

Substance Use Recovery Services Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

April 7, 2025, 9:00AM-11:00AM PST

Meeting Recording: [Substance Abuse Recovery Services Advisory Committee - YouTube](#)

HCA Executive & Administrative Support

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jason McGill, Executive Co-Sponsor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tony Walton, Section Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rachel Downs, Admin Assistant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kelley Sandaker, SURSAC Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sarah Melfi-Klein, Unit Supervisor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alex Sheehan, BH Program Manager
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michelle Martinez, Project Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brianna Peterson, Plan Writer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tim Candela, Health Services Consultant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blake Ellison, Meeting Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hailee Fuller, Admin Assistant		

Committee Members (28)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tony Walton, SURSAC Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amber Cope	<input type="checkbox"/>	Donnell Tanksley
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governor's Office Appointee-Vacant	<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 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 type="checkbox"/>	Hunter McKim
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Dan Griffey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Niki Lewis		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Caleb Banta-Green	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sherri Candelario		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don Julian Saucier	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	James Tillett		Alternates / Optional Attendees:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shawn Mire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Christine Lynch	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rep. Jamila Taylor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alexie Orr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sarah Gillard		

Meeting Attachments

- Meeting Agenda

Substance Use Recovery Services Advisory Committee (SURSAC) Updates

Tony Walton, Chair of the SURSAC Committee and Section Manager, Adult Substance Use Disorder, shared the following updates:

Budget

- There are 20 days left of Legislative Session.
- Since the SURSAC meeting in March 2025, there have been proposed budgets introduced that included:
 - House of Representatives Budget – RNP budget reduction of 10%
 - Senate Proposal - RNP budget reduction of 100% and elimination of program
- Tony reminded the committee that Governor Ferguson’s proposed budget included a reduction of 50% to RNP
- Governor Ferguson held a Press Conference regarding the Senate and House proposals and indicated he was not comfortable signing a budget, as currently written. He would be sending concerns letters going line-by-line through Senate and House budgets.
- Tony also pointed out that a revised revenue forecast was released which showed a raise in budget deficit from \$14 billion to \$16 billion over the next four years.

Legislation

- Legislative updates – Bills moving forward:
 - [HB 1574](#): Protecting access to life-saving care and substance use services.
 - [SB 5361](#): Delaying the use of the ASAM 4 criteria, treatment criteria for addictive, substance related, and co-occurring conditions.
 - [HB 2038/SB 5799](#): Establishing the youth behavioral health account and funding the account through the imposition of a business and occupation additional tax on the operation of social media platforms.
 - [HB 1432](#): Improving access to appropriate mental health and substance use disorder services.
 - [HB 1811](#): Enhancing crisis response services through co-response integration and support.

COVID Enhancement Funding

- Federal government issued letters eliminating COVID enhancement Block Grant dollars that included ARPA and COVID mitigation funding. Several state agencies like HCA and DOH were receiving these dollars and funding reduction notice came on March 24th. WA joined several states in a joint lawsuit against the federal government. As of Thursday, April 3, a Rhode Island Judge issued a temporary restraining order in this case.

SURSAC Letter

- Tony addressed the March 2025 SURSAC meeting and a proposal of SURSAC Committee Members outlining proposed budget reduction concerns in a letter to the Governor’s office, Office of Financial Management, and Legislature:
 - HCA and DBHR leadership met to discuss how best they can support the SURSAC in this endeavor. HCA can provide administrative support, such as sharing notes of concerns from the March meeting, accompanying documents, and the appropriate email distribution lists with SURSAC. However, HCA will otherwise step back from the process as a result of their agency’s role as an executive branch agency.
 - This will also ensure that the Letter accurately addresses the concerns of SURSAC Committee members.
 - Tony indicated there would need to be a motion and vote to take place between members of the SURSAC Committee.

Questions and Comments from SURSAC Members

Q: Would it be helpful for individuals who have engaged with the RNP program to send letters of support?

A: Yes. Any letters of support can be forwarded to Malika.

COMMENTS:

- It would help if Malika could speak about what VOCAL-WA has been doing with regard to Letters and information they have been putting out. This would support forming what the structure of the next steps would be, in addition to providing knowledge to committee members about some of the actions that have already taken place regarding the RNP budget reduction concerns.
- [RNP King 5 News article](#) – Article entitled “**Police urge lawmakers to save Recovery Navigator Program**”
 - Several letters have been submitted from agencies such as Washington State Association of Drug Court Professionals and Public Defenders Association
- It was vocalized that the budget reduction concern is both a policy and a budget matter as the funding goes away, so, too, does the infrastructure of the program, and the program, itself.
- In order for the letter of concern to be of relevance, it was vocalized that it should be worked on and submitted ASAP.
- SURSAC Member Malika Lamont stated she would take lead in drafting the letter.

Formal Vote Process – Letter of Concern RE: RNP Budget Reduction

- SURSAC Member Malika Lamont motioned to put forth a vote to the group for this
 - Seconded by SURSAC Member Don Julian Saucier
- **SURSAC Members Present for voting included:**
 - Amber Cope - yea
 - Brandie Flood - yea
 - Stormy Howell - yea
 - Malika Lamont - yea
 - Rep. Lauren Davis - Abstained
 - Chad Enright - nay
 - Addy Adwell - yea

- John Hayden - yea
- Caleb Banta-Green - Abstained
- Niki Lewis – yea
- Don Julian Saucier - yea
- Sherri Candelario - yea
- James Tillett - yea
- Alexie Orr - yea
- Christine Lynch – yea
- **NOTE REGARDING FORMAL VOTE:** Caleb Banta-Green and Representative Davis expressed support for the motion; however, they were uncertain whether their current roles permitted them to participate in the vote.
- **SURSAC Members Not Present for voting included:**
 - Sarah Gillard
 - Sen. Manka Dhingra
 - Donnell Tanksley
 - Sen. John Braun
 - Rep. Dan Griffey
 - Kevin Ballard
 - Hunter McKim
 - Shawn Mire
 - Rep. Jamila Taylor

Public Comment

- No Public Comment

Walk-on Item Requests

- No Walk-On Item Requests.

Committee member update

- Meeting attendees were made aware of language changes within House Bill 1574.

LEAD Education Series: Part II

Malika Lamont, SURSAC Committee member, introduced members of the Jefferson County Policy Coordinating Group (PCG) LEAD team to include:

- Dr. Gabbie Caudill – Director of Gateway to Freedom (Houses LEAD in Jefferson County)
- Brett Anglin – Patrol Sergeant, Jefferson County Sherriff’s Office
- Richard Davies – Director of independent nonprofit providing public defense to Jefferson County Courts and involved in local LEAD program
- Anna Phillips – Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

The goal of the training is to explain the different elements of the LEAD model, which is the Policy Coordination Group, and how it is a group of unlikely partners coming together to create the basis for the model/program. Members of the training shared their experiences on:

- Ways they find LEAD to be most impactful compared to traditional practices

- How LEAD model influenced approaches to addressing probable charges and diversion opportunities for individuals
- Strategies implemented to ensure effective communication and collaboration with service providers within the LEAD Model
- Ways in which perceptions of community safety and well-being have evolved since partnering within the LEAD Model
- How LEAD affects options and actions within specific roles

Questions and Comments from Meeting Attendees RE: LEAD Education Series: Part II

Q: What is the cost of this program? Does it save money?

A: While LEAD has been found to save money, years later they recognize the goal is not to cost less but to provide better outcomes for clients. The decrease in law enforcement engagement, court involvement, and prosecutor time surely saves funding.

Q: Is LEAD a statewide program?

A: RNP is a statewide program, operating in all 39 counties, and is modeled after LEAD. This is why it is important that we keep this program going across the state. The [LEAD Grant Program](#) and [Arrest and Jail Alternatives programs are funded through HCA](#).

COMMENTS:

- A meeting attendee shared that they are with Community Health working in an outpatient competency restoration program and LEAD assisted in coordinating a check-in with an individual who's in their program, as well as LEAD. The program has been very helpful for the client, and they just wanted to share this.

Recovery Navigator Program Highlights – King County BH-ASO

Susan Peacey, King County BH-ASO RNP Administrator, shared highlights to the King County RNP program through work with their community partner organizations, PEER Washington, Community Passageways, and REACH. The presentation included updates from:

- Kimmy Reedy, Director of PEER Washington
- Nikki Mogel, Team Manager of south King County region
- Chanise, RNP Program Manager of Community Passageways
- Michelle Conley, REACH RNP Program Manager
- Paige Killinger, RNP Supervisor of REACH

COMMENTS:

- Two meeting attendees shared their praise and sentiments for all the work being done for individuals living with behavioral health, addiction, and homelessness.
- [View Recovery Navigator Program Presentation](#)

Final Comments

- After SURSAC there will be a webinar on Safe Supply. If you would like to attend, please click on the link: [Safer Supply Webinar](#).

Next Steps

1. Kelley will send out the next SURSAC agenda prior to the May 2025 meeting.