



CITY OF DOVER

DELAWARE

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

OCTOBER 29, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR'S OPIOID USE DISORDER TASFORCE MEETING

The Mayor's **Blue Ribbon** Opioid Use Disorder Taskforce Committee was held on **October 29, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.** with Chairman Dr. Roy Sudler, Jr. presiding. OUD Taskforce members present were the Honorable Eric L. Buckson, Mr. James Oxford Sr., Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III, Mrs. Toni Jordan, and Mrs. Chelle Paul. Mr. Benard Pratt was absent.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' PRESENT

Councilpersons Donyale Hall and David Anderson.

AGENDA ITEMS/DELIBERATIONS

Chairman Sudler reviewed the agenda items and explained the Guideline Subheadings and Comment Feedback area to the public.

No additions or deletions were proposed for the meeting.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III,

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Chelle Paul.

PURPOSE:

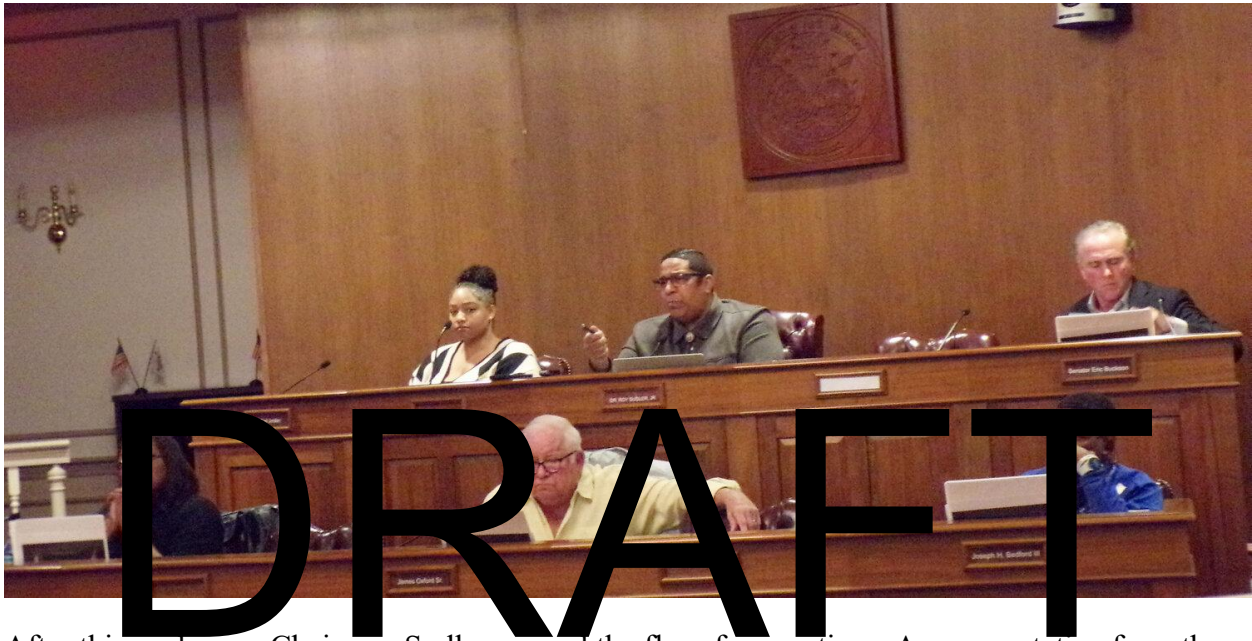
Chairman Sudler initiated the meeting by outlining the objectives of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) Taskforce Committee, including its fiduciary responsibilities and an overview of the committee members. Following this introduction, he presented the Ad hoc committee chairs for the 2025-2027 term. Each chairperson then provided a succinct overview of their strategies and goals for leading their respective committees. During this segment, Ad-hoc Chairperson Mr. James Oxford Sr. (Team Dover Coach) asked about the financial parameters for obtaining certain types of grants. Chairman Sudler clarified that the committee's recommendations would determine how settlement funds are allocated to organizations demonstrating effective, evidence-based programs in accordance with established guidelines. He then redirected attention to Councilman David Anderson, who noted that these funds, derived



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from a lawsuit against specific pharmaceutical companies initiated by the Department of Justice, are neither federal nor state funds and must be disbursed under local or state oversight.



