DRAFT MEETING NOTES

Statewide Substance Use Response Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, July 8, 2026
2:00 p.m.

Meeting Locations:

Offices of the Attorney General:
100 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
Mock Courtroom

McCarran Center - State of Nevada Campus
1 State of Nevada Way, Suite 100
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Conference Room 225/226

Virtual via Zoom

Note: All presentation materials for this meeting are available at the following link: https://ag.nv.gov/About/Administration/Substance_Use_Response_Working_Group_(SURG)/

Members Present via Zoom or Telephone
Robert Banghart; Stephanie Cook; Dr. Jose Maria Partida Corona (joined at 2:16 pm); John Firestone; Peter Handy; Nicole Hicks (joined at 2:06 pm); Shayla Holmes; Jessica Johnson; Stacey Lance; Rosa O'Bannon; Kyra Morgan (joined at 2:10); Wendy Nelsen; Christine Payson; and Steve Shell

Members Present in Las Vegas
Attorney General Aaron Ford and Guiseppe Mandell

Members Absent
Chelsi Cheatom; Noël Chounet; Assemblymember Rebecca Edgeworth; Assemblymember Heather Goulding; Senator Dina Neal; Bud Schawl; and Senator Jeff Stone

Attorney General's Office Staff
Assistant Attorney General C.J. Brady; Ashley Goode; Terry Kerns, Ph.D.; Chief Deputy Attorney General Mark Krueger; and Deputy Attorney General Joseph Ostunio

Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI) Support Team
Margaret Del Giudice; Crystal Duarte; Kim Hopkinson; Deanna Lyons; and Mary O'Leary

Other Participants via Zoom or In Person
Roberta Miranda-Alfonzo; Jess Angel; Linda Anderson; Jinan Barghouti; Lauren Beal; Katie Brandon; Dani Brown (CHW Storey County); Lea Cartwright (Cartwright NV Government Affairs); Tina Gerber-Winn (Nevada Public Health Foundation); Maddy Larson; Anne-Elizabeth Northan; Sabrina Petrel; Maddison Proctor; Belkis Quezada (DHS DO FRN); Cherylyn C. Rahr-Wood; Jamie Ross; Morgan Sollano; Katie M. Snider, Ph.D.; Karina Tomco; and Samm Warfel (NDVS)

Unless otherwise identified, members of the public are listed by their name or number as it appeared on Zoom.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call to Establish Quorum
Chair Attorney General Aaron Ford called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

Crystal Duarte, Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI), called the roll and acknowledged that both Member Stephanie Cook and Member Jessica Johnson had joined the meeting during the roll call. Ms. Duarte confirmed a quorum with 13 out of 24 members present.

Chair Ford reminded members of the following SURG procedure: *If a member must depart a meeting prior to adjournment for any reason, the member shall formally announce their departure for the record to ensure accurate minutes and to allow the Chair to confirm that a quorum remains in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Law.*

Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #2.

2. Public Comment
Chair Ford read aloud public comment guidance for those participating in-person, via Zoom, and via phone and invited public comment.

Dr. Terry Kerns offered a comment on a recent U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration press release, brought to her attention by Member Stephanie Cook, that announced the temporary scheduling of 7-OH and related substances to protect public safety. Dr. Kerns stated that this relates to the Response Subcommittee's recommendation regarding kratom. She explained that the SURG recommendation includes naturally occurring substances and the DEA press release does not. Dr. Kerns also stated that her understanding from the Board of Pharmacy is that if a substance is scheduled federally as Schedule I, the Board follows federal scheduling.

Chair Ford recognized Member Guiseppe Mandell for public comment.

Giuseppe Mandell thanked everyone in attendance for participating, and in particular expressed gratitude towards Chair Ford for his commitment to the work, evidenced by his attendance even amidst a campaign for Governor. Mr. Mandell stated that his time meant a lot, and that it meant that the right ears were hearing the voice of the public and the SURG.

Mark Krueger stated that it did not appear that the record function had been enabled and raised the issue in case recording needed to be started. Ms. Hopkinson confirmed that the meeting was being recorded to the cloud, which Chair Ford confirmed was also apparent to another participant. Chair Ford thanked Mr. Krueger for raising the concern and stated that the group would rely on the report that the meeting was being recorded to the cloud.

Chair Ford invited additional public comments, reading aloud the dial-in information for members of the public joining by phone. Hearing or seeing no other comment, Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #3.

3. Review and Approve Minutes from June 10, 2026, SURG Meeting
Chair Ford invited corrections or a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the previous SURG meeting, held on June 10, 2026.

- Member Wendy Nelsen made a motion to approve.
- Member Mandell seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissent.

Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #4.

4. Review and Approve 2025-26 Annual Report
Crystal Duarte, Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI) reviewed for approval the 2025-2026 Draft Annual Report (available on the SURG website).

