

**Southwest Opioid Response District (SWORD) Meeting Minutes – Approved 01/08/2025**

**Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2:30pm via Zoom**

**Attendees:**

<b>Voting Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Proxy</b>
Steve Garchar (Chair), Commissioner Dolores County	X	Malynda Evans
Laurel Schafer (Vice Chair), Assistant Director Montezuma County Public Health	present	
Adam Rogers (Treasurer), Finance Director La Plata County	X	Shaine Gans
Erin Hyder (Secretary), Assistant City Manager City of Durango	present	
Amie Gardiner, Trustee Town of Silverton	present	
Austin Lashley, San Juan County Commissioner	X	
Becky Joyce, Director San Juan County Public Health	present	
Bill Rockensock, Police Chief Town of Pagosa Springs	X	
Bob Brammer, Assistant City Manager City of Durango	X	
Bobbi Lock, Director Montezuma Public Health	present	
Brice Current, Police Chief City of Durango	present	
Chauncey McCarthy, Town Manager Town of Rico	present	
Heather Alvarez, Town Administrator Town of Mancos	X	
Malynda Evans, Director Dolores County Social Services	present	
Marsha Porter-Norton, Commissioner La Plata County	present	
Martha Johnson, Director La Plata Human Services	X	
Nathaniel Baca, 6 <sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judge	X	
Ronnie Maez, Commissioner Archuleta County	X	
Tracy Anselmo, Director La Plata County Public Health	X	
Travis Anderson, County Administrator Montezuma County	present	

<b>Advisory/Non-Voting Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Ashley Gonzalez, Behavioral Health Programs Supervisor La Plata County Public Health	present
Breeah Kinsella, Executive Director Colorado Providers Association	X
Donna Mae Baukat, President and Executive Director Community Compassion Outreach	present
Haley Leonard-Saunders, Sr. Director of Development and Public Information Officer Axis Health Systems	present
Imo Succo, Director Indigenous Wellbriety Program	X
Jen Hargrove, MD Emergency Medicine	present

Kelly DiGiacomo, Therapist	X
Kent Aikin, Retired Family Physician	X
Mary Katherine, Psychologist	X
Will Finn, Physician	X

<b>Facilitators and Guests</b>	<b>Role</b>
Claire West, Region 9 EDD	Facilitator
Heather Otter, Region 9 EDD	Facilitator
Laura Lewis Marchino, Region 9 EDD	Facilitator
Doty Shepard, Resilient Colorado	Guest
Eric Barker, CO Consortium	Guest
Jack Patterson, CO Attorney General's Office	Guest
Shaine Gans, La Plata County Finance	Guest
Drew Sanders, City of Cortez	Guest
Joe Theine, Southwest Health System	Guest/Presenter
Dr. Andrea Ryan, CommonSpirit Mercy Hospital	Guest
Tonya Wheeler, Advocates For Recovery	Guest

- Vice Chair, Laurel Schafer, called the meeting to order at 2:38pm.
- A quorum was established.
- The agenda was reviewed.

**I. Approve September 2024 minutes**

- a. Laurel Schafer entertained a motion to approve the September 2024 minutes. Brice Current motioned, Chauncey McCarthy seconded. **Motion passed.**

**II. Conference Highlights and Takeaways**

- a. Laurel Schafer provided takeaways from 2024 COAG Opioid Conference, noting the importance of partnerships regarding treatment for incarcerated individuals. Claire West appreciated the focus on Native American populations as well as the opportunity to connect with others doing opioid abatement work across the state. Heather Otter commented on the elevated focus on operations this year as regions are now implementing funds toward projects. Jack Patterson informed attendees that the date and location for next year's conference have not yet been confirmed. Conference recordings are available to watch at

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtNZenMezBh9SBbhRcXBORyOA28yjicID>

### **III. Overview of Southwest Health System, Services, and Challenges**

- a. Joe Theine, the CEO of Southwest Health System, presented on the hospital's services and the challenges. He highlighted recent successes in elevating physician leaders and recruiting new staff. Additionally, he discussed data related to emergency department visits and the prevalence of mental and behavioral health issues. Data indicated that alcohol was the primary substance leading to hospital admissions in 2023, overshadowing other issues like the opioid crisis. Joe also noted the challenges faced by the EMS system in transporting patients with behavioral health conditions, often requiring trips to facilities far from the community, which strains local resources.
- b. A discussion arose centered on the challenges of transporting individuals for medical treatment and the subsequent need to return them to their communities. Joe Theine reiterated the potential for collaboration in creating a system to bring patients back after treatment, while Haley Leonard noted that Axis is already working on discharge planning to facilitate this process. Marsha Porter-Norton suggested that the upcoming retreat could discuss transportation issues for individuals returning from substance use treatment, and advocated for a collaborative approach.

### **IV. Funding Updates**

- a. Heather Otter summarized the process for updating the two year plan, making the next funding request, and reporting on 2024 expenditures all of which will happen between now and March 2025. In preparation for the funding plan, the second annual SWORD Futures retreat is scheduled in January. The group is charged with preparing funding proposals for SWORD's consideration.
- b. ENDO and McKinsey settlements resulted in additional funds totaling just over \$106,000 that will be integrated into the proposals for the upcoming funding plan.

### **V. Project Coordinator Updates**

- a. Claire West gave an overview of the recovery residence project including a reminder of what the Recovery Kentucky Model is and how the feasibility study supports this model in the SWORD Region. She reviewed the Colorado Revised Statute definition of recovery residence. She reiterated what is unique and different from anything existing in the State of Colorado is that the Recovery Kentucky model has a behavioral health-informed recovery education component built into daily life.

- b. Claire is in the process of planning the 2024 SWORD Futures retreat —gathering subject matter experts, people with lived experience, along with SWORD members from across the region for balanced representation. The retreat will be held in mid-January, proposals will be presented to the SWORD Council at the February meeting, and the funding request will be submitted in March.

**VI. Next SWORD meeting - Annual Meeting and Roster Updates**

- a. January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 2:30pm via Zoom will serve as the annual meeting. Officer roles and roster updates will occur.

Meeting adjourned at 3:52pm.

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Minutes prepared by Claire West