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

MEETING MINUTES

January 26, 2026

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Conroy called to order the January 26, 2026 meeting of the DuPage Council on Strengthening the System for Mental Health and Substance Use Care (DCSS) at 10:09AM. Twenty members were present. Quorum was met.

2. ROLL CALL

Council Members Present:	Chair Conroy Director Forker Mr. Berlin Mr. Burton Ms. Charvat Ms. Garcia Mr. Geiger	Ms. Hess Dr. Holtsford Ms. Kerger Chief Krestan Ms. Lukas Judge Marchese Ms. Micele Dr. Rose	Ms. Siebert Mr. Schwarze Dr. Sullivan Mr. York
Council Members Absent:	Ms. Bates, Ms. Cahill, Ms. Costa Howard, Chief Pederson, 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 November 17, 2025, meeting of the DCSS. Motioned by Mr Burton. Seconded by Dr. Rose.

By consensus of the members the minutes were approved.

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5. CO-CHAIRS REMARKS

Chair Conroy welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of the committee's work, especially now, considering recent challenges, including the uncertainty surrounding federal grant funding for mental health services. Chair Conroy shared that there was recent confusion on the continuation of federal SAMHSA grants and recent email communications received from the federal government indicated that grant dollars were ended immediately. A subsequent reversal occurred and dollars were reinstated.

Executive Director added that great progress has been made in DuPage County even with uncertainty. This is witnessed by the incredible work being completed by coalition groups whose work supports the mission of DCSS. Three of these coalitions will provide members with updates on their work as part of today's presentations.

Director Forker also provided members with a brief summary of the Crisis Recovery Center's onsite assessments since opening in Sept. Over 700 community members have been served in the first 4 months. This number includes 139 youth.

6. NEW BUSINESS – Coalition Reports

a. Impact DuPage Data & Action Plan – Rebecca McFarland (DCHD)

Impact DuPage is a multisector partnership working to create a shared understanding of community needs, priorities, and disparities, then using that knowledge to propel actions that improve the well-being of the DuPage County community.

Through the committee's work and the results of the community-wide assessment conducted every 5 years the 2026-2030 priorities have been determined as:

- Substance Use and Mental Health
- Access to Healthcare
- Maternal and Child Health

The Community Assessment is codified in the Illinois statutes as a requirement that local health departments must conduct every 5 years.

b. Behavioral Health Collaborative (BHC) Action Plan - Cara Siebert (DCSS) and Scott Kaufmann (DCHD)

The Behavioral Health Collaborative works collaboratively to identify and implement data-driven strategies that improve access and quality of behavioral health services for all DuPage County residents, advocate for aligning resources and funding, and educate the community about the signs and symptoms of mental health issues. BHC develops specific areas of focus as goals for every three-year action plan, according to available local data and feedback from BHC partners.

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BHC Goals 2026-28

- Expand community utilization of mental health crisis response services
- Cultivate stronger coordination between parents, providers, and school districts seeking to improve youth mental health
- Develop local supports for residents living with substance use behavioral health needs
- Identify specialty behavioral health populations with enhanced needs and make improvements to their utilization of behavioral health resources

c. Prevention Leadership Team (PLT)- Jennifer Hess (DCSS) and Jordan Esser (DCHD)

Celebrating 10 years of prevention [The DuPage County Prevention Leadership Team \(PLT\)](#) was formed in 2011 following a county-wide health assessment that identified substance misuse and mental health as two of the top five health priorities in DuPage County. This led community leaders and partners to take action, establishing the PLT with a mission to reduce substance misuse and promote mental wellness among youth aged 18 and under. Since its inception, the PLT has secured funding to extend its initiatives to adults and to support the promotion of treatment and recovery services throughout DuPage County.

PLT Action Plan

Sept. 2023 – Sept. 2028

- Support and help grow local coalitions
- Increase mental wellness for youth and adults in DuPage County
- Prevent substance use among youth in DuPage County
- Prevent substance misuse among adults in DuPage County

d. Mental Health Summit Date: May 9, 2026

Chair Conroy provided a brief overview of the County's second Mental Health Summit scheduled in May 2026. The focus will be on youth mental health.

- Volunteers are needed
- Staff are currently exploring a keynote speaker for the event.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Opioid Settlement Update – Bob Berlin, State's Attorney

The Opioid Settlement fund has an unspent balance of \$6,296,762.75 as of 12/31/2025.

This includes

- \$5,860,079.03 in unspent settlement funds
- \$436,683.72 in unspent investment income

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8. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for March 16, 2026

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Penny Chanez

Recording Secretary

DRAFT