Ms. Duarte explained the reporting period covered within the 2025-2026 Annual Report due August 1, 2026, noting that members had previously reviewed and approved the report template at the June 10, 2026 meeting as well as a 2025 Progress Report earlier in the year (available on the SURG Info Page).

She noted changes to language on page 1 and page 5 that occurred following the approval of the template at the June SURG meeting. These changes broadened the description of the SURG's duties, which were

previously described in a manner that was not comprehensive of all the legislatively required responsibilities of the SURG.

Ms. Duarte then explained that recommendations are now listed throughout the report in ranked order and as revised during the June meeting.

Kim Hopkinson noted for the record that Member Nicole Hicks had joined the meeting at approximately 2:06 p.m.

Ms. Duarte continued her review on page 9, which includes a description of the June meeting where members reviewed ranked recommendations and were able to approve recommendations as-is, approve recommendations with changes, or express dissent. Recommendations receiving majority support through the formal voting process were approved and included as final recommendations throughout the report.

Moving further into the report, Ms. Duarte indicated that pages 13-30 detail the background and justification for each recommendation as it was received and revised through the subcommittee recommendation process. She noted that this section, comprising most of the report, represented much of the work completed by members throughout the year.

Ms. Duarte then called attention to page 31, which lists appendices. She stated that Appendices A, B, and C contain information submitted by members throughout the recommendation process, information that will be helpful to those reading the report as well as to members themselves as they resume the work of the SURG in September when considering new recommendations, target populations, legislators, and components of legislation that still need to be addressed.

Ms. Duarte highlighted Appendix D that details the status of 2024 recommendations and represents a substantial amount of work by the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, the Division of Child and Family Services, the Fund for a Healthy Nevada, the Fund for Resilient Nevada, and the Nevada Health Authority, also known as Nevada Medicaid, to provide the SURG with actions that they are taking related to recommendations.

Remaining on page 31, Ms. Duarte proposed to members a change to the language as written in the description of Appendix D which read: "This table provides updates on recommendations included in the 2024 annual report, which immediately preceded this 2025-26 annual report." Ms. Duarte explained that it was written this way to ensure readers understood why the report was looking back at 2024 recommendations. Ms. Duarte recommended revising that language to read: "This table provides updates on recommendations included in the 2024 report, which was the most recent report to include recommendations." (The recommended revision was displayed via red underlined text on the screen.) She explained that the report approved by the SURG in January was, in effect, an annual report but considered a Progress Report because it did not include recommendations.

Ms. Duarte took a moment to state for the record that Member Kyra Morgan had joined the meeting.

Returning to the proposed revision, Ms. Duarte asked whether members had comments, questions, or sections of the report they wished to revisit, noting to members that the recommended revision to the Appendix D description was displayed on screen.

Chair Ford applauded the work of the SURG and indicated that he would entertain a motion to approve the report as amended, but first shared that, pursuant to the first recommendation to support a bill draft request, the Attorney General's Office would in fact reserve a bill draft request to accommodate the first Prevention recommendation in the report and would submit it on behalf of the SURG.

Chair Ford welcomed comments or a motion to approve the report as amended.

Member Shayla Holmes made a motion to approve the report as amended and presented.

- Member Rob Banghart seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissent.

Chair Ford again thanked the group for their work and expressed pride in the SURG and the approved report which he hoped would make an impact.

Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #5.

5. Discuss Annual Report Distribution
Chair Ford invited Dr. Kerns to discuss distribution of the annual report.

Dr. Kerns stated that, pursuant to legislation governing the SURG, the Annual Report is provided to the Governor, the Attorney General, the Advisory Commission on the Administration of Justice, and, because 2026 is an even-numbered year, the Legislative Committee on Health Care and the Interim Finance Committee. Dr. Kerns also noted that the SURG has been asked to provide a copy of the approved 2025-2026 Annual Report for the August 11th meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

Dr. Kerns continued, noting that in the past, SURG members recommended that the report also be shared with the Regional Behavioral Health Policy Boards, prevention coalitions, all funded cities and counties in the One Nevada Agreement, the Clark County Opioid Task Force, the Southern Nevada Opioid Advisory Council (SNOAC), the Nevada Psychiatric Association, the Nevada Hospital Association, the Nursing Association, the Social Work Board Association, school boards, the Nevada Sheriffs and Chiefs Association, and the Behavioral Health Association of Nevada. Dr. Kerns added that members had previously recommended that the Attorney General's Office either host a press conference or issue a press release regarding the annual report.

Dr. Kerns stated that she would like to fulfill all these recommendations and asked those members who'd made the distribution recommendation to provide appropriate contact information as she did not have representative contacts for all the groups identified.

Chair Ford asked Mr. Krueger to assist Dr. Kerns with distribution related to the One Nevada Agreement; Mr. Krueger confirmed he would be able to assist.

