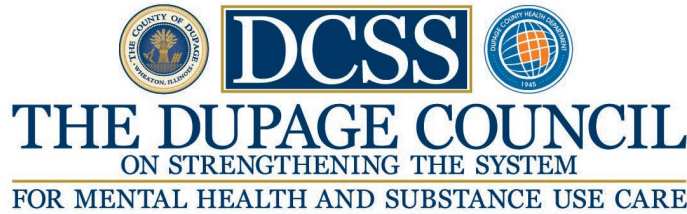


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MEETING MINUTES

DuPage County Administration Building (421 N. County Farm Rd., Wheaton, IL)

July 13, 2026

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Conroy called to order the July 13, 2026 meeting of the DuPage Council on Strengthening the System for Mental Health and Substance Use Care (DCSS) at 10:07 AM. Sixteen members were present. Quorum was met.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members Present:	Chair Conroy Director Forker Mr. Berlin Ms. Bates Ms. Garcia Mr. Geiger	Dr. Holtsford Ms. Kerger Chief Krestan Ms. Lukas Mayor Marchese Ms. McGuire	Chief Pederson Dr. Rose Dr. Sullivan Mr. York
Council Members Absent:	Mr. Burton, Ms. Cahill, Ms. Charvat, Ms. Hess, Judge Marchese, Ms. Miceli, Mr. Schwarze, Mr. Tornatore		

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Conroy requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2026, meeting of the DCSS. Motioned by Ms. Lukas. Second, by Ms. Kerger.

By consensus of the members the minutes were approved.

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5. CO-CHAIRS REMARKS

Chair Conroy welcomed everyone and introduced new member Mayor Joe Marchese of Darien. She thinks having a mayor on this committee is important, especially as he's a big champion of mental health. The second new member is Peggy McGuire, the new executive director of Metropolitan Family Services DuPage. The Chair looks forward to having them on the committee.

Director Forker shared that last month DuPage County received two 2026 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo), recognizing the Crisis Recovery Center in the health category and the County's comprehensive approach to addressing food insecurity in the human services category. He thanked Chair Conroy and Deputy Director Lori Carnahan who participated in an interview to tell the full story of the CRC.

https://www.dupagecounty.gov/county_board/dupage_county_wins_two_national_awards_1716.php

[Illinois county mental health center first in state to serve youth, adults | National Association of Counties](#)

Director Forker also shared that we are working with the Coroner's office to share overdose data. We observed a decrease from 2024-2025, which was close to a 15% drop. This is the fourth consecutive year overdoses have dropped. There was a total of 65 deaths last year, which is the lowest since 2015. State data should be coming out soon.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Presentation on Popular Unregulated Substances – Scott Kaufmann, Community Initiatives Supervisors at DuPage County Health Department

Mr. Kaufmann provided members with background on unregulated substances that are sold in places like smoke/vape shops, corner stores, and gas stations. These “gray market” substances are unregulated by the FDA and often sold in bright packaging that is very attractive to youth. Popular products include Kratom (mitragynine) and 7-OH (7-hydroxymitragynine) and Kratom Derivatives. We will cover additional products at our next meeting.

- Six DuPage overdose deaths in 2025 listed kratom as a cause of death.
 - Chair Conroy suggested creating public messaging about how Kratom interacts with other drugs, including prescription drugs, and how that can result in fatal overdoses.
- 7-OH is marketed as a “natural” alternative to opioids and other substances. It has little oversight in manufacturing and quality control, leading to inaccurate labeling. This includes deceptive serving sizes and confusing potency/content information.
- 7-OH has a fast dependence and severe withdrawal. ED's are seeing increasing visits and more people seeking treatment.

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- No current federal or Illinois statewide regulation to limit the sale of kratom or derivatives (other than 18+). The DEA is moving to temporarily schedule 7-OH and derivatives, but it is unknown when it begins or for how long. Wheaton passed an ordinance banning sales earlier this year. DuPage has led previous efforts to pass state bans.
 - The group discussed trying to pass an ordinance banning sales in DuPage. Chair Conroy said she can talk to Mayors and Managers and see who is interested.
 - [Naperville commission votes in favor of ban on kratom products](#)
- Shops can easily replace products with something else. What we discuss today as concerning is different from two years ago or two years from now.
- Importance of creating an ecosystem of support for those who use substances, including treatment and public education
 - DuPage ROSC will be giving an online presentation on Wednesday, July 15th at 10 am, which includes information on reaching out to vape shops. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86115807281?pwd=TD5kVuRGhURe909Faxfbu8uulEfh2X.1>
 - Ms. Garcia asked if there was outreach or presentations being shared with the schools. Mr. Kauffman says he is not aware of any currently. She would like to see a partnership with DCSS, Coroner's Office, and Mayor and Managers.
 - Chief Pederson says he will speak with his team about bringing this information to the schools since they already visit to discuss other topics.
 - DuPage Federation's tobacco environmental scan has information on how often local gas stations offer certain substances and other data. Larger chain gas stations are less likely to have them than smaller ones. They will be publishing this information soon.
- Community coalition work includes the following:
 - PLT – Advocacy for local control bans, messaging campaigns, school surveys, environmental scans
 - BHC – Emerging substance discussions, provider outreach
 - ROSC – Vape shop visits/presentations, education webinars, recovery community discussion

