



MEETING MINUTES
September 15, 2025

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Conroy called to order the September 15, 2025, meeting of the DuPage Council on Strengthening the System for Mental Health and Substance Use Care (DCSS) at 10:11 AM. 13 members were present. Quorum was met.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members Present:	Chair Conroy Director Forker Ms. Bates Mr. Berlin (Lisa Smith) Mr. Burton Mr. Hess Ms. Kerger	Chief Krestan Ms. Lukas Judge Marchese Chief Pederson Ms. Siebert Mr. York
Council Members Absent:	Ms. Cahill Ms. Charvat Representative Costa Howard Ms. Garcia Mr. Geiger Dr. Holtsford	Ms. Miceli Dr. Rose Mr. Schwarze Dr. Sullivan Mr. Tornatore Senator Villa

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Conroy requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2025, meeting of the DCSS. Motioned by Chair Conroy. Seconded by Judge Marchese.

By consensus of the members the minutes were approved.

5. CO-CHAIRS REMARKS

Chair Conroy provided welcoming remarks and mentioned recent federal cuts to Medicaid and their negative effects on those with Mental Health and Substance Use. She urged the committee to follow any updates closely as it affects their work. The Chair mentioned the

opening of the Crisis Recovery Center and welcomed Heather O'Donnell, Director of Behavioral Health Strategy and Partnership, to the team.

Director Forker mentioned the grant awards being given through this council. He also recognized that September is both Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention month. He thanked all the members for their commitment to this important work.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. DuPage Coalition Updates

- Prevention Leadership Team (PLT) – Jennifer Hess shared about PLT’s five-year SPF (Strategic Prevention Framework) grant, which lets them expand their efforts from focusing on youth prevention to supporting the entire lifespan of residents. PLT has two teen groups, REALITY and Teen Ambassadors, that meet monthly during the school year. The Teen Ambassadors serve as REALITY’s board and interviewing for new members is currently underway. PLT’s next meeting is September 24th from 9:00 – 10:30 am virtually.
 - Illinois Youth Survey – The IYS is a self-report survey administered in schools which gathers information about health and social indicators, including substance use patterns and attitudes of Illinois youth in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade. In 2026, PLT will promote the survey again and evaluate results to make data-driven decisions about prevention policies and education.
 - Free Educator's Guide to Substance Use Prevention and Mental Wellness – In response to Illinois Public Act 103-0365, which mandates fentanyl education in schools, PLT has developed a comprehensive [resource guide](#) to support educators and school staff in selecting effective curriculum materials. This guide is designed to aid in the implementation of educational content that addresses the dangers of fentanyl and other substances, raises student awareness, and promotes informed, potentially life-saving decision-making.

- Mental Health Flip Card Charts – These charts include simple self-regulation tips and resources if additional help is needed. Cards will be available in Spanish soon. If you are interested, please reach out to Jordan.Esser@dupagehealth.org
- GPS Parent Series – PLT partners with GPS on their watch parties, which are funded through the SPF grant. PLT is helping support 11 GPS events, which include four watch parties.
- Behavioral Health Collaborative (BHC) – Cara Siebert shared that BHC is finishing up its 2026-28 action plan. Based on feedback, these goals are: 1) Expand community utilization of mental health crisis response services, 2) Cultivate stronger coordination between parents, providers, and school districts seeking to improve youth mental health, 3) Develop local supports for residents living with substance use behavioral health needs, 4) Identify specialty behavioral health populations with enhanced needs and make improvements to their utilization of behavioral health resources.
 - The plan will be voted on later this year. Once finalized, it will be shared with this committee.
- BHC continues to share out CRC updates and messaging with the community. At the BHC's September 11th meeting, they shared updates from local 708 mental health boards, including funding opportunities.

b. DuPage Crisis Recovery Center

- Lori Carnahan shared a few updates about the CRC. It has been open for almost two weeks. DCHD sent out a communications toolkit to partners to help spread awareness. Between the ribbon cutting and other tours, almost 600 partners toured the CRC. Between September 2nd – 15th, the CRC completed 54 assessments, served 15 adults in the adult pod, 1 youth in the youth pod, and 3 individuals for sobering, and had 3 drop offs (1 from law enforcement and 2 from EMS). Multiple clients were directly admitted to partner medical detox programs without the use of 911. The CRC only made one 911 call in two weeks, which was for a medical issue. The youth client was able to stay in the community and the family was linked back to

resources. The youth was very excited not to have to go to the hospital for help!

