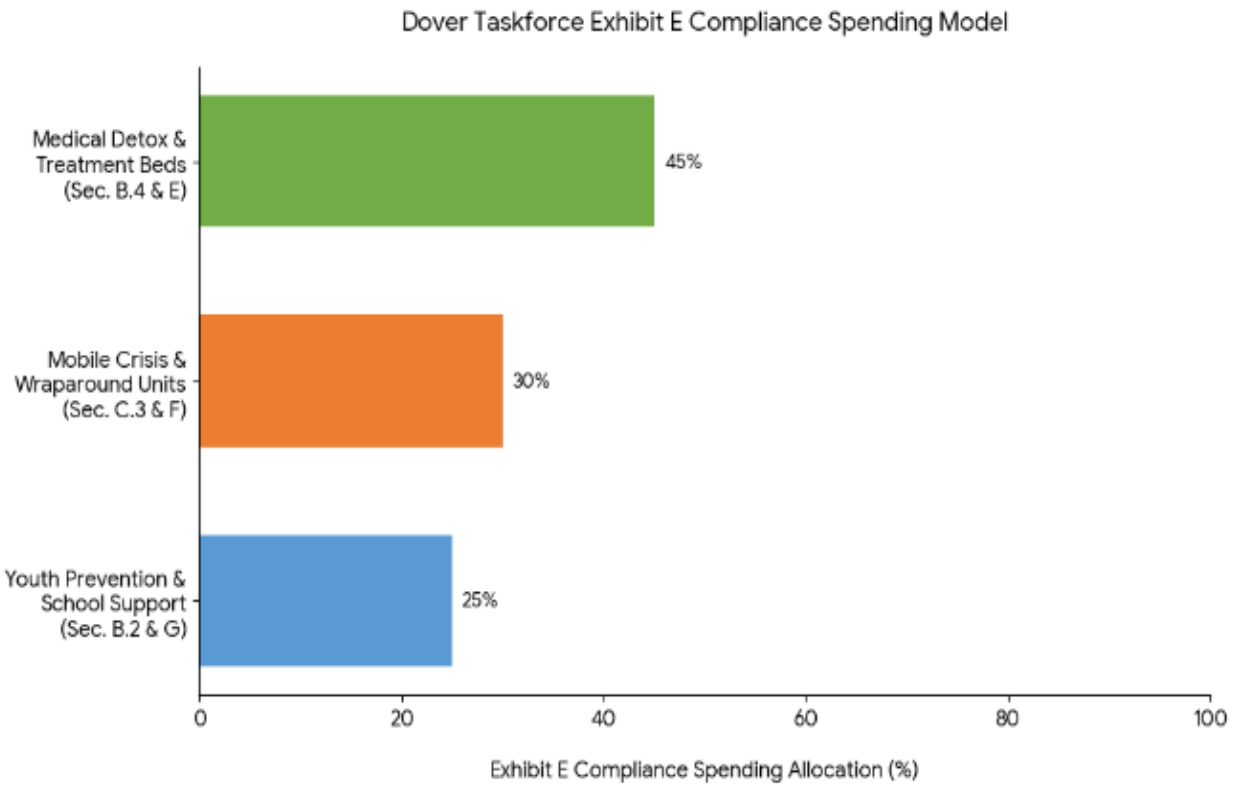
Unserved Expansion Target



Utilizing Care (Mental, Academic, Life Skills)

2. Exhibit E Compliance Allocation Model

To secure funding from the state's Prescription Opioid Settlement, municipal allocations must map onto the formal remediation tracks outlined in the national guidelines. The graph below presents a tactical funding blueprint derived from the Taskforce's six key recommendations:



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3. Data Matrix & KPI Performance Tracking Table

Use this core matrix within your state applications to prove operational viability and precise performance oversight.

Strategic Focus Track	Local Project Examples	Direct Performance Metrics (KPIs)	Exhibit E Statutory Flag
Track 1: Youth Prevention & School Support	"Write for Me" pilot" Expression in the Rain" program TikTok anti-misuse media	Total count of youth enrolled in creative art therapy Gross social media impressions within local zip codes% of early-intervention screenings deployed in Pre-K/K	**Sections B.2 & G** *(Primary & Secondary Youth Prevention)*
Track 2: Medical Detox & Facility Infrastructure	Clinical capacity scaling Adolescent care beds regional provider networks	Net change in active municipal detox/treatment beds Average client placement wait times (target reduction) Total unique patients admitted for OUD clinical care	**Sections B.4 & E** *(Expanding Inpatient & Outpatient Treatment)*
Track 3: Mobile Crisis & Wraparound Units	Mobile intervention teams Trauma case management Homeless/minority outreach	Total monthly field deployments of response vehicles Average emergency response runtime to youth Crises Demographic equity ratio (unhoused/minority care access)	**Sections C.3 & F** *(Recovery Support Services & Crisis Teams)*

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Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler I. is the Chairman of the Dover Human Relations Commission and Delaware State University's Liaison to the Office of the Child Advocate (**OCA**), which is a non-judicial state agency charged with safeguarding the welfare of Delaware's children.

Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler I. facilitated a comprehensive discussion regarding the Office of the Child Advocate's (OCA) strategic management of funds allocated for addressing Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) with the aim of safeguarding children adversely affected by this issue. As Delaware State University's Liaison to the OCA, Dr. Sudler operates within a non-judicial state agency dedicated to the protection and advocacy of the welfare of children throughout Delaware. During the discussion, Dr. Sudler reported that 75% of the student population is demonstrating favorable outcomes, with 100% of these individuals availing themselves of the institution's multifaceted counseling services. These encompass not only mental health support and academic guidance but also essential life skills training, ensuring a holistic approach to student well-being and development.

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Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. asked if there were any committee member that would like to ask a question? Are there any questions that you seem to be able to ask in regard to how, in the Office of the Child Advocate (**OCA**) domain, we can help service OUD or advocate for some additional services? Committee Member Joseph Bedford III responded Yeah, just seeing, you know, what Dr. Travis Sudler was talking about, as far as, you know, kids aging out of foster care. I mean, I see it younger, so if I look at it from a different angle, other than, you know, 18-year-olds, I'm looking at, you know, kids that are in pre-K and kids are already on medication. So, they're dealing with family members that may be an active addiction, brothers or sisters. So, I mean, overall, it's bigger than just aging out of foster care.

As far as children, it starts in pre-K and kindergarten, to be honest with you, because we have younger generations that are seeing opioid abuse. They're seeing any type of, you know, drug abuse from the use at an early age, it's affecting these kids at an early age. So, as far as the aging out, I get it, you know, transitional and all that, the campaign, I'm looking forward to that, because we have to start now, as soon as possible, because we've got kids, you know, pretty much scared the kids out of it. I mean, we need a lot more support in classroom, what the heck goes with DOE. But, as far as what we're trying to do here, and what Dr. Sudler offered, yes, but we have to, it's bigger than just the aging out. To be honest with you, it starts bigger than that. I mean, like the gentleman, like Cameron and KP, they were talking about it, you know, you have drug factors, you mean gang factors.

So, it's not just the opioid, I mean, there's a whole bunch that's into it, especially when you're in the classroom seeing it. You know, I mean, from middle school to, you know, pre-K, kindergarten, what I've been seeing over the last three years. Yeah, this is when we work, but we

have got a lot of stuff to do here. I mean, it's bigger than that. You know, we need people, you know, filling up these rooms and people in the classrooms. You may not understand just people out there doing things on the political level or the administrative level, but it's much more than that. I mean, I really don't see improvement. It's going to take time, and, but it's just going to be, it's bigger than, it's bigger than just that transition. Chairman Sudler Thanked Committee Member Bedford for his comments and then stated to Committee Member Bernard Pratt, I know you have spoken at the last meeting in regard to also being an advocate for being proactive, starting with the youth campaign based on the information that we've received from our, Mr. Devane our detox specialist that was here from the last meeting.

