

Substance Use Recovery Services Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

January 9, 2023, 9:00-11:00 PDT

Meeting Recording: [WA State Substance Use Recovery Services Advisory Committee \(SURSAC\) January 9, 2023 - YouTube](#)

HCA Executive & Administrative Support

<input type="checkbox"/>	Jason McGill, Executive Co-Sponsor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tony Walton, 5476 Project Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Zayas, Admin Assistant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michelle Martinez, Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brianna Peterson, Plan Writer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandy Sander, Admin Assistant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blake Ellison, Meeting Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rachel Downs, Admin Assistant		

Committee Members (28)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Langer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amber Daniel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donnell Tanksley
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amber Leaders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brandie Flood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Malika Lamont
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sen. Manka Dhingra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stormy Howell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Addy Adwell
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sen. John Braun	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chad Enright	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kevin Ballard
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Lauren Davis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	John Hayden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hunter McKim
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Dan Griffey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sarah Melfi-Klein	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kendall Simmonds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Caleb Banta-Green	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sherri Candelario		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don Julian Saucier	<input type="checkbox"/>	James Tillett		Alternates / Optional Attendees:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chenell Wolfe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Christine Lynch	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Jamila Taylor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alexie Orr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sarah Gillard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Gina Mosbrucker

Teams Meeting Attachments

- Meeting Agenda
- Committee Norms & Expectations
- 2023 Meeting Schedule

Stipends for Eligible Committee Members

Per SB 5793, HCA is able to offer stipends for committee members who are not otherwise compensated for their time serving on the committee, to remove barriers for the participation of individuals directly impacted by public policy discussions. Per 5793, “Subject to available funding, [HCA] may provide a stipend to individuals who are low income or have lived experience to support their participation in [the SURSAC] when the agency determines such participation is desirable in order to implement the principles of equity described in RCW 43.06D.020, provided that the individuals are not otherwise compensated for their time at meetings.”

Committee members are eligible for the stipend if they bring lived/living experience or expertise to the conversation, or they meet a low-income threshold (not more than 400 percent of the federal poverty level, adjusted for family size), if they are not receiving compensation for time attending the committee meetings.

The stipend is \$45.00 per hour (\$90.00 for each two- hour meeting).

If you think you would be eligible for this, please reach out to Michelle Martinez at michelle.martinez@hca.wa.gov

Q. Is the stipend retroactive, for meetings attended over the last year?

A. Stipend requests can be applied for the January 2023 meeting and all subsequent meetings. Michelle will inquire about whether retroactive payments are also available.

Plan Submission & Implementation Updates

Currently the formality of the plan being published is still going through executive review. We would expect that to be completed by the first part of February. Will send weekly/bi-weekly updates.

It is anticipated that the delay in the formal submission of the Plan to the legislation will NOT inhibit or reduce the ability for legislation to be crafted, given the Law & Justice Committee hearing in December, the participation of multiple legislators on the SURSAC throughout 2022, the availability of the recommendations that have been posted to the 5476 webpage for several weeks, and references being made in the press to the SURS Plan.

The 5476 webpage with the list of recommendations can be found here: [State v. Blake: ESB 5476 and behavioral health expansion | Washington State Health Care Authority](#)

Update: The SURS Plan was officially submitted on Wednesday, January 11, 2023. [Read the final SURS Plan.](#)

Monthly Meeting Objectives & Process

Michelle Martinez and Blake Ellison provided an overview of the 2023 SURSAC meeting schedule, highlighting the meetings already dedicated to review of the RNP quarterly reports as well as annual report review, and a recap of feedback received for 2023 “Areas for Improvement,” before moving into the following discussion topics:

- 2023-2026 Committee Charge per 5476
- Additional Objectives
- Communication
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Strategies

2023-2026 Committee Charge per 5476

Per 5476, the charge of HCA with regard to the SURSAC, is to adopt rules in accordance with the recommendations of the committee as provided for the SURS Plan (RCW 71.24.546§6). The charge of the SURSAC is to provide review and consultation to HCA regarding: (1) the annual Substance Use Recovery Services Plan reports (RCW 71.24.546§7); and (2) the quarterly reports for the Recovery Navigator Program (RCW 71.24.115§5).

