

Opioid Abatement Advisory Board Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

10am – 11am Remote via Zoom

Present: Sarah Toste, Fred Hehre, Fernando Lana, Brice Boutot, Anna McCaffrey, Marina Lent

Also Present: Stacy Wise (Red House & SUD Coalition), Allie Gittens-Dias (Mosaic Program), Kala Thapa (BU MPH student), Martina Thornton (County Manager), Diane Conroy-LaCivita (Health and Human Services Director)

Updates

1. Ongoing Substance Use & Behavioral Health Needs Assessment

- Conducted by BU graduate students Kala Thapa and Jaden Thackston under Board oversight.
- Focus areas: partnership mapping, community engagement, and identifying island service gaps in behavioral health and substance-use treatment
- Mapping categorized local organizations, state/federal resources, and civic groups, listing each group's type, mission, funding, and contact info.
- Key represented organizations include MV Community Services, MV Hospital, Red House, Vineyard House, Wampanoag Tribe Health Services, Gosnold Behavioral Health, and many others.

2. Invoices & Compensation

- Fred made a motion to approve invoices for both Jaden and Kala. Anna seconded. The Board unanimously approved partial stipend payments for both students (~\$1.6–1.75K each) at the midpoint of their 240-hour practicum

3. Community Engagement Plans

- Upcoming steps:
 - Surveys for stakeholders and community members with lived/living experience.
 - Red House's new meeting rooms will host listening sessions and focus groups.

- Outreach will intentionally include Portuguese-speaking/Brazilian residents, veterans, and deaf community members
- Printed and digital trifold pamphlets were created to describe the assessment and include a QR code for stakeholder participation.

4. Resource Coordination & Gaps

- Discussion highlighted:
 - Need to update outdated online resource directories like *First Stop* and *Find Help* implementation on the island.
 - Desire for a comprehensive, easily searchable resource guide (print + web) reflecting all recovery, behavioral-health, and civic supports available locally
 - Persistent service gaps: transportation and lack of inpatient detox facilities on the island.

Collaboration Highlights

- Stacy Wise will provide recovery-focused contact data and integrate efforts with the SUD Coalition.
- Diane Conroy-LaCivita emphasized opportunities to align the project with the Rural Scholars initiative and Rural Transformational Grant work
- County and Board of Health offices will explore ways to fold these findings into a unified county-level resource database.

Next Steps

1. Finalize and share the living partnership map for Board review.
2. Expand outreach to faith communities and civic groups.
3. Conduct stakeholder and community interviews/surveys.
4. Compile findings into a draft Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) report by late summer 2026.
5. Target September 2026 for issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) to allocate opioid-abatement funding based on needs identified

Action Items for West Tisbury

- Review and contribute to the partnership mapping document when shared.

- Provide local input on community resource outreach points (e.g., Town Hall, library, COA).
- Distribute printed surveys in high-traffic town areas.
- Support planning for focus groups at the Red House.
- Coordinate with Fernando Lana on effective outreach to the Portuguese-speaking community.

Key Decision Summary

- Minutes approval: Marina Lent made a motion to approve March 4 minutes. Brice Boutot seconded. Board unanimously approved.
- Invoices approved: Midpoint payments to student analysts.
- Ongoing projects: Partnership map and community engagement initiatives continued.
- Next meeting: TBD, likely after review of mapping deliverables and surveys

Meeting adjourned at 11:03am

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Toste

West Tisbury Board of Health