Did you want to elaborate on that, having some more time to think about that since the last meeting? Did you say anything you'd like to contribute to that or add to that since then? Committee Member Bernard Pratt stated, I yield to him at the present time on just being a sponge and really absorbing a lot of things that Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler I, focused on upon. However, he did make a few comments based on a couple of comments on the topic. He elaborated on the point that he was really caught off guard, like learning some new things that he just is speaking upon. And his main thing is, I don't know if it really matters because you want to help the young, period. But gender wise, my question would be, do you see it more in your men or more in your young women as these things come from?

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So, with the, with the sample size that I'm talking about, we have more females than males. We have more females than males. Because, and the reason why I ask that is because, what's the reasons for putting them there? So, helping them wise, you're helping them with, you know, the usage and things like that. But then it comes to the fact of more of a different kind of counseling may be needed as well. So that's why I'm absorbing it to your day. Because it's more, it's going to be added to this. It just comes to the part of suffering and addiction. It's more to it and to it. So that's what I'm trying to understand. Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler engaged with the insights shared during our last meeting, where Mr. Devane raised important points about the detox facility and Mr. Paul highlighted the treatment facility.

It is essential to recognize that, while comprehensive services may be challenging to provide, simultaneous support for both detox and treatment is crucial. Currently, our resources don't extend much beyond basic material, but we do have systems in place to support individuals in recovery and prevent relapses. The treatment facility mentioned has the potential to offer sufficient services to address the needs of our community across all demographics. This includes the critical aspects discussed, particularly regarding child advocacy and the foster care system, where proactive measures are especially needed. Chairman Sudler expressed gratitude to

Committee Member Bernard Pratt for his question and acknowledged Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler's contributions. He also recognized a community member, Mr. Cam Norwood. "My name is Cam Norwood," he began. "I previously served as the interim director of NextGen 302 and am currently the founder and executive director of Power Roots Foundation.

Our focus is on violence intervention and prevention within neighborhoods that are often affected by trauma and loss. Having grown up in these communities, I have a deep understanding of the challenges faced by the children and families here. When I decided to pursue a positive path, I became an advocate for these kids, who recognized me from my past. This established a sense of trust, and I've been able to connect with them meaningfully. Many are dealing with issues arising from opiate use disorder within their families, leading to hardships such as food insecurity and the struggles that come with substance abuse. Chairman Sudler then asked how young people express what they're experiencing, aside from verbal communication. He inquired whether they felt comfortable discussing their feelings with counselors or relatives, and whether creative outlets, such as art or social media platforms like TikTok, might be effective ways for them to express themselves.

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He suggested that perhaps facilitating their stories through TikTok or even a live theater performance could provide a positive outlet for healing and connection. Mr. Norwood responded thoughtfully, noting that the OUD Taskforce would need to identify which young individuals might benefit from these creative approaches, as not all youth openly share their struggles immediately. Many feel compelled to speak once they establish a safe space and a trusting relationship with those in care. He acknowledged that while platforms like TikTok are already in use, facilitating structured creative projects could encourage youth to express themselves. This would provide them with both a sense of purpose and a platform for sharing their experiences, bolstered by a supportive environment. Chairman Sudler expressed a strong interest in hearing from the community about the advantages and disadvantages of this research opportunity.

He emphasized the importance of providing a platform for youth to express themselves and pursue healing, particularly through art, with the support of larger institutions like museums. Committee Member Chelle Paul contributed to the discussion by highlighting the need for a deeper understanding of marginalized youth. She mentioned the challenges faced by young individuals, including those involved in gang activities or born into addiction. Paul underscored the significance of enabling these youth to express themselves through various forms of art, including tagging and graffiti, which are valid artistic expressions. She noted the importance of guiding youth to channel their creativity constructively, while recognizing that many aspire to

careers in music, particularly rap. Paul acknowledged that while some youth struggle academically, they often find their voice and express their emotions artistically.

Mr. Norwood added to the dialogue by recognizing the importance of ensuring participants can interact positively within the group. He mentioned platforms like TikTok, which offer unique opportunities for young people to express their experiences, potentially through rap, as a means of coping with their struggles. Chairman Sudler reiterated the vital role of creative expression in addressing issues such as opioid addiction and its impact on families and individuals. He encouraged further conversation about the proposed TikTok theater and youth art initiative as a way to break the silence surrounding these significant topics. Community member George Johnson shared his experience of supporting a local teacher who created a studio for children, where they engaged in dance and TikTok videos. He noted the importance of providing positive outlets for youth, although he acknowledged the challenges faced in maintaining the program due to financial constraints and the studio's location. Johnson emphasized the power of TikTok in shaping young minds, cautioning that it can present both positive and misleading information.

He advocated for structured guidance to help children navigate these influences as they develop. We need to take decisive action if we choose not to pursue this approach. It's essential that we carefully consider how to structure our initiatives to ensure they yield positive outcomes. Many young people are eager for this type of engagement; I've spoken with countless kids who express a genuine passion for it. Addressing the broader community challenges—such as the opioid crisis—is crucial. We can create a positive framework that prevents negative influences from affecting our youth. By focusing on this objective, we can pave the way for success. Children shouldn't have to navigate positive and negative currents on their own. They need support and a pathway that allows them to thrive. Many kids face identity and abandonment issues, often stemming from broken homes.

Platforms like TikTok give them a sense of belonging by providing validation through views and comments, a lifeline for those feeling isolated. Approaching these kids can be challenging; they may not open up to just anyone, but I have a unique perspective that resonates with them because they understand my background and experiences. Building trust is critical. If we can extend a helping hand and convey the message that we are in this together, we can break down barriers. In my work with the "My Brother's Keeper" program, we had a significant impact. Being able to connect with and share experiences opens doors for many individuals. They often tap into their raw emotions, what we call "Jelly Belly "allowing for authentic interactions that can channel their pain into something positive. We must determine whether we are addressing issues from a negative or positive perspective and focus on the core problems.

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I genuinely appreciate the support from my colleagues. Establishing a dedicated space for these discussions—like a community center—would lead to substantial success. We should invite young people to explore their creative outlets, whether it's dance, poetry, or other artistic expressions. Collaboration is key; when we invest in each other, we all benefit. Regarding community engagement in this TikTok initiative for youth outreach, I am fully on board. I understand the importance of this initiative. Recently, I presented to the state legislative body about critical issues such as technical violations. For instance, I completed three years of probation without incident, yet a single missed curfew risked sending me back to jail. This type of punitive response stifles individuals genuinely trying to rebuild their lives. Change is challenging, and asking someone to shift their established routine to pursue a new path can be incredibly difficult. When a minor misstep jeopardizes a hard-earned second chance, people disengage entirely.

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We must strive to create an environment that supports growth and recovery, rather than perpetuating cycles of failure. The current disconnection between youth and their support systems is evident. Many young individuals lack effective communication skills needed to articulate their struggles and needs. Although some probation officers (POs) show understanding and empathy towards these youths, others do not, exacerbating their feelings of isolation. These individuals are navigating the complexities of reintegration into society after facing punitive measures, such as Level Five confinement, which serves as a form of punishment rather than rehabilitation. Upon re-entering society, these individuals must recognize that probation officers primarily serve as supervisors to ensure compliance with the law—not just penalties for technical violations. It is essential to create an environment that allows for error and growth. Probation officers should collaborate with these young individuals to develop tailored portfolios that identify specific issues, such as curfew violations or difficulties with reporting.

This could take the form of an Advancement of Achievement Program that documents progress and certifies improvements. Providing tangible recognition of achievements could foster a sense of hope and agency, motivating youths to engage more positively with their circumstances. When asked about the persistent participation in illegal gang activities among youth in the capital of Delaware, Mr. Johnson noted that many youths are in search of guidance and a sense of belonging. In contrast to past times when violence was less prevalent and typically limited to fistfights, many of today’s youths lack supportive familial structures. Absent communication from parents and a strong father figure leaves these youth vulnerable to negative influences, prompting them to seek acceptance and camaraderie from peers who may lead them into criminal

activities. In response to questions regarding the link between opioid abuse, trauma, and chronic pain, Mr. Johnson affirmed that peer pressure plays a significant role.