After this exchange, Chairman Sudler opened the floor for questions. A representative from the Firm Foundation Recovery expressed appreciation for the OUD Task Force's efforts to pursue grant funding. He inquired whether the previous framework and strategic plan would be utilized in the current Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force approach, as well as the status of funding awards. In response, Chairman Sudler noted that the City of Dover has not yet received the next round of funds. The city has been tasked with formulating recommendations through a comprehensive plan that adheres to the OUD Settlement Guidelines. He then introduced the Ad-hoc Chairs, who outlined their integrated plans to fulfill their committee objectives. Chairman Sudler called upon Senator Eric Buckston, Ad-hoc Chair of the Legislative & Finance Issue Committee, to articulate his leadership role within the OUD Taskforce Committee. Senator Buckston shared his perspective on prioritizing quality outcomes over speed in securing funding, emphasizing the importance of being "last and best" in the effective use of OUD funds in Delaware.

He further discussed the restructuring efforts of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Commission (POSDC) regarding oversight and accountability for the usage of these funds. Following his presentation, Councilwoman Donyale Hall posed several questions about funding rounds, guidelines, grant recipients' responsibilities, and the distribution percentages among municipalities. Senator Buckston responded by indicating a desire to return control over fund allocation to local municipalities while implementing performance appraisals. He indicated that



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fifteen percent (15%) of the total amount disbursed in the current funding round would be allocated among eligible municipalities that qualify for the OUD Settlement Funds. He also outlined the various grant sizes—macro and micro—accessible to organizations seeking financial support. This comprehensive dialogue underscored the OUD Taskforce Committee's commitment to ensuring effective stewardship of the funds and maintaining transparency in the disbursement process. After much discussion regarding the grant process, Chairman Sudler introduced Mrs. Chelle Paul, the Chair of the OUD Taskforce's Workforce Development & Safety Issues Ad hoc Committee, to present her strategic vision for workforce engagement. Mrs. Paul's initiative champions a robust, data-driven approach that aligns with the Biopsychosocial Framework.

By focusing on comprehensive assessments of chronic pain, trauma, and mental health issues, this initiative seeks to deliver targeted support to those most in need, reinforcing our commitment to effectively addressing OUD cases in Delaware's capital. Upon completion of Mrs. Paul's vision plan for her committee, a community member from Firm Foundation Recovery approached the podium to inquire about how the Proposed Recommendations for the Abatement of OUD in the Capital of Delaware were identified. **1. Investment in Detox Treatment Infrastructure, 2. Enhancement of Behavioral Health, 3. Expansion of Telehealth Services, 4. Data and Research, 5. Mobile Intervention Units, and 6. Youth-Focused Campaigns**), and whether any of these strategies are linked to the previous funders. Chair Sudler responded to the questions and emphasized that the proposed recommendations were derived from various community and OUD Taskforce committee members, which Chair Sudler orchestrated into six proposed strategies aligned with the **EXHIBIT E. List of Opioid Remediation Uses**.

He also explained that the recommendations would be voted on based on feedback from the community and task force members. During the discussion, community representative Mr. Stratton Bay raised essential concerns about the criteria for recruiting individuals with substance use backgrounds who wish to contribute to the OUD response actively. Mrs. Paul emphasized the committee's dedication to ensuring compliance with grant requirements, recognizing that while many eager organizations stand ready to assist, some may lack the essential staffing or proposal quality needed to secure funding. Chair Sudler then recognized Councilman Anderson, who reminded attendees of the microphone's accessibility for those unable to approach the podium, underscoring the meeting's community-focused nature. Mr. Stratton continued his point of interest and emphasized the importance of focusing on past practices and on organizations that were qualified to provide OUD services but failed to fulfill their obligations under the terms of



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the grant awarded, as this was a significant concern for consideration in the next round of funding.

Mr. Stratton further elaborated on the imperative for the OUD Taskforce to be proactive in workforce development and in addressing the OUD epidemic challenges in our community, by monitoring the use of Settlement funds to ensure that the guidelines are adhered to and that the Settlement funds are traceable and utilized effectively. Chair Sudler responded by elaborating on the task force's duties: to review all micro- or macro-grant proposals and assess the best approach to selecting evidence-based programs that address the whole individual. Chair Sudler then recognized Senator Buckson, who suggested that Mr. Bradley Owens, Executive Director of the Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Distribution Commission, provide further insights to clarify the funding and grant processes. Senator Buckson then yielded the floor back to Chairman Sudler for further discussion. Chair Sudler then referred to a community member who inquired about assistance for orchestrating a grant proposal due to the complexity of the requirements. Chair Sudler responded that Delaware State University has students willing to assist individuals with the grant-writing process through workforce development and partnership initiatives. He also referred to Mr. Bobby Wilson, who offered his sources to help individuals with the budget to complete a grant application successfully.

