





**THE DUPAGE COUNCIL**  
ON STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CARE

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 27, 2025**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Conroy called to order the January 27, 2025, meeting of the DuPage Council on Strengthening the System for Mental Health and Substance Use Care (DCSS) at 10:05AM. Seventeen members were present. Quorum was met.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Council Members Present:	Chair Conroy Director Forker Ms. Bates Mr. Berlin Mr. Burton Ms. Cahill Ms. Charvat	Representative Costa Howard Ms. Garcia Ms. Hess Dr. Holtsford Ms. Kerger Chief Krestan Judge Marchese	Chief Pederson Mr. Schwarze Mr. Tornatore
Council Members Absent:	Judge Marchese, Ms. Miceli, Ms. Siebert, Dr. Sullivan, 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 November 25, 2024, meeting of the DCSS.

**By consensus of the members the minutes were approved.**

**5. CO-CHAIRS REMARKS**

Chair Conroy provided welcoming remarks and thanked everyone for their continued support. Director Forker provided a summary and accomplishments of the Council’s work in 2024. Director Forker also welcomed the newest members who were recently appointed to the Council. Mr. Pederson, Chief of Police of the DuPage County Forest Preserve and Dr. Holtsford of Substance Use Medical Director for the DuPage County Health Department.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

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### **a. Opioid Settlement Funds:**

- Mr. Berlin stated that a settlement with Perdue and the Sackler family was reached, but an appeal to the decision is expected.
- As of December 31, 2024, a total of \$5,302,360.00 in revenue has been received to date from various settlements and interest earned on the revenue received.

### **b. Illinois Regional Cared Coordination Agency Grants**

- Director Forker shared that a significant share of opioid settlement funds is going directly to the State of Illinois and will be distributed through the Department of Health and Humans Services/Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery. Grant funds will be awarded to organizations that provide (a) intervention, treatment and harm reduction services for Illinoisians with substance use disorders and (b) core abatement strategies to prevent opioid overdoses and improve social drivers of health throughout the state.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

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### *a. Member updates*

- Mr. Pederson and Dr. Holtsford have been appointed to the Council. The DuPage County Coroner, Ms. Lukas, has also been appointed to the DCSS Council.

### *b. 2025 DCSS Funding Discussion*

Chair Conroy shared that in November 2024 the DuPage County Board allocated \$350,000.00 towards the Council's work. The following items were proposed by Chair Conroy for disbursement under these allocated funds:

- Budgeting \$50,000 for crisis services and mental health awareness campaign including the 988 campaign and promotions.
- Budgeting \$200,000 for funding opportunities through a grant process to address mental health and substance use in DuPage County. Information on the process can be found at <https://www.dupagehealth.org/792/2025-DuPage-Council-on-Strengthening-the> Applications will close at noon on March 7, 2025.
- Consensus was received from the Council to move forward with these proposals as outlined.

### *c. Behavioral Health Collaborative Update (BHC)*

Member Garcia shared the following updates:

- The BHC is in the development stage of the 2026-2028 action plan identifying priorities and areas for improvements.
- A BHC member survey is being conducted to assist in the development of the action plan.
- The next BHC meeting is scheduled for March 12.
- BHC subcommittees are working on:
  - providing communications of mental health resources available to seniors.
  - Mental health messaging campaign; including messaging to youth populations.
  - Review of supportive housing in DuPage County for those with co-occurring disorders.

### *d. Prevention Leadership Team Update –*

- Ms. Hess shared that the PLT received a 12-month (*ending in June 2025*) BASE grant awarded through the Illinois Opioid Settlement Fund to expand substance use prevention programming specifically focused on youth and emerging adults.

- PLT will participate in the county-wide Teacher’s Institute Day on Feb. 28 and will host a presentation called *Not On Our Watch* focusing on understanding, preventing and addressing student substance use.
- PLT’s - Teen Ambassador program is comprised of 17 high school students from 6 area high schools who participate in teen mental health training courses to help identify the signs in peers who may be struggling with mental health or substance use. 2 ambassadors will be traveling to Springfield to meet with state legislators. More information on this program can be found at <https://www.dupageplt.org/27/Home>

*e. Upcoming Events and Opportunities*

- Building off the success of the County’s first Mental Health Summit in Sept. 2024 Chair Conroy proposed continuing hosting this event on a biennial basis with a focus on children’s mental health in 2026. The event would occur in May to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Month. This timing will also coincide with the recent opening of the Crisis Recovery Center in the summer of 2025. Council members agreed with this suggestion.
- Members shared other suggestions to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month in May of 2025
- A social media campaign is being launched by the Health Department called “Our Thrive in 2025” which features Health Department counselors sharing mental health tips and information.
- Information was also shared on upcoming programs being held by the Glenbard Parent Series. More information can be found at <https://gpsparentseries.org/>
- Members also discussed the need for a safe needle exchange program in DuPage County. There currently no central coordination for harm reduction services or broader need for these services.

**8. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

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The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for March 17, 2025

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Penny Chanez  
Recording Secretary