Young individuals often succumb to substance use when they are surrounded by peers who engage in such behaviors, especially during formative developmental stages. It is crucial to understand that acceptance and normalization of drug use among their peers can trigger a downward spiral into addiction. Addressing these issues requires diligent effort. The community must remain steadfast in its commitment—giving in to fatigue or frustration is not an option. A dedicated team, equipped with resources, can facilitate meaningful change. Mr. Johnson emphasized the importance of engaging authentically with youth by establishing trust through one-on-one interactions. His approach, characterized by candor and relatability, helps foster discussions about the realities of their lives. The discussion emphasized the importance of understanding the varying experiences and backgrounds individuals have when addressing issues related to youth and substance use. Those who work with children often have personal stories that shape their perspectives, making their insights valuable.

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The concept of giving back to the community was highlighted, as many individuals in these roles have themselves faced challenges and recognize the need to support the younger generation. A critical point made was the significance of experiential learning. Youth are more likely to resonate with individuals who have faced similar struggles, as they find authenticity in shared experiences. Specifically, when discussing substances like opioids, it's essential to clarify that the conversation extends beyond traditional views. Substances often labeled as "party drugs," like Biggs, alter emotions and serve as a temporary escape from reality. They can enhance feelings of enjoyment or numb distress, making them appeal to young people. Mr. Johnson explained that substances like Biggs can act as an emotional regulator, stimulating feelings of happiness during social activities or intensifying negative emotions when someone is already upset. This dual nature can lead to a cycle of dependency, especially among youth who may be grappling with issues such as depression or loneliness.

When individuals are introduced to these substances, they may be tempted to engage in use as a means of coping, unaware of the potential long-term consequences. Moreover, the conversation touched on the similarities between opioid use and other forms of escapism, such as alcohol or even certain sexual behaviors, where the primary motivation is to escape pain and achieve a sense of superiority or relief from distress. This pattern of behavior can lead to codependency, making it difficult for individuals to seek healthier alternatives when they become reliant on these substances for comfort. Understanding these dynamics is vital in addressing the broader issue of substance use among youth and creating effective intervention strategies. We absolutely

must advocate for change in our community. We mustn't just sit back but rather take proactive steps to create positive opportunities for our youth. As I discussed with Sister Vonda, having more presence and involvement in our neighborhood is vital—this is how we can truly make a difference.

We should engage directly, just as I would if I were navigating a jungle of challenges, returning with a clean slate and a wealth of potential. When I spoke with some young men recently, I asked them what they would want to see in our city that could genuinely benefit them. Their answers were telling. One young man expressed the need for a space dedicated to the arts—an opportunity to understand and appreciate our community's history. Another shared that they'd like a dedicated facility for basketball and other activities, something more engaging than a simple skating rink. They want fun, meaningful alternatives to the streets where they currently feel trapped. The reality is, when we provide these kinds of opportunities, we offer them choices. Choices that can steer them away from negative influences and help them forge a path towards a brighter future. We must be the ones to offer that direction. Community member Bonnie Pennington's words resonated deeply.

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She shared her story of overcoming adversity, emphasizing that sometimes, it takes a stranger to connect and inspire kids. She knows firsthand the challenges kids face—having been in similar shoes herself. Bonnie is eager to step in, to reach out, and to lift those who are struggling. Her experience demonstrates that we can't underestimate the role of mentorship and support from those who have walked a difficult path and found their way back. We must embrace individuals like Bonnie, who are willing to share their stories and provide hope. We must create environments where these conversations can happen, where young people can engage openly with someone who understands their struggles. Let's not forget that every child deserves a chance. We have the power to facilitate change, to engage our community in meaningful ways, and to inspire our youth to rise above their circumstances. Together, we can ignite transformation—let's set aside our fears and commit to doing the work. We need to act now, because every moment counts, and our youth deserve better.

Chairman Sudler expressed gratitude to Mrs. Pennington for her eagerness to engage with the youth. Committee Member Chelle Paul then addressed Mrs. Pennington, clarifying that she believes there may have been a misunderstanding of Mr. Johnson's intentions. Paul emphasized that addressing community and social issues indeed requires collective effort. She firmly stated, "We work with everyone, regardless of color, race, or sexuality. Our mission is to engage with all members of the community, as you never know who might effectively connect with someone in need." Mrs. Pennington responded passionately, asserting her commitment to making a

difference. She pointed out that she could easily have remained silent and uninvolved but chose to step up instead. She described witnessing troubling behaviors among youth in the community and how those experiences resonate with her past, including her own encounters with the law. She made it clear that it took a stranger to help her recognize the danger she was heading toward.

Chairman Sudler then introduced community member Eliza Parker, founder of the Care of Their Life Project. Parker highlighted her dedication to providing essential resources for violence intervention, prevention, and substance abuse within the community. She mentioned her close collaboration with Mr. Bedford, stressing that addressing these issues requires operating from a place of understanding and cultural competency. Parker underscored her connection with youth, noting that she is only a few years removed from high school and uses her successful podcast to raise awareness of these critical topics. Parker posed a direct question to Dr. Travis Mishoe Sudler regarding the focus of his program. Dr. Sudler clarified that his work with the Office of Child Advocacy specifically targets issues related to foster care, noting that while foster care is a vital need, it's just one aspect of a larger problem. He acknowledged the current stagnation in violence levels but made it clear that proactive measures are necessary given the approaching warmer months.

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He recounted a successful youth program in Sussex County, revealing that even youth engaged in criminal behavior expressed simple desires—like visiting a trampoline park. Dr. Sudler stressed the importance of recognizing the underlying issues that lead to addiction and violence in the community, pointing out a failure to provide adequate rehabilitation for both people with an addiction and those involved in drug dealings. He asserted that addiction is pervasive and requires a thoughtful, comprehensive approach to foster true recovery and reintegration into society. This dialogue is not just an exchange of ideas; it's a call to action for everyone in the community to step up and be a part of the solution. I appreciate the dedication shown by everyone involved in this issue. We all recognize the importance of addressing the challenges at hand. We're not just talking about the problems; we're actively working to change lives. I've seen firsthand how our efforts impact the community. We've distributed shoes and necessities to kids who stumbled upon us, some of whom were even without footwear. I remember a 14-year-old who confidently exchanged my boots for some of his, choosing to go barefoot for others in need.

This happened before shelters opened, and the reality was stark people had nowhere to go. We stayed up collecting blankets until 3 AM because that's what it takes. I am deeply connected to this reality, and we can't just rely on offices or bureaucracy. We need to address immediate needs on the street where families and children are struggling without support. The situation is only

going to escalate if we don't get proactive. When we begin to see the fallout—an uptick in violence, overdose incidents, and drug-related arrests—we must ask ourselves: Are we truly helping these individuals by sending them to treatment centers for synthetic alternatives? Are we genuinely supporting them or simply maintaining a cycle of instability? At our program, we are equipped to meet people where they are. We've built resources such as a recording studio, a podcast space, and gaming stations—all aimed at connecting with youth. At just 24, I've seen and experienced my friends' struggles, so I understand their immediate needs. The connections we've forged stem from shared experiences.

When I was bullied about my size or my friends about theirs, it wasn't just the teasing—it was a reflection of our struggles. But if you can provide two blue bags to help feed a family when a mother hasn't returned home, of course, we'll do what we need to survive. It's often far easier for someone to opt for quick fixes rather than navigate a lengthy application process. The key is listening and bridging that disconnection. It's not just about telling them we care; it's about demonstrating it through actions that will stabilize their situation. When we stabilize local youth, we are indeed paving the way for a better future. Then, Chairman Sudler recognized Committee Member Joseph Bedford III. He emphasized that the foundation of change is rooted in families. Individuals will turn to trusted figures with whom they feel comfortable. As we engage with this community, we need to remember that we can't just bring programs and policies; we must foster genuine relationships on the ground.