- Jarrett Burton asked if the length of stay was in line with what had been projected. Lori Carnahan confirmed that 8 hours has been the average and was what they had expected.
- Chief Krestan asked if the drop offs were by pilot partners. Lori clarified that agencies no longer need the approval waiver, but the CRC will need to be added to their policies.

c. Presentation on Federal Medicaid & ACA Changes: Impact on People with Behavioral Health Needs

- Heather O'Donnell shared updates on the federal cuts that are coming to Medicaid.
 - Medicaid covers over 3 million Illinoisans & over 156,000 in DuPage residents. Marketplace plans cover more than 450,000 Illinoisans; over 42,000 in DuPage. ~330,000 – 500,000 Illinoisans are projected to lose health coverage due to federal cuts to Medicaid & ACA premium subsidies. \$51 billion is the estimated loss in federal Medicaid funds for Illinois over the next decade.
 - Impact: Nearly 17 million people could lose health coverage, and their healthcare. People with serious mental illnesses die 25 years earlier than the general population due to their medical needs. Many will lose access to care, exacerbating their medical conditions. Hospital uncompensated care will rise and there is a risk of hospital closures. Fiscal Pressure: Illinois will be forced to fill significant budget holes, putting tremendous pressure on the state budget.

Investment in behavioral health care and other medical care will become more difficult. Enrollees will be faced with significant increased administrative burden to keep their health coverage.

- Coroner Judith Lukas asked if immigrants who have paid into Medicare but are not permanent residents will still be eligible

for coverage. O'Donnell answered that they would no longer be eligible.

- Chief Krestan asked if the CRC will still treat people whether or not they have insurance. O'Donnell said the CRC will serve them regardless of insurance, but lack of insurance will make treatment more difficult.

d. Update on HB1085 parity legislation

- People with private insurance often have trouble finding therapists that take their insurance. Insurance pays less for mental health services than medical services. Parity regulates policies that set rates.
- The current administration has paused the implementation of a prior federal rule that would have further implemented parity. However, state level parity could still be implemented.
- HB1085 requires a minimum reimbursement rate. O'Donnell believes there is hope for this legislation.
 - Chair Conroy also shared that we need to make sure there is oversight and that parity is being reinforced.

e. September is Recovery Month and Suicide Awareness Month

- Director Forker mentioned that the health department has been sharing resources for prevention on its social media to highlight both awareness months. If you have resources or events to share in these areas, we are happy to put them on our social media as well.

f. Run for the Mind/NAMIWalks DuPage 2025 – 5K + Color Run – NAMI DuPage will be hosting their annual mental health awareness and fundraising walk on Saturday,

September 27th at St. James Farm Forest Preserve. This family friendly event is free to register and participants are encouraged to fundraise to support NAMI's peer-led mental health programs. Find more information [here](#).

7. Old Business

a. Opioid Settlement Update

- Lisa Smith, covering for Bob Berlin from the State’s Attorney’s Office, shared that the last deposit from 4 settlements totaled \$872,342.91 and the total balance now is \$6,010,025.21 after paying Health Department expenses in the amount of \$850,000.00.
- b. DCSS Grant Report (NAMI DuPage, Metropolitan Family Services, GPS Parent Series, and Hope for Healing)
- NAMI DuPage, Project Title: Mental Health Support and Education for Emerging Adults, Award Amount: \$37, 610
 - Metropolitan Family Services – DuPage, Project Title: Domestic Violence Mental Health Services, Award Amount: \$35,700
 - GPS Parent Series, Project Title: GPS Connect - Facilitated Community Conversations, Award Amount: \$17,500
 - Hope for Healing, Project Title: Community Based Harm Reduction and Stigma Reduction, Project Award Amount: \$20,000

8. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Krista Webb
Recording Secretary