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Behavioral Health Collaborative (BHC) Updates – Paula Garcia

Ms. Garcia shared that the next BHC meeting is Thursday, September 10th. It will be hybrid at the Community Center and via Microsoft Teams; reach out to Scott Kaufmann for more information about how to participate or get BHC information.

The Substance Use Subcommittee has a survey out in the community now to get feedback from people who have overdosed to tell us what the most beneficial resources they used

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and any they wish they had. The goal is to use this feedback to guide a post-overdose follow-up system with community partners like ROSC. They are still working on getting the word out about 7-OH and similar gray market substances.

The Youth Mental Health Subcommittee merged with the PLT School Committee in May to help providers and schools prepare for universal mental health screening beginning Fall 2027. They are waiting for guidance from ISBE and the Governor's Office in September but working on some small preparations to get partners prepared before then, like sharing information about BEACON database to providers. Mindful Messages texting project is gearing up for a second year with financial support from Advocate and administrative support from NuPAGE Communities.

The Mental Health Crisis Subcommittee is continuing to get new flyers and resources out to new and old partners that may have use for them across several sectors. They are working to understand different cultural stigmas that may make some people less likely to access crisis services and finding ways to address those stigmas.

The Specialty Populations Subcommittee is developing a senior-centric messaging campaign to encourage utilization of 988 and is discussing the potential for a senior wellness day supportive of mental health later this year.

Chair Conroy said that Lurie Children's Hospital is building a new site in Downers Grove. She continues to advocate for six children's mental health beds. The DCSS committee discussed pursuing a project with mental health wellness and another with emerging substances simultaneously.

b. Prevention Leadership Team (PLT) Updates – Scott Kauffman

Mr. Kauffman shared that the PLT and BHC subcommittees have merged temporarily to address shared priorities, including the implementation of mental health screening initiatives in schools. Current work includes:

- Collaborating with the Regional Office of Education (ROE) to identify opportunities to build school capacity
- Preparing schools for future implementation guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- Preparing the treatment community for this mandate and encouraging providers to register in various referral systems

Reality's summer meeting series kicked off with their PhilanthroParty on June 16th with over 40 teens in attendance. This event is a "party with a purpose" – price of entry was a donation to Serenity House's mobile van. Teens learned about the "Face it. Feel it. Flip it" method from keynote speaker, Christine Conti, and heard from peers from Stevenson High School about ways to advocate for positive change. Teens are meeting weekly throughout the summer and participate in wellness topics and community betterment projects.

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PLT received their 4th year of grant funding through SAMHSA, but is proceeding cautiously with pending implementation of new proposed rules by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). On May 29, 2026, OMB released proposed revisions to the Uniform Guidance, the federal regulations that govern grants, cooperative agreements, and other federal financial awards provided to nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, and other grant recipients. These revisions represent the most significant overhaul of federal grant administration since the Uniform Guidance was originally implemented. The proposed revisions to the OMB Uniform Guidance could significantly change how federal grants are awarded, managed, monitored, and audited. In short, these rules would impact how federal grants are dispersed based on political beliefs instead of community need. It is also important to understand that the PLT is fully funded by federal grants that were directly impacted earlier this year when the administration attempted to eliminate billions of dollars of federal grant dollars, only for that decision to be rescinded 24 hours later. If these rules pass as they are proposed, that would grant the administration the power to do that again and uphold those decisions. Because of this, PLT is updating sustainability plans and looking at various new streams of funding that would be more reliable than federal grants.

c. MICAP Graduations – Bob Berlin

- The next MICAP Graduation is August 14, 2016. There have been 869 graduates from MICAP since 2004. The recidivism rate is 13% (the national average is 20-30%).
- The next Drug Court Graduation is September 17, 2026. There have been 510 graduates from Drug Court since 2002. The recidivism rate is 12% (the national average is 16.4%).
- The next Veteran's Court Graduation is October 2, 2016. We have had 58 graduates from Veteran's Court since 2018.

8. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for September 21, 2026.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Penny Chanez
Recording Secretary