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We should approach individuals with understanding, not judgment—engaging with them as if they are family. It's about creating a supportive environment where we can work together to break the cycle and find pathways to success. By building these relationships, we can truly make an impact, and that's the vision we need to pursue. We care deeply and have walked this path ourselves. Coming from the suburbs of Dover, I understand the daily struggle with addiction, and it motivates me to be here today. Recently, Chairman Sudler acknowledged committee member Mr. Bedford and heard from Mr. Bobby Wilson, who passionately emphasized the need for action rather than just discussion. His point about the absence of Dover Parks and Recreation staff at our meetings was poignant. It's an opportunity for them to step up. This year, as we look forward to the annual concert series, I believe it's time to consider including hip-hop or rap events to cater to the youth in our community. There's a chance to create something vibrant and inclusive. Chairman Sudler also heard from another community member, Denner Gibson, who shared her heartfelt story.

She expressed gratitude for being at the meeting, and her reflections about childhood and parenting resonated with many of us. As we head into the future, it's vital to focus on families

and the societal challenges they face. She pointed out that many children struggle due to their parents' battles, some even involving addiction, which we know can be hereditary. Denner's journey has been tough, having faced domestic violence, and her desire to be an advocate for children is inspiring. She reminded us that police and community members often lack the awareness needed to support those who are not in typical circumstances. Denner's experiences highlight the pressing need to address these issues and empower individuals like her, who are eager to help shape a more supportive community. As we move forward, it's crucial to ensure that those who face challenges, whether they're related to addiction or disability, receive the understanding and assistance they need. With her voice for the community, she is a testament to the resilience found in adversity. We have the chance to change narratives, engage parents, and ultimately create a safer environment for our children. As we anticipate future discussions and actions, it's a reminder that we must rally together.

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Everyone has a role to play, and together we can foster hope and healing in our neighborhoods. In a recent community discussion, Mrs. Gibson passionately addressed the need for a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals and families dealing with substance abuse. She emphasized that the issue often stems from a cycle of trauma and inherited struggles, where drug dependency can be seen almost as a disease tied to one's genetic makeup. Mrs. Gibson pointed out that society frequently resorts to punitive measures, opting to incarcerate individuals rather than providing supportive solutions that can heal families and communities. She highlighted the profound psychological impact children face when exposed to domestic violence, recalling her own journey from homelessness and the stigma that accompanies mental health struggles. Her experience taught her that many individuals dealing with addiction are often those who seek to escape their painful pasts, and it's crucial to provide support that extends beyond just the physical addiction to opioids or crack cocaine.

Mrs. Gibson underlined that addiction does not discriminate; it affects people of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds, and addressing it effectively requires a focus on poverty and the systemic issues that perpetuate it. She argued that fostering understanding and compassion—rather than judgment—could significantly change outcomes for those struggling with addiction. By investing in programs targeted at families, particularly in impoverished communities, we can help break the cycle of addiction, offering resources that support parents and safeguard children from the trauma of their surroundings. She concluded with a call to prioritize mental health support, emphasizing the importance of seeing individuals as more than their addiction. Following Mrs. Gibson, Chairman Sudler acknowledged her insightful feedback and welcomed another community member, Belinda Main. Belinda shared her perspective on the pervasive

influence of social media and digital platforms like TikTok and YouTube. She pointed out that it's not just teenagers who are affected; even children as young as 3 are absorbing messages from these platforms.

Balancing her role as a parent to six children, she expressed concern about the disconnect children feel when seeking help or discussing their struggles, often driven by fear of disappointing their parents or peers. Belinda also shared her personal struggle with type 2 diabetes, illustrating how her three-year-old daughter is beginning to grasp complex concepts about health. While she took her insulin, her little girl would innocently mimic the actions associated with these medical needs, showing the importance of parental guidance in navigating health issues. Belinda made it clear that while medications can be necessary, it's imperative to distinguish between therapeutic drugs and harmful substances like opioids, which pose serious risks, especially to youth. Moreover, she highlighted the challenges faced by her son, who occasionally encounters bullying from peers, particularly those from single-parent households. She recognized that some children might channel their frustration and aggression toward quieter classmates, suggesting a need for greater empathy and understanding among all students. Belinda committed to keeping a close eye on her children, ensuring they remain strong and resist negative influences while fostering open communication about making healthy, informed choices.

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Both Mrs. Gibson and Belinda exemplified the real-world challenges families face while addressing larger social issues, making a compelling case for community and systemic support to break the cycles of violence and addiction, and to nurture a healthier future for all children. This will empower you to rise above and become greater than those around you. I have a teenage daughter, and I'm vigilant about her well-being. She often asks about what she sees on YouTube, and I take the time to explain things to her. Not long ago, when my daughter was in public school, a friend would visit almost every evening around dinner time. I sensed something wasn't right at home, so I asked her, and she shared that her mom worked nights, her dad was away, and her sister didn't want to help. I realized this child sought refuge in my home because she knew it was a safe place. I welcomed her for dinner, not as a burden, but as an opportunity to help someone in need. I encouraged her to knock on my door if she ever felt unsafe or needed assistance. A month later, two girls came by, joyfully proclaiming, "God is good, God is great!" They explained that my house was known as the "safe house." That label resonated deeply with me. I've always thought of a safe house as a refuge for those in trouble, and I realized my home had become that space for these kids—where they could seek help and support.

No one enters my home without welcome; I have my two dogs and enough determination to protect everyone within. I enjoy connecting with people, always ready to offer compassion. If I see someone in distress, I ask what's wrong, always pushing to find a solution that keeps them safe and cared for. I've had my share of hardships, and I know the impact of those early experiences. Though I have had nightmares from my past, I also learned resilience. My biological father struggled with addiction, and my mother faced challenges that led to family separation. Decades later, I reconnected with my siblings, some still battling their demons. I offer them support when I can but also encourage them to seek a better path. I believe in positivity, especially for those who have served their time and are reentering society. It's crucial not to let past mistakes define the future. I tell my children and their friends that even as a non-foster parent, I feel like a mother to many. Parents trust my home, and when conflicts arise, I reach out to listen and support, creating a safe space for open dialogue.

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If I don't have an answer, I will seek help. My desire to become a psychologist stem from my passion for guiding youth, especially those from single-parent households. It's about lifting each other. Chairman Sudler recognized this call to action and invited me to collaborate on initiatives to support our youth within the Capitol School District. Together, we can make a meaningful impact, and the more involved we are, the stronger our community becomes. Chairman Sudler acknowledged community member Denner Gibson from the Living Institute Career Academy. Denner expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone present, emphasizing the urgency of the issues at hand. Although he isn't a resident of Dover, he shares the struggles many faces, as his 13-year-old son lives in Baltimore and navigates challenges that are all too familiar. Denner brought up the serious matter of the blue streetlights affecting visibility for those dealing with addiction, highlighting the complexity of such struggles. He reflected on a personal experience with his father, who is recovering from addiction. It was a moving moment as he shared his father's journey and how the family continues to support him.

These issues are not just black-and-white; they resonate deeply, lasting for years and affecting relationships. He pointed out the common themes that have emerged from the stories shared, particularly the need for connection and community. Denner shared that to inspire genuine change in someone's life, authentic connections are vital. If we haven't moved through the struggles someone else is enduring, they may be hesitant to hear our words. This is especially true for today's youth, who are living in an era of overwhelming information and rapid changes. Many millennial, Denner shared how he was taught the path to success—go to school, secure a job, attend college—but many have seen that path falter for an entire generation. As children today navigate a world full of social media platforms, it's clear that merely shielding them from

exposure isn't a realistic solution. Instead, we can significantly impact their self-concept and self-worth. Denner emphasized that some children grow up in harsh environments yet never engage in harmful behaviors, not necessarily because of a perfect upbringing, but because of the support and belief others have instilled in them.