Chair Sudler then recognized the founder of Firm Foundation Recovery Inc., who focused on treatment models rather than peer-to-peer conceptual models, and he felt that peer-to-peer recovery programs are a better investment for long-term treatment and recovery strategies. He also specified that the medication assisted treatment plan keeps people dependent on Meds rather than addressing the core issue for long-term successful impact. Arresting individuals and forcing individuals to treatment fails to address the core issue; hence, impeding upon recovery initiatives; subsequently, contributing to some individuals continuing to abuse pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical drugs. Responding to the representative of Firm Foundation Recovery Inc. (FFRI) was Mrs. Pual who clarified the OUD Taskforce Committee's mission, emphasizing the importance of aiding individuals on the Medians rather than resorting to punitive measures. She highlighted the dual goals of ensuring safety for both drivers and pedestrians while also reinforcing the illegality of walking on the median. The representative from FFRI expressed gratitude for Mrs. Pual's insights and encouraged the Committee to leverage his organization's resources to further their objectives. His concluding remarks echoed Senator Buckson's sentiment that the committee should maintain a broad, visionary perspective in addressing this issue.



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Chair Sudler responded appreciatively, reiterating the Taskforce's adoption of the Biopsychosocial Framework, which advocates for a comprehensive approach to tackling addiction and chronic pain by addressing biological, psychological, behavioral, and social factors. Following this, Senator Buckson shared his personal views on coerced versus voluntary treatment, clarifying that his opinions do not necessarily represent the committee's collective stance. Chairman Sudler then called on Mrs. Toni Jordan, the Ad hoc Committee Chair and Optimal Well-being Advisor from North Node Counseling Agency, who expressed her excitement about contributing to the Taskforce. She emphasized the multifaceted approach to recovery, acknowledging that some individuals may not be ready or willing to accept help. Nonetheless, she is committed to the peer support model and looks forward to collaborating with the committee and the community. After Mrs. Jordan's presentation, Mr. Joseph H. Bedford III was introduced by Chairman Sudler as the Community and Youth Engagement Ad hoc Committee Chair. Mr. Bedford stressed the importance of increasing community involvement in these discussions. He highlighted his work with youth, urging attendees to promote awareness of available resources. Mr. Bedford also advocated for fostering a positive relationship between the police and the community to enhance engagement in recovery efforts, emphasizing collaboration and support over blame as essential for effective outreach and resolution-building.

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He further focused on the big picture, and his vision, dream, and prayer are for everyone to work together and reach individuals through community outreach, not pointing fingers, but being willing to help resolve the matter via program resources and networking. In a significant move towards addressing the challenges posed by opioid use disorder (OUD) in Delaware's capital, Mr. Bedford articulated a vision centered on healing and community support. Following this, Chairman Sudler introduced Mr. Benard Pratt as part of the OUD Taskforce, where Mr. Pratt will serve as the assistant researcher alongside Chairman Sudler, who will lead the research efforts. Chairman Sudler underscored the importance of advancing scientific understanding of OUD treatment and recovery methods. The research committee intends to delve into the multifaceted aspects of the disorder and their implications for the overall well-being of individuals. He elaborated on the adoption of the Biopsychosocial (BPS) Framework as a foundational approach, recognizing its significance in comprehensively addressing addiction and chronic pain through a holistic lens that considers biological, psychological, behavioral, and social components. Emphasizing the necessity of teamwork in this endeavor, Chairman Sudler introduced Mr. James Oxford Sr. as the Team Coach for the OUD Taskforce Ad hoc Committee.



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Mr. Oxford, a retired educator and athletic director with deep personal insights into the challenges posed by OUD—especially as a parent who has experienced this epidemic—shared his commitment to helping those in need. He highlighted the gaps in insurance coverage for recovery addiction and the lack of adequate support programs within the prison system. Mr. Oxford brought attention to initiatives like the "Fisherman of Men," spearheaded by Frank Parks, which aims to assist young individuals in their recovery journeys. He also spoke passionately about the Dover Elks program, which extends advocacy and resources into schools to support those facing OUD-related challenges. Following Mr. Oxford's valuable contributions, Chairman Sudler drew attention to the QR Code linked to EXHIBIT E: List of Opioid Remediation Uses, facilitating access to essential information. He then revisited the Biopsychosocial framework and presented six Proposed Recommendations aimed at the abatement of OUD in the capital. He stressed the importance for potential grant applicants align their services with the remediation uses outlined in the OUD grant guidelines. Moreover, Chairman Sudler discussed the upcoming Traffic Safety Concerns regarding individuals on highways and medians, viewing this as a vital opportunity for the OUD Taskforce to gather more data and implement targeted initiatives that directly address the needs of individuals in need towards safe spaces equipment and the necessary resources for their specific challenges.

