

**Pennsylvania Opioid Misuse and Addiction Abatement Trust
Dispute Resolution Committee Public Meeting
October 29, 2024 | 1:30 PM | Virtual**

MINUTES

DRC Member Attendees (7):

- Chair Tom VanKirk
- Tumar Alexander
- Commissioner Kevin Boozel
- Erin Dalton
- Shea Madden
- Commissioner Robert Postal
- Senator Christine Tartaglione

Northampton County Representatives:

- Robyn Barbosa, Human Services Deputy Director
- Stephen Barron, Fiscal Affairs Director
- Gretchen Hill, SCA Assistant Administrator

Other Attendees:

- Jayson Wolfgang, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney
- Jordan Yeagley, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney
- Briana Anderson, CCAP

Announcements

- This meeting of the Pennsylvania Opioid Misuse and Addiction Abatement Trust’s Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) has been duly advertised as a public meeting in accordance with the Sunshine Act and is therefore open to members of the public as observers.
- Participation in this meeting is limited to Northampton County, as a beneficiary under the Trust Order, and their designated representatives, Trustees on the DRC, and those that the Trustees have invited in advance to take part.
- This meeting is being recorded and minutes from this meeting will be available on the Trust’s website after they are approved by the DRC.
- A quorum of Trustees is present at the meeting.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the public DRC meeting held on September 23, 2024, were circulated to members of the DRC in advance of this meeting. Chair Tom VanKirk indicated that he would entertain a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Kevin Boozel and seconded by Senator Christine Tartaglione. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously by the Trustees in attendance.

Northampton County Presentation on Appeal of Program No. 1 – County Newsletter

Before Northampton County began its presentation, Chair Tom VanKirk sought clarification on the overall cost of the County Newsletter, which was reported to the Trust as \$21,999.98. At its public meeting on August 22, 2024, the Trust approved only \$4,180, which Northampton County had specified as OUD related. This appeal sought approval of the entire amount.

Stephen Barron, Fiscal Affairs Director for Northampton County, explained that opioid settlement funds (OSF) were specifically allocated for the creation and distribution of the newsletter, which served as the analog component of the County’s broader prevention marketing strategy. He noted that while the Trust had already determined that part of the program was compliant with Exhibit E, Northampton County had prepared a PowerPoint presentation that detailed the newsletter’s content and how each section is believed to align with Exhibit E.

Chair VanKirk asked if the newsletter is sent out annually, to which Mr. Barron confirmed that it is not. He elaborated that Northampton County hired the marketing firm, Kudu Creative, to oversee a range of initiatives, including the development of a website, branding efforts, the “Fake is Real” campaign, Facebook ads, and billboards. Given that Northampton County felt it was not effectively reaching all demographics, they decided to use direct mail to distribute the newsletter as a targeted communication strategy.

Mr. Barron then proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation, outlining the guiding principles that shaped the County's OSF spending decisions. He emphasized that the newsletter was a key component of their strategy to engage an underserved segment of the population. Looking ahead, Mr. Barron mentioned that future versions of the newsletter would include QR codes to improve engagement and that they were exploring more cost-effective mailing strategies. He also provided an overview of the County's comprehensive prevention strategies, which rely on mass communication channels like flyers, websites, billboards, and media campaigns. Mr. Barron highlighted the impact of the "Fake is Real" campaign, which features Narcan distribution kits. He reported that the campaign had successfully raised awareness, with a noticeable spike in website traffic during and after the newsletter's distribution. He also reviewed annual drug overdose statistics, noting a hopeful trend of decreasing deaths related to opioid use disorder (OUD), which he attributed in part to the "Fake is Real" campaign.

Next, Mr. Barron walked the DRC through the content of the newsletter. The newsletter aimed to engage residents with county services and promote community well-being.

At the conclusion of the PowerPoint presentation, Commissioner Robert Postal inquired as to how the \$4,180 portion of the overall cost of the newsletter, which was identified by Northampton County as relating to OUD and approved by the Trust, was determined. Chair VanKirk clarified that Northampton County had explained the OSF funding for the newsletter was based on a proportional allocation, reflecting the percentage of the newsletter content related to OUD prevention/remediation content. Northampton County calculated this by dividing the total number of pages by the frequency with which "Fake is Real" or related drug and alcohol references appeared.

Commissioner Kevin Boozel expressed concerns that the newsletter could be seen as an attempt to justify other county expenditures using OSF funds—such as the purchase of a sheriff's vehicle with a Narcan sticker. Commissioner Boozel asked if all the County's other prevention marketing initiatives were funded entirely by OSF. Mr. Barron confirmed that while most of the County's marketing initiatives were fully funded by OSF, the newsletter received only partial approval due to its partial alignment with Exhibit E. He added that, had the newsletter been fully compliant with Exhibit E, all the County's prevention marketing initiatives would have been fully funded by OSF.

Outcome of the Appeal

After Northampton County's presentation, Chair VanKirk opened the floor for discussion. Erin Dalton, Senator Christine Tartaglione, Tumar Alexander, and Shea Madden indicated they had no further questions.

Chair Tom VanKirk then presented the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that, the Dispute Resolution Committee of the Pennsylvania Opioid Misuse and Addiction Abatement Trust hereby affirms the decision of the Board of Trustees that Northampton County Program No. 1 County Newsletter is not compliant with Exhibit E.

A “yes” vote would maintain the current denial by the Trust, whereas a “no” vote would reverse the decision by the Trust that the program is not compliant with Exhibit E.

Chair VanKirk asked legal counsel to confirm that a “yes” vote would approve the \$4,180 amount as compliant with Exhibit E, as previously determine by the full Board at a public meeting. Counsel Jayson Wolfgang, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, confirmed. Senator Christine Tartaglione then made a motion to approve the motion as presented. Tumar Alexander seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the Trustees then voted as follows:

Yeses (6):

- Tumar Alexander
- Commissioner Kevin Boozel
- Erin Dalton
- Shea Madden
- Commissioner Robert Postal
- Senator Christine Tartaglione

Nos (0)

The motion passed unanimously, with the result that the Trust’s approval of only \$4,180 for Northampton County Program No. 1 County Newsletter, was affirmed.

With no new business to address, Chair Tom VanKirk called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kevin Boozel moved to adjourn, and Tumar Alexander seconded the motion. The meeting was officially closed at 2:13 PM.