He also emphasized the importance of mentorship, noting that our youth can thrive when they encounter individuals who recognize their potential. The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by young people in environments that should promote nurturing but, unfortunately, sometimes make them feel undervalued. This leads to a defensive mindset, especially among youth who crave love and connection, which are often missing from their home lives. When they face a world that only values them for superficial reasons, it creates a troubling reality. Denner brought attention to the alarming instances of suicide among young children, who possess a stark understanding of life, often greater than many adults today. They see and experience a world that we cannot fully comprehend, often without the context to navigate it. This is where we must step in with compassion and understanding. Denner reiterated the need to approach these conversations fearlessly sharing our experiences to guide youth without dictating their paths, demonstrating that choices exist beyond the immediate and the easy.

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He acknowledged that while it might seem easier to take risky shortcuts, there are alternative paths available, emphasizing the importance of showing our youth that they deserve better. As we observe the evolving landscape of commerce, particularly in the digital sphere, it becomes evident that younger generations—having grown up with pervasive technology—are uniquely positioned to capitalize on these changes. Unlike older cohorts who were primarily shaped by a pre-digital environment, today's youth are accustomed to the omnipresence of advertisements and online interactions, which are now empirically understood to influence consumer behavior after repeated exposures, commonly referred to as the "11 touches" rule. It is imperative for us, as seasoned members of society, to recognize the vital role that these young individuals will play in shaping the future economy. Rather than stifling their ambition, we should aim to channel their entrepreneurial spirit into constructive avenues. This means creating supportive frameworks that not only provide a source of catharsis but also contribute to sustainable lifestyles.

For instance, individuals emerging from addiction often face significant barriers when reintegrating into the workforce; traditional employment models frequently overlook their potential, resulting in feelings of rejection and disillusionment. However, we can facilitate pathways that highlight the intrinsic value of their experiences. There exists a substantial demographic of individuals who could benefit from hearing their narratives, especially when such messages come from those who genuinely understand their struggles. This need is

underscored by the prevalent stigma surrounding mental health, particularly within certain cultural contexts. Addressing these issues is complex. The socio-economic landscape in America, compounded by factors such as undocumented immigration and systemic inequities, means that many individuals face significant obstacles from a young age. The societal framework historically rooted in the marginalization of specific communities has persisted, leading to a penal system that disproportionately affects vulnerable populations.

We must therefore be proactive in redefining the self-perception of youth, empowering them to see themselves as capable individuals rather than products of their circumstances. It is crucial that we engage with them authentically, considering their perspectives rather than imposing outdated paradigms. They are disenchanted with the narratives perpetuated by prior generations—narratives that resulted in economic instability and unfulfilled aspirations. Instead, they are inspired by contemporary figures in digital entrepreneurship—streamers, podcasters, and online creators—who embody the new path forward. The goal should not only be to endorse creative endeavors but to guide these individuals toward successful entrepreneurial ventures where their passions can translate into viable income streams. This is particularly essential for youth navigating complex family dynamics, facing economic instability, or lacking adequate support systems. Strengthening their self-concept and resilience is vital for breaking cycles of poverty and recidivism.

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As mentors and community leaders, it is our responsibility to illuminate pathways for these individuals. By fostering environments that uplift and empower, we can help them transcend their initial circumstances. If we equip them with a robust sense of self-worth and purpose, they will be less impacted by external negativity. Ultimately, the integration of proactive systems within education and community support frameworks will be key. By bolstering their self-concept, we can instill confidence that remains steadfast, irrespective of external challenges. This journey, while multifaceted, hinges on a larger commitment to mentoring and developing the next generation, ensuring they not only withstand adversity but thrive beyond it. The theoretical framework we are exploring includes the theater variable, which addresses positive youth development interventions. This perspective emphasizes the importance of self-reflection through a positive youth development lens. Additionally, we will integrate concepts from trauma theory and general systems theory, using a transdisciplinary approach to view various entities, whether biological, social, or mechanical—as interconnected systems rather than isolated components. Much of our discussion aligns with the theoretical foundations we aim to establish through this research. I want to express my gratitude to everyone's valuable feedback.

Chairman Sudler then recognized Mr. Johnson, who offered a thoughtful reflection on Mr. Parker's comment about children's desire for activities such as visiting a trampoline park. Drawing from my experience with various programs, I recall the Traxxas program in Milford, which focused on supporting youth facing challenges within the community. This initiative provided an alternative educational framework, facilitating learning for students who were struggling in traditional settings. Participants received academic support through their school's curriculum, and after school, dedicated counselors organized enriching outings, including trips to amusement parks and other recreational activities. The program was effective, but unfortunately, it was relocated and subsequently disbanded. In my experience running the 6 for 1 program at the Howard Road Young Correctional Center, I worked closely with individuals transitioning from the street to the judicial system. Director Prince entrusted me with this responsibility because of the compassion I demonstrated toward these individuals.

I initiated a program called "Write for Me," which encouraged participants to write letters to themselves. This exercise allowed them to reflect on their lives and share their insights with me, fostering a deeper understanding of their identities. Following this, we introduced the "Expression in the Rain" session, providing a safe space for participants to express their feelings, often leading to emotional breakthroughs. This initiative strengthened our connections, and at the end of the program, we celebrated our growth together. Despite my transition to other endeavors, I maintain contact with many individuals from the program who have since found success in their lives. As Mr. Paker mentioned, it is essential to focus on solutions as we face challenges.

I propose we organize transportation for troubled youth to engage them in positive activities and experiences in our community. By creating these opportunities, we can help foster a more supportive environment for their development. I want to emphasize a critical opportunity we have to make a significant impact on our community, especially for our youth. As we wrap up summer, we must unite— not as individuals, but as a powerful collective committed to the betterment of our city. During our recent meeting, we thoroughly discussed essential recommendations from the Opioid Use Disorder Task Force, driven by the Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Initiative. These recommendations are not just proposals; they are a necessary action plan to address the urgent issues surrounding opioid use disorders and to support our youth. I urge you to take a stand with us as we prepare to present our sixth recommendation to the Mayor and the City Council.

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Here are the key recommendations we have approved and why they are crucial:

1. **Investment in Detox Treatment Center Infrastructure:** We must invest in a state-of-the-art detox center that includes comprehensive services. This facility will be staffed with specialized addiction therapists and social workers who deliver evidence-based therapeutic programs to tackle opioid use disorders effectively. This investment is non-negotiable for the health of our community.

2. **Enhancement of Behavioral Health Integrations:** We must expand treatment centers and boost the workforce of peer-supported specialists. A holistic support network is essential for fostering prevention and recovery, and we can no longer ignore this need.

3. **Expansion of Telehealth Services: We** need to broaden treatment options for opioid use disorders by enhancing telehealth services. This is crucial in ensuring accessibility and significantly improving patients' management of their behavioral and emotional needs.

4. **Data and Research**: We must conduct comprehensive research to deepen our understanding of the risks associated with opioid use and to inform effective harm reduction strategies. Engaging with those who face these challenges is necessary for collecting vital insights that will guide our interventions.

5. **Mobile Intervention Units:** We will deploy mobile units to provide immediate referrals to harm reduction services. This targeted approach is vital to ensure that all individuals suffering from opioid use disorders receive timely and accessible support.

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6. Youth-Focused Campaigns: *Supporting community coalitions in implementing evidence-informed prevention*, such as reduced social access and physical access, stigma reduction—including staffing, educational campaigns, support for people in treatment or recovery, or training of coalitions in evidence-informed implementation, including the Strategic Prevention Framework developed by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration **("SAMHSA").**

***Engaging non-profits and faith-based communities* as systems** to support prevention.

School-based or youth-focused programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in preventing drug misuse and seem likely to be effective in preventing the uptake and use of opioids.

