

**OPIOID ABATEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**OFFICIAL PUBLIC MEETING**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**NOVEMBER 29, 2023**

The Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission was held at 64 New York Avenue, NE, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20002 on Wednesday, November 29, 2023. Notice was published in the DC Register on November 23, 2023. Members of the public were also invited to attend in-person and virtually via WebEx: [Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission-20231129 1356-1 - OCTO WebEx Enterprise Site](#).

**ATTENDEES**

Present

1. Barbara Bazron, Ph.D., Director, Department of Behavioral Health
2. Ayanna Bennett, Ph.D., 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. Christina Okereke, Representative of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia
6. Marcia Huff, Representative of the 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 (virtual)
11. Senora Simpson, PTMPH, DrPH
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 (virtual)
18. Nnemdi Elias, MD, MPH, Addiction/Internal Medicine
19. Juanita Price, M.Ed, Chief Executive Officer, Hillcrest Children and Family Center

## Absent

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

21. Queen Anunay, MPH MCHES, Designee, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

J. Chad Jackson called the meeting to order at 9:09 AM.

## **Agenda**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Jackson presented the minutes for the November 25, 2023, commission meeting.

Larry Gourdine stated that he sent an email correction to the minutes that were not reflected in the present version of the minutes.

The Commission approved the minutes by unanimous vote.

### **Guiding Principles**

Chair Jackson continued the meeting and shared his personal story.

Chair Jackson recommends that Phase 1 (of the Opioid Abatement funding) should be to save lives, particularly the lives of older African American men in wards 5, 7 and 8.

### **Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest**

Chair Jackson introduced the proposed amendments to the operating procedures.

Christina Okereke stated that the Commission did not adopt the operating procedures during the last meeting, and therefore a motion to adopt the operating procedures inclusive of the amendments of today would be needed.

Chair Jackson agreed and stated that there needs to be a motion on the articles pertaining to Meetings, Conflict of Interest and Rules of Decorum.

Chair Jackson emphasized that the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission is advisory and is not spending money.

Jacqueline Bowens wonders stated that have the date and time for meetings is too descriptive and does not give flexibility.

Dr. Laverne Adams questioned whether or not we would meet every other week.

Chair Jackson states that the Commission will be meeting more often than quarterly but there is a minimum requirement by law to meet once a quarter, so it is being included in the operating procedures.

Marcia Huff stated that in the article pertaining to conflict of interest, a clarification is needed on affiliation with the organization so.

Dr. Ayanna Bennett stated that having a leadership role with an organization would have more weight as a conflict of interest as opposed to just an affiliation.

Dr. Bazron stated that are if a Commission member has a financial interest on a topic then they should recuse themselves.

Dr. Bazron motioned to amend the amendment of Article VI Conflict of Interest. Dr. Simpson seconded the motion. The motion is passed by unanimous vote.

Vice Chair Bowens motioned to strike date and time from Article IV Meetings. Dr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion is passed by unanimous vote.

Mark Levota motions to open discussion on Article IX Rules of Decorum. Vice Chair Bowens seconded the motion.

In referring to the breaking of rules of decorum, Dr. Bennett recommended in the case where the rule is broken, the chair should ask that member to leave the room.

Larry Bing said that telling someone to leave the room would be an insult to the Commission member.

Mark Levota stated that in the operating procedures, the Commission had adopted Robert's Rules of Order so the Commission can use the section on disciplinary proceedings to handle these special situations.

Mark Levota motioned to amend the amendment of Article IX Rules of Decorum, to say "commission members refrained from private discourse during meetings or other acts tending..." Simpson seconded the motion. The vote passed by unanimous vote.

### **Operating Procedures (Committee Structure)**

Vice Chair Bowens presents the organizational chart for Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission which includes newly proposed steering committee and subcommittees for prevention, harm reduction, and treatment & recovery. The full presentation is available.

Mark LeVota suggested that first preference for the mayoral appointee and council appointee on the steering committee be an individual with lived experience.

Patricia Quinn asked if one member be on multiple committees.

