

Opioid Abatement Advisory Board Minutes

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Remote via Zoom

10am – 11am

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

Also Present: Jaden Thackston Boston University MPH practicum student, Stacy Wise (SUD Coordinator), Martina Thornton (County Manager), Ally Gittens Dias (Mosaic TTA), Kala Thapa BU MPH practicum student, Lisa Belcastro (Dukes County Health Council)

Community Needs Assessment Progress

- Partner & Resource Mapping: Now largely complete, documenting island health and substance use disorder (SUD) resources, though still being refined with details such as operating hours and service capacities
- Surveys: Community and organizational surveys being finalized; plans to distribute them in multiple formats and translate into Portuguese to engage Brazilian community members.
- Focus Groups: Two planned at the Red House to explore local experiences with substance use and behavioral health care. Faith-leader and stakeholder focus groups are also planned.
- Goal: Gather quantitative and qualitative data to understand access barriers, collaboration, and community resource capacity.

Resource Access and Information Systems

- FindHelp Platform: Martina Thornton described replacing “First Stop” with FindHelp, a county-funded online directory offering:
 - Easier updating (automatic organization notifications)
 - Referral tracking loop
 - Usage metrics for grants and coordination
 - Participation confirmed from 11 major organizations

- Reason for switch: First Stop lacked active maintenance and update capacity. FindHelp adds automated updates, national reach, and data tracking.
- Marina Lent's note: Suggested considering accessibility for people in crisis or with low literacy. Kala supported developing print or "phone book" -style resource guides

Outreach to the Brazilian Community

- Fernando Lana's input:
 - Suggested initiating contact through trusted pastors and WhatsApp groups.
 - Offered to assist translating the survey and introducing Kala and Jaden to community leaders.
 - Emphasized need for Portuguese-language materials (concise, visual) and potentially youth engagement through schools

Contract and Administrative Updates

- Jaden Thackston & Kala Thapa: Current contract set to expire May 31 but work continues. Marina made a motion to extend contract to June 30th. Fred seconded. Board voted unanimously to extend the contract to June 30th so they can finish outreach and analysis. Sarah to facilitate contract signatures with students and the County Manager.
- Hours: About 170 of 240 required hours completed; expected to reach ≈300. Potential stipend adjustment to match workload may be discussed later.
- Funding formula: Ally Gittens Dias working with Cheryl Sabara (Mass. Assoc. of Health Boards) to design a fair cost-share model for town contributions.

Announcements

- Red House Grand Opening: Friday at noon on Community Services main campus.
- Chicken Alley Super Clearance Sale: Friday 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; proceeds support community reuse.
- Mosaic Matching Grants: Applications reopen this fall—potential funding source for Opioid Abatement projects

Action Points

Support continued engagement in the community needs assessment and follow its data outcomes.

1. Encourage local promotion of the FindHelp resource platform once launched.

2. Facilitate participation of Portuguese-speaking residents via translated surveys or focus groups.
3. Monitor contract extension deliverables from Kala and Jaden through June 2026.
4. Prepare to collaborate on the shared financing framework once finalized by Ally and Cheryl Sbarra
5. Attend or promote community events (Red House opening, Chicken Alley sale) to strengthen local engagement.

Meeting adjourned 10:57am

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Toste

West Tisbury Board of Health