At this moment, we look forward to addressing any questions about the six recommendations that will pave the way for future initiatives. Chairman Sudler recognizes a community member

who expresses curiosity about the six recommendations. The community members wonder if there are six specific parties of interest or if there are six entities that will need to apply for the grant. In response, Chairman Sudler shares his anticipation about the six recommendations. He explains that the committee has examined the overall use of the guidelines for remediation and has identified six key areas they aim to present to the mayor and council. He clarifies that, for now, no specific individuals have been chosen to take on these responsibilities; rather, a competitive application process will allow various organizations to apply. The goal is to address these critical areas that have been deemed necessary for future development. The community member then clarifies: "So you're saying you haven't selected these six areas yet?" Chairman Sudler affirms, stating that while the committee has identified the categories, they haven't pinpointed the specific entities. He emphasizes that they look forward to the competitive grant process, in which both non-profit and for-profit organizations, as well as municipalities, can vie for funding.

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An exciting aspect of the recommendations is strong advocacy for the Dover School District, focusing on a youth-centered campaign with significant potential for impact. This initiative is set to be a committee recommendation to the mayor, and they see it as a promising start toward expanding scientific knowledge of addiction and its side effects, while also providing solutions moving forward. He highlights the competitive nature of the funding and expresses optimism that programs aligned with these six focus areas will step forward to present their best ideas. After this clarification, the community member expresses gratitude to Chairman Sudler. He turns to committee member Bernard Pratt, who is eager to move forward with the chair's recommendation to approve the youth-focused research campaign. This motion is expected to gain the backing of the mayor and be forwarded to the prescription opioid settlement commission for the allocation of general grants over $30,000.

Enthusiastically, the motion receives a second from committee member Chelle Paul and is passed unanimously by the Mayor's Blue-Ribbon OUD Taskforce Committee. Before the meeting wraps up, Chairman Sudler is pleased to recognize Councilman Brian Lewis of District 2, who graciously accepts the acknowledgment. He's here to listen to the committee's discussion because he believes listening is crucial to moving forward effectively. He draws upon his extensive experience to emphasize the seriousness of the addiction problem in the state, underscoring the importance of using the upcoming funds wisely. The emphasis on oversight resonates with Councilman Lewis as he expresses his commitment to ensuring that the community benefits directly from these resources. With such shared goals, attendees are eager to

ensure responsible usage of funding that will truly support the youth and the community at large. I have a two-year-old grandchild, and it's essential to keep him engaged.

When children aren't occupied, they tend to explore potentially dangerous situations. This principle also applies to the youth in Dover who are drawn to gangs, often stemming from dysfunctional family environments. We must proactively provide constructive activities to divert them from negative influences. I wholeheartedly support the sentiments expressed by the speakers tonight. Our city is in a state of crisis; we face significant challenges that require immediate attention. Many of our leaders are not taking adequate action. As my grandmother used to say, "Action speaks louder than words." We need to act decisively and ensure that resources are allocated effectively to support our community. I am calling on all of you to join us at the City Council meeting on the fourth Monday of this month. Your presence is critical. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to drive positive changes and make a lasting impact. Together, we will ensure that $350,000 is directed towards these essential initiatives. Let's act, support our youth, and shape a healthier Capital of Delaware.

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SYNOPSIS:

To effectively address our constituents' concerns about the OUD crisis and the allocation of State Opioid Response (SOR) funding grants in the Capital of Delaware, we must first recognize the profound challenges our young people face. It is essential that we not only listen but also equip them with the tools they need for meaningful improvement. Words alone will not suffice; we need to take decisive, actionable steps to foster growth within our community. As Local Officials, we must work together and engage in constructive dialogue to create real change. We must show that personal and community growth is attainable for everyone. Supporting our Council Leadership is vital, and it's our responsibility to ensure they are held accountable for the effective allocation of State Opioid Response (SOR) funding grants. By pooling our resources and expertise, we can drive meaningful legal and institutional reforms that directly enhance the lives of our residents. Together, we can make significant strides toward a healthier and more just future. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to addressing this critical issue and for standing alongside our community in this vital mission.

The meeting was adjourned at **7:56 p.m.**

Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman of Mayor's

OUD Taskforce Committee

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MAYOR'S BLUE-RIBBON OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE

MEETING MINUTES

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The **Mayor's Blue Ribbon Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee** was held on **May 5, 2026, at 5:45 p.m.** with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding. OUD Taskforce members present were Mr. Benard Pratt Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Chelle Paul, Mrs. Toni Jordan Honorable Eric L. Buckson, absent was Mr. James Oxford Sr. (Excused) and Brad Owens (Executive Director).

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

No additions or deletions were proposed for the meeting.

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INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mrs. Toni Jordan

A brief prayer/reflection urged the group to act with wisdom, honesty, compassion, and to focus on prevention, recovery, and hope for affected people and families.

• The invocation closed with an appeal that small steps move the community forward.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Honorable Eric L. Buckson

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Mr. Brad Owens -** Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission **(POSDC).**
   Application Process

   a. Public Interest Form:
   b. Notification & Portal:
   c. Review:
2. Discussion concerning **Youth-Focused Campaigns:** Allocate funding for targeted **"Real Cost Media Campaigns and Programs"** aimed at preventing opioid use among youth and other vulnerable demographics. Special attention should be given to the unique needs of communities disproportionately affected by the epidemic, including homeless populations and communities of color, to ensure effective engagement and support.

3. Discussion regarding partnership with the Delaware Division of Public Health **(DPH)** Mobil Community Health Service**,** the Mayor's Blue Ribbon OUD Taskforce (**OUD**) and Dover Human Relations Commission **(DHRC)** for Quality of Life and Community Well-being Achievements**.**
    - This approach prioritizes immediate access to resources over enforcement which aligns with the goals of the Dover Opioid Use Disorder (**OUD**) Taskforce, which aims to address the high number of individuals panhandling at intersections like **Route 8** and **Route 13 through** compassionate intervention rather than criminalization.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

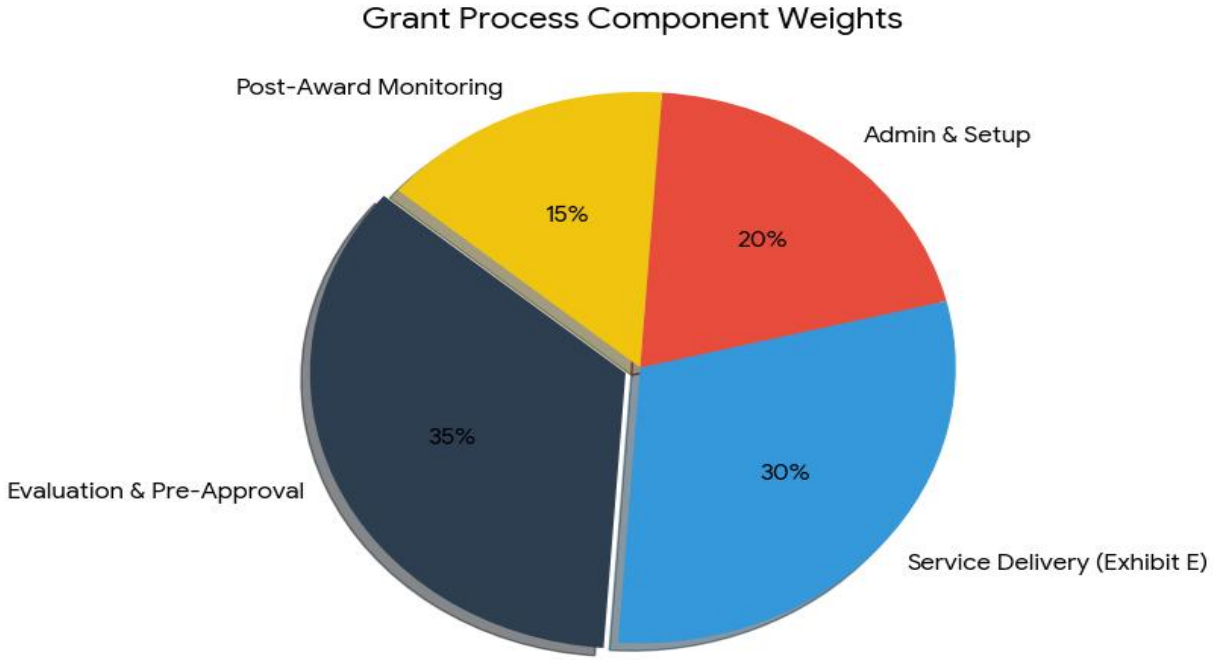
Chairman Sudler reviewed the agenda items and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

Chelle Paul moved to adopt the meeting agenda for **May 5, 2026, at 5:45 p.m.** The motion was properly seconded by Mr. Pratt. There was no discussion on the agenda item; hence, the motion was unanimously adopted.