When Blake Ellison asked the committee, “What do you want this process to look like?” SURSAC members responded with the following:

- **Do something to show what committee members are doing / the lived experiences they have outside of the SURSAC** (Follow up: Michelle will send bio prompts for a SURSAC directory to members – participation is voluntary)
- **More equitable and representative process, co-chair or tri-chair model** (Follow up: The SURSAC admin team is seeking clarification around what authority HCA has, if any, to make changes regarding committee chairs and seats.
- **Need communication from HCA when there are opportunities for SURSAC members to speak publicly (to legislature and otherwise) re: the recommendations** (Follow up: Michelle will provide the committee with guidance on how to find legislative committee agendas, offer testimony around bills of interest, and receive automated bill updates. Michelle will also notify the committee when members have been invited to speak publicly on the committee’s work. Committee members interested in providing political advocacy for recommendations in the SURS Plan are encouraged to also seek additional information sources and coordinate with one another and HCA).
- **Helpful to keep a tally of different questions that come to committee re: questions and follow up – responses do not need to wait until each monthly meeting; Would like HCA to follow up and make sure all questions addressed to subcommittee members are answered to the extent possible** (Follow up: Using a new format in the Meeting Notes to ensure follow up to each issue/concern is noted).
- **Plan proactively for bringing voices of those with lived/living experience & expertise to the conversations early and often** (Follow up: In committee membership, there are at least 6

members in recovery from SUD who experienced criminal legal consequences; if/when additional voices representing other types of experiences are needed, collaboration between HCA and SURSAC members will be needed to figure out who else to invite and how best to extend those invitations).

- **Do not limit input from community members to public comment periods, particularly for those who regularly attend the meetings** (Follow up: Public comment will be prompted in public comment periods at the beginning of meetings, during each topic discussion, and at the end of meetings to encourage input from non-committee members)
- **Have active conversations re: next agendas near the end of meetings, and who to have at the table for upcoming conversations** (Follow-up: 5-10 minutes for subsequent agenda-setting has been added to SURSAC agenda templates)
- **Re: RNP quarterly reports – include on-the-ground members of navigator team at the report review meetings** (Follow-up: Michelle has sent invitations to RNP Quarterly Report review meetings on March 6, June 12th, September 11th, and December 4th to BHASO administrators and service providers)
- **HCA should share news and media related to SURS Plan/ SURSAC work** (Follow up: As we become aware of media related to the SURS Plan, they will be included in direct emails to SURSAC and the SURSAC listserv)
- **To the extent possible, invite SURSAC members to help inform media from HCA related to RNP and recommendation implementation** (Follow up: A discussion related to media options has been added to the list of to-be-scheduled agenda items for further conversation)
- **Would be helpful to make a list of people from each RNP region who media can be referred to, coordinate talking points and success stories / share what's working well** (Follow up: Michelle will discuss options for this with the RNP team leads.)
- **Collect list of criticisms as well as praise related to RNP work to help track what's working / not working and what needs addressed in media messaging** (Follow up: There will be a presentation on RNP to provide an overview of the program that covers challenges and successes at the Feb 13th meeting. RNP quarterly reports are also intended to provide data snapshots to committee members to identify areas of improvement as part of consultation provided to HCA.)
- **Put together a media packet with multiple people from SURSAC to be released** (Follow up: We are in discussions with our communications team; a discussion related to media options has been added to the list of to-be-scheduled agenda items for further conversation once we know more)
- **Align with DEI guidance from governor's office** (Follow-up: A 2020 policy brief from Jay Inslee's office on state commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion can be found here: [An historic commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion \(wa.gov\)](#). Information about the Washington State Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) efforts can be accessed on the [HCA website here](#). A 2-page summary can be found [here](#). Michelle Martinez, Michael Langer, Blake Ellison, and Tony Walton are in conversations with DBHR's DEI lead, Sandra Mena-Tyree, to improve DEI practices)

- **Frame SURSAC as multi-disciplinary group that listens to and learns from each other to create solid policy** (Follow up: This has been added to the list of agenda items to be scheduled.)
- **Include time for conversation related to public safety; how to encourage recovery, not criminalize people, and also maintain public safety** (Follow-up: This item has been added to the “future agenda items” list)
- **Discuss Kratom as potential regulated treatment for OUD and other behavioral health disorders, including risks and benefits** (Follow-up: This item has been added to the “future agenda items” list)
- **SURSAC should make a statement / declaration re: overdose prevention** (Follow-up: This item has been added to the “future agenda items” list; will need clarification regarding intended audience and message distribution)
- **SURSAC should make a statement re: goals with safe supply** (Follow up: This will be added to the “Safe Supply” agenda item)

Additional Objectives

Blake asked the committee, “Above and beyond the charge laid out for the SURSAC per 5476, is there anything else you want to add to the committee’s objectives?” Members responded:

- Discuss/teach strategies to talk about stigma, communication skills, how legislation works (e.g., lobbying), and the myth of “rock bottom”
- Opportunities for teaching/learning
- Involve SURSAC in developing public facing talking points related to the Plan

Communication

Michelle presented the current communication process between HCA and SURSAC, and invited feedback from the committee:

SURSAC member emails

- Agenda item requests to be sent to SURSAC at least 2 weeks prior to next meeting
- Notification when members are speaking to legislature re: recommendations
- Share legislative updates relevant to SURS Plan, Blake work, and additional intersections of behavioral health and criminal legal systems

GovDelivery SURSAC Listserv / Newsletter

- Share milestone updates regarding SURS Plan implementation
- Provide links for upcoming meetings

COMMUNICATION REQUEST: Inform the SURSAC when HCA faces challenges, hiccups, or barriers.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Strategies

Michelle presented take-aways from DEI conversations that have been had with community members with lived experience to gather ideas for specific action HCA could take to improve DEI within the committee meetings:

DEI Principles/Approaches

- Invite people with lived experience to the existing “tables” where work is being done; do not create separate tables
- Make “getting to the table” as accessible as possible
- Distinction between the “public” and those who are directly impacted by the policies being discussed (not everyone who is part of the public is directly impacted)
- Allow for flexibility in agendas to prioritize hearing from people who are directly impacted when they are able to be present and share (**Follow up:** Each discussion topic will include time for public comment to create more flexibility for those who are directly impacted to share)

Specific Strategies

- Put Public Comment at the beginning, less waiting for those who want to share; allows for influence over decision-making discussions; have also heard that having public comment at the end is better to allow for comment on what was discussed
 - **Post-meeting action taken:** Public Comment periods have been added to the beginning *and* end of agenda templates, 10 minutes each
- Include the 5476 email address in the YouTube description below meeting videos
 - **Action taken:** hcaesb5476@hca.wa.gov has been added to the video description template for all future meeting recordings
- Post agenda at least a week ahead of the meeting so people have time to understand what’s on the agenda and prepare comments
 - **Action taken:** SURSAC members will receive copies of draft agendas for feedback at least two weeks prior to the next meeting, and final agendas will be posted at least a week prior to the next meeting. If these timelines must be adjusted due to challenges or barriers, those will be communicated to SURSAC as requested.
- Invite feedback inside of each topic instead of only during public comment, e.g., “Are there any directly impacted folks on the call who would like to weigh in on this topic?”
 - **Post-meeting action:** Concern was raised around asking people to identify as having direct experience before commenting, but inviting public comment inside each topic was supported. This will be implemented in the next meeting.
- Facilitator awareness and mediation is needed around others’ responses when vulnerable experiences shared, to ensure an environment of safety and respect
- Meetings that are later in the day can be more accessible (also received feedback that mornings are better)

- Provide compensation for those who attend (committee members, but also others)
 - **Action taken:** A stipend of \$90 per 2-hour meeting has been made available to SURSAC members with lived experience and/or low income who are not otherwise compensated for time spent in committee meetings.

Additional DEI Requests

- Multiple chairs for the committee (co-chairs or tri-chairs) with equal say
 - **Follow-up:** Before implementing this suggestion, HCA will seek more clarification about the intended role of a co-chair (e.g., facilitating meeting discussions, attending agenda-setting meetings, etc.), as well as majority group support for this change
- Encourage members to bring +1 with lived experience to each meeting
- Bring those with lived/living experience & expertise to the conversations early and often
- Do something to show what committee members are doing / the lived experiences they have outside of the SURSAC
 - **Follow-up:** Michelle will be inviting committee members to provide information related to their professional and personal experience (as much or as little as they are comfortable sharing), to be included in a SURSAC member directory for members to learn more about one another and better understand the knowledge and experience base within the committee
- Need to know how to provide safe space for sharing before inviting people to share
 - **Follow up:** HCA is exploring DEI / trauma-informed meetings training for meeting facilitators
- Align with DEI guidance from governor's office
 - **Follow up:** HCA can share summary of agency strategies/initiatives on the agency level if committee is interested, such as Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) efforts

Public Comment

- Concern was voiced that there is only one representative from Eastern Washington on the committee (Amber Daniel from Walla Walla). The committee was asked to conduct more outreach to recruit more rural voices. As a point of clarification regarding this concern, there are actually four SURSAC members from Eastern Washington:
 - James Tillett (Spokane County)
 - Chenell Wolfe (Grant County)
 - Sarah Gillard (Franklin County)
 - Amber Daniel (Walla Walla County)

The current SURSAC roster, which includes geographic areas of representation for each member, [can be viewed here](#).

- When new acronyms are introduced (such as “DEI”), it is important to clarify what it stands for a few times, for those who are not already familiar
- When someone attends the meeting who has lost a loved one, it can be very painful to speak out. We want voices to be heard so that things keep moving forward and people stop dying.
- Public comment at the end of the meeting is preferred, and it would also be helpful to take a moment to pause and honor the death of someone’s loved one when they share that experience.
- Open back up committee recommendations or committee member recommendations to improve diversity and representation. “There’s no LGBTQIA+ representation. I see very few lived experience people in here. I don’t see any tribal representation. There are about 89 people on the line that probably need to be included.”