Vice Chair Bowens suggests that the seven members assigned to a committee have voting power but

Bowens members can participate in other subcommittee discussion but only 7 subcommittee members can vote subcommittee issues.

Dr. Bennett stated DC Health can provide subject matter expertise.

Vice Chair Bowens also suggest it would be staff to set things up (subject matter expertise)

Christina Okereke recommends steering committee members can be members of other committee members.

Dr. Bennett suggests having seven members per subcommittee is important.

Larry Bing asks if the Commission can give out gift cards to homeless DC residents as soon as possible without having to go through subcommittee meetings as it is hypothermia season and subcommittee meetings make take more time.

Chair Jackson responded that the Commission is obligated to follow Robert's rules of order and is trying to get through this decision-making process as quickly as it can. Also, the Commission does not have the ability to spend money and instead makes recommendations to the Mayor and DC Council.

Mark LeVota motioned to approve the proposed committee structure. Dr. Bennett seconded the motion.

Mark LeVota motioned to amend the proposal for the steering committee, preference be given to people with lived experience for the mayoral appointee and council appointee. Patricia Quinn seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Vice Chair Bowen called for a vote to approve the proposed committee structure. The vote was unanimous.

### **Timeline**

Chair Jackson skipped ahead in the presentation to present and discuss proposed grant timeline.

Dr. Chapman stated that data is needed about the number of people need to be in treatment.

Dr. Chapman stated that the Office of Medical Examiner needs to provide data to target the approach of the Commission going forward.

Dr. Bennett stated that DC Health can provide data and asked if there is more data or other priorities that may need to be focused on before March.

Chair Jackson stated that the approach is open but the main point is to save lives as quickly as possible.

### **Principles for Use of Funds**

The report of Christina Okereke, representative of the Attorney General of District of Columbia, titled "Overview of the Role and Responsibilities of the Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission" was received. The full report is available.

Dr. Barbara Bazron asked how does the Mayor's public emergency affect the grantmaking procedures.

Christina Okereke responded that it is our [Office of Attorney General's] understanding that it does not affect the grantmaking statute or the timelines under the grantmaking staff, which are pretty short anyway because it is only a fourteen-day notice.

Dr. Bazron suggested that some requirements may be able to be waived and a number of things can be done differently in terms, for example, looking at a competition of awards. Dr. Bazron stated that we should get input from DC Council.

Mark LeVota asked if the language in the DC statute, "area per capita," refers to geographic area or area of topic focus.

Christina Okereke responded that she believes it refers to geographic area but it is limited to one area of the District

Larry Gourdine asked if the organization is proposing to serve in a geographic area, does the organization have to be in that area of service?

Christina Okereke responds no.

Simpson asked what were the Mayor's charges to each of the departments, and suggested that the Commission needs to be aware that if they [government departments] start some activity with her instruction, then it may limit what the Commission can do.

Dr. Bazron stated that overall data coordination particularly among the Office of Medical Examiner and Fire and Emergency Services (FEMS) and an expedited procurement process were some of the particular charges made under the Mayor's public emergency.

Dr. Adams asked if the public emergency directs the specific use of any money from the Opioid Abatement Fund.

Dr. Bazron responded that the public emergency does not specifically direct Opioid Abatement Funds.

Bowen stated that it is important for the subcommittees to express to Department of Behavioral Health staff on providing adequate data for what they need.

### **New Business**

Items to be discussed and addressed in upcoming meetings:

- Subcommittee adoption and designation
- Data on how Live. Long. DC. funds have been spent.
- Grantmaking path

**Public comments**

Linda Kaufman, Ambrose Lane, Chris Thomas, Prince Hamn, John Davis, and Joe Henry made comments in person.

**Future Meeting Schedule and Next Steps**

Chair Jackson reminds Commission members that members must take an ethics and Open Meetings Act

Chair Jackson announced that the next meeting was on December 15, 2023 at District of Columbia Hospital Association.

**Adjournment**

At 11:15 AM, J. Chad Jackson adjourned the meeting.

Minutes approved on December 15, 2023.