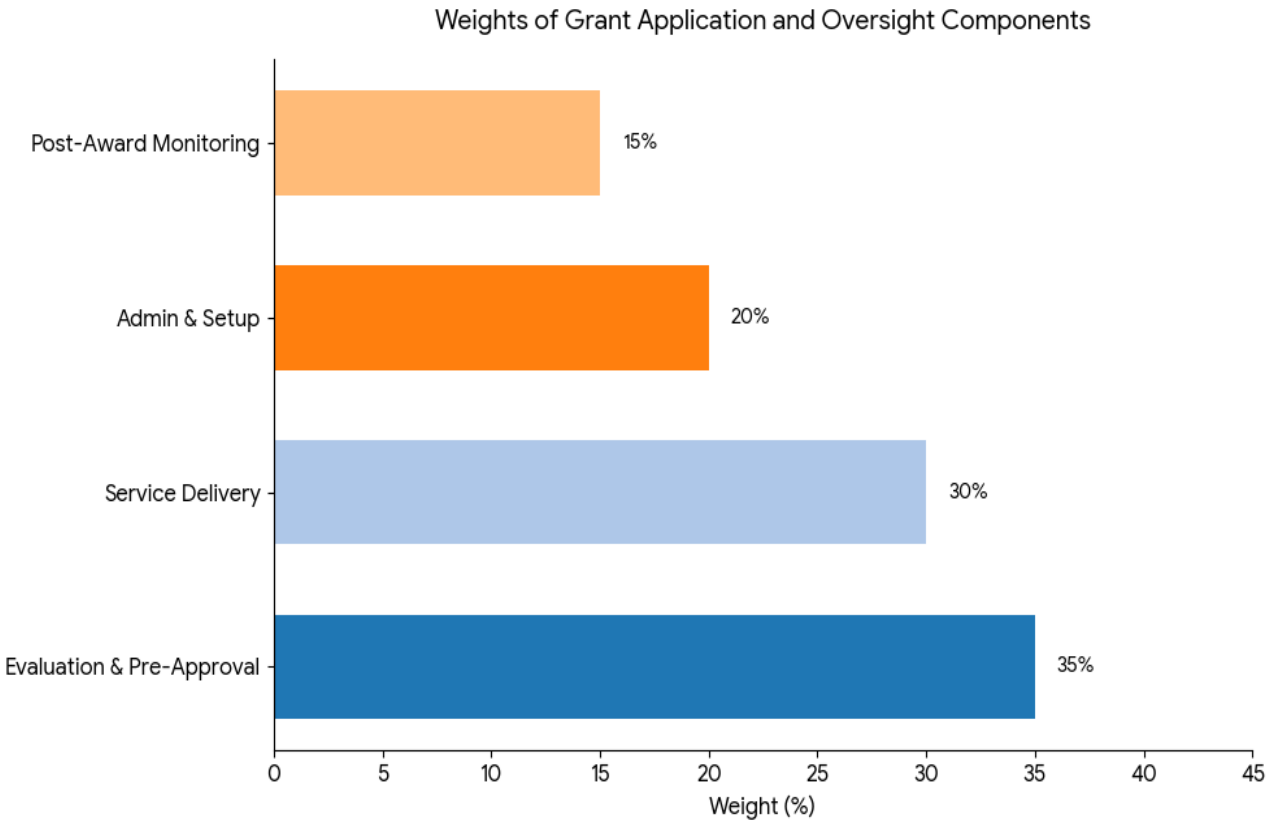
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CHAIRMAN SUDLER'S ANALYSIS:

Evaluation Component Distribution (Pie Graph): *the pie chart maps the proportional focus placed on each distinct phase during the evaluation process. Evaluation/Pre-Approval and Service Delivery hold the highest priorities, combining for 65% of the program's overall assessment weight.*



Relative Weight of Core Components (Bar Graph): *the bar chart illustrates the workload and scoring importance of each individual program component, making it easy to see that the validation of technical medical criteria (Phase 2 and Phase 3) outbalances initial administrative entry and long-term project upkeep.*



The application framework is divided into four distinct phases, each carrying a relative weight toward final selection and project sustainability:

Phase	Core Metric Description	Operational Requirement	Relative Weight
Phase 1: Admin & Setup	**Public Interest Form & Portal Access**	Complete conflict-of-interest forms and secure initial system entry.	**20%**
Phase 2: Evaluation	**Pre-Approval & Review Procedure**	Technical compliance check by the OUD Taskforce against state criteria.	**35%**
Phase 3: Service Delivery	**Exhibit E Guidelines Execution**	Direct alignment of the proposed clinical/community program with OUD rules.	**30%**
Phase 4: Monitoring	**Work Development & Benchmarks**	Continuous post-vote timeline adjustments and operational monitoring.	**15%**

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Matrix Breakdown of Meeting Alignment with Exhibit E Rules

The operational workflows discussed by Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr., Brad Hilton, and Greg Hughes align directly with the legal, clinical, and administrative requirements mandated by the National Opioid Settlement's Exhibit E remediation guidelines.

Meeting Workflow Component	Exhibit E / Delaware OARS Requirement	Practical Operational Impact for Dover Applicants
Public Interest Form & Portal Entry	**Transparency & Reporting Accountability**	Establishes the legally required public trail to prove funds are not diverted to general treasury use.

State Pre-Approval Verification	**Non-Supplantation Provision**	Ensuring grant money strictly creates new, supplemental OUD programs rather than replacing existing local budgets.
Exhibit E Guidelines Compliance	**85% Core Remediation Mandate**	Restricts all funded activities strictly to approved medical, harm-reduction, or clinical recovery strategies.
Taskforce Recommendation Pipeline	**Statutory Abatement Commission Oversight**	Funnels applications through a rigorous advisory evaluation before local municipal approval by the Capital of Dover.
Conflict-of-Interest Disclosures	**Ethical Fund Governance**	Guarantees transparent distribution of funds, avoiding clinical, political, or municipal bias.
Work Development Benchmarks	**Evidence-Based Tracking Mandate**	Conditions ongoing funding payouts on verifiable data, such as patient intake or treatment retention rates.

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MEETING MINUTES DIALOGUE:

Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. kicked off the meeting with enthusiasm, moving right into the first agenda item. While Mr. Brad Owens was unfortunately absent, Chairman Sudler was excited to introduce his representatives, starting with the knowledgeable Mr. Brad Hilton, a Program Integrity Specialist from the Opioid Commission. He was joined by Mr. Greg Hughes, a program support consultant tasked with outlining actionable steps for the application process. With a warm welcome to the presenting team, Chairman Sudler set the stage for a vital discussion on the application process, which encompasses three key components: A) the submission of the public interest form; B) notification protocols and portal access; and C) the review procedure. Mr. Hilton took center stage to elaborate on the OUD Taskforce's critical oversight role for agencies applying for grants.