Follow up: Michelle will prepare a summary of the demographic distribution in SURSAC membership compared to the state’s behavioral health services clientele, to help the group identify areas where additional representation is needed.

- It’s great to know that this process is available for people to be compensated, cause a lot of the VOCAL members could not come because they’d be missing hours of work. I would like to know the process of how we could be able to bring that out to community.
 - **Follow up:** Currently, stipend availability has only been confirmed for committee members. If this changes, an update will be announced.
- Unleashing the self-initiating power of SURSAC members, and others who attend SURSAC meetings, to move this agenda forward is going to be really important. HCA is probably not best positioned to move any agenda forward and people are anxious that all the work done in the committee may not advance further. Switching over to a community-initiated push is going to be really important this year.
- Putting a draft of the Plan online would be really helpful, as a lot of lawmakers don’t know anything about SURSAC. There is a lot of media around Blake decision and on drug policy and SURSAC is not breaking through.
 - **Follow up:** The SURS Plan was published to the 5476 web page and submitted to the legislature on January 11, 2023.
- The Recovery Navigator Program doesn’t have the opportunity to gather the statistics that other programs would have in looking at its effectiveness, its usefulness and its value. Right now, the main objective is to look at success stories, the success of how much was built from nothing to something in a relatively short amount of time.
 - **Follow up:** RNP success stories will be shared at the Feb 13th RNP presentation
- When we are holding up an individual, a participant, that the health quotient of the entire community is increased and that we are healing the entire community. When we reach out to an individual and that is the honoring when we talk about people with lived experience, we’re really talking about the community being stronger.
- I would like to see a commercial that says “I do drugs” -- normal everyday people that are businessmen and business women wearing suits. And if there was just a pattern of people saying “I use drugs” to normalize the fact that a lot of us are using drugs, and culturally sanctioned drugs, and this society applauds it.

- **Follow up:** Options for creating media such as this will be discussed at a future meeting on the topic of “Media & Messaging”
- We have these concepts around ableism and professionalism that are often steeped very much and in racism and classism; we have people within our organization who are currently, locked up in different systems. It’s vital that we stop empowering only those who look nice and who act nice and who don't have neurodivergence or who don't have a personality disorder, and things like that. There are lots of us who can lead, who have issues, and outreach is needed to engage those individuals. The more transparent we are about our issues, the more transparent people will feel about taking away the barrier and the stigma of addiction.
 - **Follow up:** “People currently inside behavioral health and criminal legal systems/facilities” has been added as a potential seat of representation on the SURSAC. Michelle is in the process of confirming whether HCA has authority to add seats to the committee, as the original seats of representation were determined by the legislature via 5476.
- It would be a huge service to alert the distribution list of people when there are relevant bills coming up, hearing dates and opportunities to testify. I think that could gather up a lot of this momentum without HCA doing the advocacy. Creating awareness of those bell opportunities could allow others to organize for opportunities that we may otherwise miss. There’s a lot of like probably low hanging fruit like drug testing and we just we need to make the wins we can make.
 - **Follow up:** A running list of relevant bills is sent weekly via the SURSAC listserv, which includes information about how to find upcoming hearings and set up bill status alerts via email. Additionally, the Office of Recovery Partnerships listserv also provides a weekly update with information on upcoming hearings. [Use this link to sign up for these email updates.](#)

Upcoming Agenda: February 13, 2023

There was time at the end of the meeting to initiate the request for agendas to be set at the end of each meeting while members are assembled.

These are the agenda items requested for inclusion at the February meeting:

- RNP Presentation (added to February agenda from request at December meeting)
- Review of the final Substance Use Recovery Services Plan
- Overview of emerging legislation / legislative updates
- Safe Supply Workgroup
- DEI Follow Up
- Overview of state housing programming and how recommendations interact with, or are supported by, housing funding, including presentations from the following (guest attendance and presentations will need to be confirmed):
 - Department of Commerce, to speak on housing options for people along substance use continuum

- Melodie Pazolt, on Apple Health & Homes
- Scott Tankersley, on Foundation Community Supports (FCS) Supportive Housing program

Next Steps

1. Michelle will send a draft of the Feb 13th agenda to SURSAC for feedback by Jan 25
2. Michelle will begin sending weekly updates to the SURSAC listserv with SUD/Behavioral Health bills of interest, and instructions for how to set bill alerts, and find committee hearing agendas