Chair Ford reiterated Dr. Kern's request for contact information and asked members who recommended distribution to other entities to connect with Dr. Kerns and help identify the right people to contact. He specified that for the Nevada Sheriffs and Chiefs Association, Dr. Kerns could talk internally with Chief Bowen, Investigations.

Chair Ford then confirmed that the Attorney General's Office would host a press conference or issue a press release, or both, and that SURG members who wish to attend a press conference would be welcome and that it would be at the Attorney General's Office. He added that they would certainly issue a press release to talk about the great work this committee continues to do year after year.

Dr. Kerns clarified to members she had contacts for the Regional Behavioral Health Policy Boards, prevention coalitions, the Clark County Opioid Task Force, and the SNOAC, but still needed contacts for the other organizations discussed.

Ms. Duarte noted that Dr. Jose Maria Partida Corona had joined the meeting at approximately 2:16 p.m. and that Member Jessica Johnson had her hand raised.

Jessica Johnson echoed Chair Ford's compliments to the group and appreciation of the report, which she described as comprehensive, and underscored her gratitude for being a part of the SURG. Member Johnson offered to assist Dr. Kerns with Southern Nevada contacts as needed.

Chair Ford stated that Dr. Kerns would likely appreciate contact information for any of the remaining organizations for which contacts had not yet been identified.

Ms. Duarte asked members to postpone distributing the report until they receive the final version with the approved edit and Chair Ford's signature.

Chair Ford indicated that he could sign the report promptly such that this final version would be distributed to members as soon as the next day, July 9th. He then asked Dr. Kerns to contact the Attorney General's communications team to discuss a press conference and press release.

Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #6.

6. Review and Consider Items for Next Meeting

Member Kerns read aloud the information on slide 10 of the meeting PowerPoint, which detailed pending presentations for the SURG October 2026 and January 2027 meetings (meeting PowerPoint is available on the SURG website). She noted that the Overview of Open Meeting Law is no longer pending but now finalized. She also noted that the January presentation will focus more largely on the Crisis Response System. Dr. Kerns invited members to contact her with other ideas for future meeting topics.

Chair Ford noted that by the next meeting, requirements for bill draft requests likely would have been submitted to the Legislative Counsel Bureau and a list may be available, which would be helpful to review in case any touch on the SURG's work and consider a brief introduction, not a full conversation, around those. His recollection was that the deadline to submit was September 1, and that a list of what was submitted, at least by topic, would be available shortly thereafter. Chair Ford suggested that Dr. Kerns follow up with Mike Morton in the Attorney General's Office.

Chair Ford welcomed additional comments from the SURG.

Member Mandell stated that he had been reaching out to some tribes and that a representative from the Paiute community Health and Human Services would like to get involved.

Chair Ford was enthusiastic about this and suggested a 15-minute overview of the issues from the tribal perspective, if the representative would like to share. Chair Ford asked Dr. Kerns to connect with Member Mandell to obtain contact information and stated that the overview would be worthwhile including as a short agenda item.

Chair Ford welcomed any additional comments for October, noting that this meeting will be his last in his capacity as Attorney General. He recommended a breakfast meeting with donuts or bacon and eggs.

Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #7.

7. Public Comment

Chair Ford read public comment guidance and asked for public comments.

Maddy Larson, Northern Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator, provided public comment. Ms. Larson elevated the work of the Northern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board, explaining that they are considering a bill draft request to add clinical professional counselors (CPCs) and marriage and family therapists to the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) to decertify mental health crisis holds. Ms. Larson stated that because SURG members have expertise in substance use and mental health, the Board wanted people to know about the proposal and discuss any concerns. She invited members to reach out and stated that the Board would welcome a conversation.

Chair Ford thanked Ms. Larson for her comment and welcomed any additional public comment. Seeing or hearing none, Chair Ford moved to Agenda Item #8.

8.Adjournment
Chair Ford entertained a motion to adjourn.

- Member Mandell motioned to adjourn.
- Member Stacey Lance seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissent.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

Chat Record:
From Kim Hopkinson (she/her) to everyone 02:03 PM: If a member must depart a meeting prior to adjournment for any reason, the member shall formally announce their departure for the record to ensure accurate minutes and to allow the Chair to confirm that a quorum remains in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Law.

Members of the public joining by phone are not able to view information shared in the chat. Please do not use the chat for items other than technical support, as this becomes part of the public record. Exercise caution with links which may appear in any meeting chat as they could be malicious.

From Kim Hopkinson (she/her) to everyone 02:24 PM: Members of the public joining by phone are not able to view information shared in the chat. Please do not use the chat for items other than technical support, as this becomes part of the public record. Exercise caution with links which may appear in any meeting chat as they could be malicious.

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