He presented a detailed timeline for the disbursement of funds from the OUD State Commission and distributed calendars marking essential benchmark due dates to help everyone stay aligned with state expectations. Mr. Hughes then stepped in to share an exciting update: the application portal is set to open on March 30, 2026. He walked the audience through the online application process, highlighting invitation protocols for eligible entities. With clarity, he explained the

completion of conflict-of-interest forms and shared a key calendar highlighting important dates. Emphasizing compliance with Exhibit E guidelines for OUD service provision, he stressed that applicants must meet the necessary state pre-approval requirements. The Taskforce's role is pivotal in recommending eligible partners to the Capital of Dover, helping combat the opioid use disorder (OUD) crisis effectively.

After the commission's vote, the next phase unfolds—work development—where engaging discussions with selected entities will set clear timelines and benchmarks for compliance, crucial for continued funding. Expectations are high as contracts between the State and Awarded Entities are set to be executed in June or July, with payments disbursed shortly thereafter. Mr. Hilton focused his remarks on the strategic timeline for distributing grants aimed at enhancing OUD services. As his presentation wrapped up, Mr. Hilton delved into the auditing and compliance process. He emphasized that municipalities could be responsible for ensuring all benchmarks, workshops, and compliance obligations tied to OUD State Commission funding are met. Chairman Sudler highlighted the OUD Task Force's recommendation for six specific funding allocations to the City Council. He advocated for a youth-driven campaign initiative to fill gaps in OUD services.

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This initiative especially targets detox facilities that provide comprehensive wraparound services, crucial for addressing adolescent OUD issues that impact family dynamics and involvement with Family Court. Chairman Sudler then asked Mr. Hilton to outline best practices for leveraging the allocated $248,000. Mr. Hilton made it clear that identifying targeted service areas and aligning strategies with the expectations of the OUD Committee and Guidelines are key. Mr. Hughes suggested innovative outreach tools, such as TikTok and creative educational projects, to engage the community with their initiatives. Raising a relevant point, Committee Member Pratt Bernard inquired about potential changes in allocation costs due to fluctuations in materials, fuel, and operating expenses that could affect budget compliance. Mr. Hilton wisely advised entities to factor these variables into their project cost estimations.

Throughout the discussion, both presenters underscored the importance of consistency and the need for awarded entities to provide data justifying their ongoing funding requests. Mr. Bernard asked whether funds must remain allocated solely to the same groups or if future collaborations could involve different entities based on performance outcomes. Mr. Hilton clarified that municipalities enjoy flexibility in the use of funds and in partner selection. He wrapped up the session by emphasizing recommendations for peer-to-peer initiatives. He excitedly announced the development of a new website designed to enhance accountability and ensure robust compliance frameworks for funded projects. Chairman Sudler opened the meeting by

acknowledging Committee Member Toni Jordan, who raised a critical question regarding conflicts of interest.

Mr. Hughes clarified that, given Delaware's small size, committee members interested in participating in the application process cannot vote on related matters. However, they can still apply if they are not related to any applicants. Senator Eric Buckson emphasized the paramount importance of maintaining integrity and accountability within the application process. He commended the State Commission for their progress and for implementing quarterly reports, highlighting the need for alignment between what we want to achieve and what we should do. Buckson urged that realistic decisions must be made when benchmarks are not met. He expressed strong support for the state's thorough vetting of applicants as a necessary measure of accountability, which he believes must withstand public scrutiny. He made it clear that performance and fiscal responsibility are vital to the success of the OUD Taskforce over the next twelve years.

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Once Senator Buckson concluded, Committee Member Bernard Pratt inquired about the security of funds, particularly any concerns regarding their recall due to the state's non-involvement in service provision. Mr. Hilton assured us that these funds, stemming from a lawsuit settlement, are guaranteed, dispelling any doubts of potential recalls. Committee Member Toni Jordan then sought clarity on the quarterly metrics and monthly performance reports. Mr. Hilton confirmed that metrics are due on the 15th of each month and will be provided by the program specialist along with database access for the OUD Taskforce. Chairman Sudler underscored that the OUD Taskforce will also serve as compliance officers, overseeing metrics and deliverables for the entities receiving funding. Jordan emphasized the importance of fiscal accountability, performance standards, and transparency in the funding structure.

Community member Bonnie Pennington expressed interest in collaborating with agencies as an individual and sought guidance on how to navigate this. Mr. Hilton acknowledged her question, noting that the state is in the early stages of modifying the application process to broaden accessibility for all potential applicants, regardless of affiliation with an organization. Chairman Sudler reiterated the commitment to inclusivity in funding opportunities. Community member Cam Norwood brought attention to the youth campaign initiative, specifically exploring how to leverage platforms like TikTok for outreach. Mr. Hilton shared that successful youth-led Narcan campaigns in other municipalities could serve as a model, fostering creativity and collaboration. Mr. Hughes added that creating TikTok videos not only spreads educational messages but also develops video production and theater skills among youth, which are integral to the OUD-Taskforce Youth Campaign Initiative.

Another community member, KP, inquired about partnerships for similar projects. Mr. Hilton responded affirmatively, suggesting that separate proposals under a unified organization are highly advantageous for collaborative efforts. Returning to Mrs. Pennington, she advocated extending initiatives to include junior high students. Chairman Sudler acknowledged this valuable recommendation for consideration. Committee Member Chelle Paul addressed the conflict of interest once again, asserting that she would not apply for funding due to integrity concerns. At the same time, Mr. Hilton reiterated the commission's stance that committee members may apply but must abstain from voting on related matters. He stressed the need for collaboration in pursuit of shared goals. Committee Member Bernard Pratt closed the discussion with inquiries about competitive grants, emphasizing that any applications must introduce new initiatives rather than repurpose general fund appropriations. Mr. Hughes reaffirmed the critical nature of meeting all application deadlines.

Chairman Sudler posed a crucial question regarding the number of municipalities actively researching the OUD-Remediation Guidelines. Mr. Hilton confidently asserted that Seaford is partnering with the distinguished University of Delaware, a recognized leader in OUD initiatives. This collaboration positions our OUD-Taskforce to seize a significant advantage in research, equipping us to effectively confront the OUD crisis here in the Capital of Delaware. Given the pressing nature of this issue, we made the decisive choice to suspend the remaining agenda items. As we concluded, committee member Bernard Pratt guided us in a poignant prayer, providing a reflective close to our meeting. We are united in our commitment to make a profound impact on our community.

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SYNOPSIS:

Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. confidently opened the Capital of Dover's Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) grant session, laying a clear framework for the strategic distribution of state remediation funds. Supported by Commission representatives Brad Hilton and Greg Hughes, the meeting outlined a decisive three-part application process that requires submission of a public interest form, adherence to established portal access protocols, and a thorough evaluation by the OUD Taskforce. This initiative is set to empower qualified local partners to effectively tackle the pressing opioid crisis with robust state oversight.Operational timelines and stringent governance structures are prominently positioned ahead of the official application portal launch on March 30, 2026. To ensure complete transparency and compliance, applicants will follow a well-defined schedule of benchmark deadlines, furnish conflict-of-interest disclosures, and obtain mandatory state pre-approvals.

The OUD Taskforce will oversee this timeline and evaluate submissions against state standards, acting as the primary steering body that endorses viable partners to the Capital of Dover Project sustainability will depend on unwavering adherence to Exhibit E guidelines and ongoing evidence-based tracking. All funded OUD service provisions must align with these state criteria to qualify for the initial disbursement from the OUD State Commission. Following the official commission vote, selected entities will promptly engage in a collaborative work development phase to establish explicit operational benchmarks, linking all long-term funding to demonstrable program compliance and performance.

The meeting was adjourned at **7:13 p.m.**

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Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman of Mayor's

OUD Taskforce Committee

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