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Constituents Recommendations consisted of the following:

****Firm Foundation Recovery:** This organization emphasizes the 12 principles of recovery and takes purposeful steps to foster positive community change. For more information, visit [firmfoundationrecovery.org] (<https://firmfoundationrecovery.org/>).

****Carry Their Light Project:** No one outside Dover can effectively address the challenges faced there—the people of Dover must do it. This organization provides essential assistance at night, filling a service gap in both Capital and Kent County. More details can be found [here](<https://www.facebook.com/share/1BvRrVbxVy/?mibextid=wwXIfr>).

****Our Roots Foundation:** Their peer-to-peer approach, along with the efforts of small organizations on the ground, is critical for reducing stress and helping individuals be more receptive to recovery and treatment. Collaboration is vital, as we all share the same goals. Learn more at [ourrootsfoundation.com] (<https://ourrootsfoundation.com/>).

****Community Member (Matt):** He advocates for a focus on long-term recovery—lasting five months or more—through supportive organizations like Fishermen of Men and Firm Foundation Recovery. He encourages exploring new strategies to guide individuals in the capital and calls



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for increased funding to address substance use and mental health challenges throughout the state of Delaware.

****Community Member (Justin):** He argues that Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is not a sustainable long-term recovery strategy, as individuals can become resistant to the treatment after prolonged use. He also suggests examining Carl Jung’s research on the “Uresis of the Mind.”

****Community Member (Robert, 30 years of recovery):** He recommends focusing on a spiritual foundation and emphasizes the importance of relying on God. He states that the Firm Foundation Recovery program is highly effective in helping others.

****Hope Ministry (Pastor) –** People need to see that you care for them to want to change. Helping people avoid incarceration and getting the help they need. We need to focus on the youth because the Drug War over territory needs to be addressed by focusing on the youth, not becoming another statistic in the usage of illicit drugs. We need to come together and educate each other throughout the state with a sentiment of community of compassion.

After recommendations from the Constituents, Chair Sudler recognized Senator Beckson, who focused on addressing the acute phase of addiction and providing wraparound services. He further explained that Kent County does not have a recovery facility in lower Kent County, and that his objective is to change that. He believes that if you cannot control your OUD situation, then someone should do it for you. He invites conversation but not confrontation. Chair Sudler then recognized Mrs. Chelle Paul, who elaborated on the different needs of individuals battling addiction based on circumstances and age of individuals confronted with OUD determinants.

Chair Sudler responded to Mrs. Paul, stating that one of the six proposals addresses youth awareness and campaigns. Councilwoman Donyale Hall congratulated individuals for coming out and letting their voices be heard and confirmed the need for further outreach to youth and other community members for assistance. She believes wraparound services are very much needed, and she is happy to hear that there are programs that can be sustained through collaborative efforts for a long-term solution to individuals’ recovery.

Councilman Anderson concurred with Councilwoman Hall and emphasized the importance of staying connected and advocating for positive change. He offered his contact information and noted that all council members' contact information is on the City of Dover’s Website.

Firm Foundation Recovery (Representative) - Asked for a group picture in the spirit of unity and transparency.



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MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON OUD TASKFORCE ACTION:

After the final remarks, Chairman Sudler recognized OUD Taskforce Member Toni Jordan, moved to accept the six Proposed Recommendations for the Abatement of OUD in the Capital of Delaware (Investment in Detox Treatment Center Infrastructure, 2. Enhancement of Behavioral Health, 3. Expansion of Telehealth Services, 4. Data and Research, 5. Mobile Intervention Units, and 6. Youth-Focused Campaigns, which was properly seconded by OUD Taskforce Member Mrs. Chelle Paul. The motion was adopted unanimously. The Chair then recognized Team Dover Coach Oxford, who ended the meeting by stating that he is both encouraged and surprised that individuals have organizations with boots on the ground. He further stated that we need to focus on funding individuals and organizations to continue their support in addressing the OUD challenges, as he is very impressed and encouraged.



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SYNOPSIS:

The conversation ultimately underscored the existing tension between traditional treatment models and the efficacy of peer-to-peer recovery programs. The need for substantial investment in practices that promote long-term recovery without the risk of medication dependence was a central theme, reflecting a community commitment to innovative approaches in addressing OUD. In addressing the challenges associated with opioid use disorder (OUD) in our community, it is essential that we approach solutions with both assertiveness and diplomacy. As discussed in the recent meeting, the involvement of peer-to-peer organizations and the insights shared by community leaders highlight the urgent need for compassionate support and resources, particularly focusing on our youth.

- The meeting was opened (6:00 p.m.) and adjourned (9:00 p.m.) with a Prayer.

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Submitted By:

Roy Sudler, Jr. Ph.D.

Chairman

Mayor's **Blue Ribbon** OUD Taskforce Committee



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