

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Substance Use Response Working Group



Report Date: January 30, 2026

For submission to the Governor, the Attorney General, the Advisory Commission on the Administration of Justice, any other entities deemed appropriate by the Attorney General and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to: (1) During an even-numbered year, the Legislative Committee on Health Care and the Interim Finance Committee; or (2) During an odd-numbered year, the next regular session of the Legislature.

Table of Contents

Purpose and Background2

Working Group Structure2

Subcommittee Structure.....2

Progress in 2025.....5

Appendix.....8

Signature Page9

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Purpose and Background

The Statewide Substance Use Response Working Group (SURG) was created in the Office of the Attorney General under [Assembly Bill 374](#) in 2021. The SURG is required to make recommendations for the establishment, maintenance, expansion or improvement of programs, and the use of state and local funds to address substance misuse and substance use disorders in Nevada.

In 2025, Assembly Bill 19 was approved by Governor Lombardo to expand SURG membership to include representatives from the general public, with a preference for a bilingual representative; emergency response; the Department of Indigent Defense Services; the Division of Child and Family Services; and the Nevada District Attorneys Association. Per AB 19, the representative from the Department of Health and Human Services must be from within the Division of Public and Behavioral Health. Additionally, this legislation changed annual reporting to August 1st, effective July 1, 2026. Consequently, **this report does not include recommendations** but describes the substantive work-in-progress through subcommittee meetings, presentations to the full SURG, and related activities, including the legislative session.

Working Group Structure

In 2025, the SURG was comprised of 18 members. The SURG met four times in 2025. Meetings focused on reviewing various aspects of substance misuse and substance use disorders and programs and activities to combat such use in the State. Additional details on 2025 meeting topics are included in a subsequent section of this document.

The Office of the Attorney General provides legal guidance for all meetings, and administrative guidance for all activities and materials. All meeting materials are posted on the SURG website:

[https://ag.nv.gov/About/Administration/Substance_Use_Response_Working_Group_\(SURG\)/](https://ag.nv.gov/About/Administration/Substance_Use_Response_Working_Group_(SURG)/)

Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI) provides project management support including coordination of presentations from subject matter experts (SME), survey development, distribution, and analysis, development of agendas and related materials, and support for subcommittee meetings and development of recommendations. Outreach to state agency partners is provided to track progress on past recommendations for follow up with SURG members and to inform future recommendations and/or strategies.

Subcommittee Structure

In 2022, subcommittees were created to support focused presentations and in-depth discussions. They include:



Subcommittee work is aligned with AB 374 Section 10, Subsection 1, Paragraphs a-q¹ as follows:

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevention (primary, secondary, and tertiary):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (a) Leverage and expand efforts by state and local governmental entities to reduce the use of substances which are associated with substance use disorders, including, without limitation, heroin, other synthetic and non-synthetic opioids, and stimulants, and identify ways to enhance those efforts through coordination and collaboration.○ (g) Make recommendations to entities including, without limitation, the State Board of Pharmacy, professional licensing boards that license practitioners, other than veterinarians, the State Board of Health, the Division, the Governor, and the Legislature, to ensure that controlled substances are appropriately prescribed in accordance with the provisions of NRS 639.2391 to 639.23916, inclusive○ (j) Study the efficacy and expand the implementation of programs to: (1) Educate youth and families about the effects of substance use and substance use disorders; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harm Reduction<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (j) Study the efficacy and expand the implementation of programs to: (2) Reduce the harms associated with substance use and substance use disorders while referring persons with substance use disorders to evidence-based treatment. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treatment and Recovery<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (c) Assess and evaluate existing pathways to treatment and recovery for persons with substance use disorders, including, without limitation, such persons who are members of special populations.○ (e) Evaluate ways to improve and expand evidence-based or evidence-informed programs, procedures, and strategies to treat and support recovery from opioid use disorder and any co-occurring substance use disorder, including, without limitation, among members of special populations.○ (f) Examine support systems and programs for persons who are in recovery from opioid use disorder and any co-occurring substance use disorder. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (d) Work to understand how residents of this State who are involved in the criminal justice system access supports for treatment of and recovery from substance use disorders at various points, including, without limitation, by reviewing existing diversion, deflection, and reentry programs for such persons.○ (i) Develop strategies for local, state, and federal law enforcement and public health agencies to respond to and prevent overdoses and plans for implementing those strategies.○ (k) Recommend strategies to improve coordination between local, state, and federal law enforcement and public health agencies to enhance the communication of timely and relevant information relating to substance use and reduce duplicative data collection and research.○ (l) Evaluate current systems for sharing information between agencies regarding the trafficking and distribution of legal and illegal substances which are associated with substance use disorders, including, without limitation, heroin, other synthetic and non-synthetic opioids, and stimulants.○ (m) Study the effects of substance use disorders on the criminal justice system, including, without limitation, law enforcement agencies, and correctional institutions.○ (n) Study the sources and manufacturers of substances which are associated with substance use disorders, including, without limitation, heroin, other synthetic and non-synthetic opioids and |

¹ In 2021, guidance from Vice Chair Tolles, Dr. Stephanie Woodard, and Dr. Terry Kerns determined subcommittee alignment with the components of AB 374.

stimulants, and methods and resources for preventing the manufacture, trafficking, and sale of such substances.

- (o) **Study the effectiveness of criminal and civil penalties at preventing the misuse of substances and substance use disorders and the manufacture, trafficking and sale of substances** which are associated with substance use disorders, including, without limitation, heroin, other synthetic and non-synthetic opioids, and stimulants.
- (p) **Evaluate the effects of substance use disorders on the economy of this State.**

- The following items were considered cross-cutting:

- (b) **Assess evidence-based strategies for preventing substance use and intervening to stop substance use**, including, without limitation, the use of heroin, other synthetic and non-synthetic opioids and stimulants. