

**OPIOID ABATEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
OFFICIAL PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 8, 2023**

The Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission was held at 64 New York Avenue, NE, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20002 on Wednesday, November 8, 2023. Notice was published in the DC Register on November 3, 2023. Members of the public were also invited to attend in-person and virtually via WebEx: [Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission-20231108 1404-1 - OCTO WebEx Enterprise Site](#).

ATTENDEES

Present

1. Barbara Bazron, Ph.D., Director, Department of Behavioral Health
2. Carl Filler, Designated Representative of Director, DC Health
3. Melisa Byrd, Interim Director, DC Department of Health Care Finance
4. Ciana Creighton, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (virtual)
5. Brian Schwalb, Attorney General of the District of Columbia
6. The Honorable Christina Henderson Chair, DC Council Committee on Health
7. Edwin Chapman, MD, President Designee, Medical Society of the District of Columbia
8. Jacqueline Bowens, Chief Executive Officer, District of Columbia Hospital Association
9. Mark LeVota, Executive Director, District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association
10. Patricia Quinn, Designated Representative, District of Columbia Primary Care Association
11. Senora Simpson, PTMPH, DrPH (virtual)
12. LaVerne Adams, DMin, Chief Executive Coach, Total Life Consultancy LLC
13. Demetrius Jones, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Wards 7 & 8 DC Prevention Center/DC Recovery Community Alliance
14. Larry Bing, Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Leadership Council for Healthy Communities
15. Larry Gourdine, Program Manager, Psychiatric Institute of Washington
16. J. Chad Jackson, MS, CEO, Ardan Community Living, LLC
17. Beverly Settles-Reaves, PhD, Program Manager, Howard University
18. Queen Anunay, MPH MCHES, Designee, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
19. Nnemdi Elias, MD, MPH, Addiction/Internal Medicine
20. Juanita Price, M.Ed, Chief Executive Officer, Hillcrest Children and Family Center

Absent

21. Franciso Diaz, MD, FACP, DC Chief Medical Examiner

Dr. Barbara J. Bazron called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

The present Commission members introduced themselves.

Dr. Bazron presented the agenda for the meeting.

Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Barbara Bazron presented the minutes for the October 25, 2023, commission meeting. A correction was made to the minutes. The Commission approved the minutes.

Election of Chair

Dr. Barbara Bazron presented proposed duties of the chair and vice chair to the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission.

The Commission discussed voting on chair/vice chair and whether or not there should be a weighted vote in favor of Commission members who are peers (individuals with lived experience).

Patricia Quinn suggested that Commission members who are persons with lived experience to have their votes double weighted.

Mark LeVota made a motion to amend the motion for the weighted votes to only occur on votes for grantmaking. Patricia Quinn seconded the motion.

The amended motion for weighted votes to occur only when voting on grantmaking issues passed by with eighteen (18) yes and one (1) no. Juanita Price voted no.

Juanita Price suggested a private vote, not for lack of transparency, but because these kinds of decisions can lead to negative emotional responses. Ms. Price then made the motion to vote by secret ballot for Chair. Dr. Senora Simpson seconded the motion.

Dr. Edwin Chapman and Larry Bing both stated that all votes should be public because this is a public commission.

A roll call vote was conducted for the use of a secret ballot for the election of the Chair. The motion passed on a roll call vote of fifteen (15) yes and four (4) no. The following members voted yes: Dr. Barbara Bazron, Melisa Byrd, Ciana Creighton, Brian Schwalb, Christina Henderson, Jacqueline Bowens, Mark LeVota, Patricia Quinn, Dr. Senora Simpson, Dr. LaVerne Adams, Demetrius Jones, Larry Gourdine, Queen Anunay, Dr. Nnemdi Elias, and Juanita Price. The following members voted no: Larry Bing, J. Chad Jackson, Dr. Beverly Settles-Reaves, and Dr. Edwin Chapman.

On the election of the chair, Dr. Bazron opened the floor for nominations.

Dr. Nnemdi Elias nominated J. Chad Jackson for Chair.

Dr. Bazron nominated Jacqueline Bowens for Chair.

Both J. Chad Jackson and Jacqueline Bowens gave nomination statements.

The vote resulted in a tie: ten (10) for Mr. Jackson and ten (10) for Ms. Bowens.

Patricia Quinn made a motion for both to serve as co-chairs and Christina Henderson seconded. However, Brian Schwalb said that the Act names a Chair only. Christina Henderson suggested that there be a short break for the nominees to take some time to discuss a resolution between them.

The Commission was temporarily adjourned for Mr. Jackson and Ms. Bowens to discuss the situation.

After the Commission meeting resumed, Jacqueline Bowens nominated Chad Jackson for Chair. The nomination was approved by unanimous vote by a show of hands. Chad Jackson nominated Jacqueline Bowens as Vice Chair and the nomination was approved by a unanimous vote by a show of hands.

Operating Procedures

Dr. Barbara Bazron presented a draft of operating procedures to the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission.

The commission discussed chair/vice chair duties.

Mark LeVota made a motion to approve amended chair/vice chair duties stating that the description of the duties of the responsibilities of the chair and vice chair be accepted with following medication: “Act as an agent on behalf of the Commission as expressly authorized by Commission.” Dr. Bazron seconded the motion.

The motion for the adoption of chair and vice chair duties carries with a majority by a voice vote There was one (1) no vote.

Dr. Barbara Bazron presented a draft of operating procedures including, a conflict of interest policy, member duties, and structures of the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission and the Office of Opioid Abatement.

Brian Schwalb made a motion to table conflict of interest policy in favor of the Chair talking to the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. Jacqueline Bowens seconds. The motion passed unanimously by show of hands.

Jacqueline Bowens made a motion to develop an expectations and responsibilities policy for the Commission. J. Chad Jackson seconds. The motion passed unanimously by show of hands.

Principles for Use of Funds

Dr. Bazron presented a draft of principles on the use of opioid abatement funds (based on John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health principles for the use of opioid settlement funds).

Commission members offered more principles:

- Dr. Chapman proposed that research specific to opioid use in the District be funded, in addition to including social determinants of health and housing as a guiding principle; and
- Patricia Quinn proposed that funds be allowed for innovative projects.

A vote was not taken because it was now the public comment period.

Before moving to Public Comments, Larry Bing requested that the Commission should vote on whether or not the opioid epidemic is a public health emergency.

Christina Henderson said the Commission can vote on if they support it but at the time there is no document before the Commission and that it may be inappropriate for District government agency leads to vote on a public health emergency statement when Mayor has not made a decision. She said the mayor has not said she would not declare an emergency and that action could take place before the next meeting.

Jacqueline Bowen made a motion to express the sense of the Commission that opioids are a public health emergency for the District of Columbia. Larry Bing seconded the motion.

Brian Schwalb said that the scope of the Commission is narrow, and it is to make recommendations on how to distribute settlement funds that have come in from litigation.

Dr. Edwin Chapman stated that it is important to know Commission members' views on whether or not opioids are a public health emergency for the District of Columbia.

Dr. Bazron called for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed by a majority vote with a show of hands. Brian Schwalb, Carl Filler, Melisa Byrd and Dr. Barbara Bazron abstained from voting by a show of hands.

Larry Gourdine recommended that the Commission add peer workforce to the principles for use of funds.

New Business

Items to be discussed and addressed in upcoming meetings:

- Scheduling next three (3) meeting dates ahead of time
- Having flexibility in meeting location
- Boundaries about “agent of the Commission” and description needed
- Full adoption of operating procedures including conflict of interest policy and expectations and duties policy
- Grantmaking path

Public comments

Ambrose Lane, Dr. Vonnie Hamilton, Reverend Greg Anderson, Joe Henry, Horace Fletcher, Kent Wilson, and Linda Kaufman made comments in person.

Adjournment

At 11:15 AM, Dr. Bazron adjourned the meeting.

Minutes approved on November 29, 2023.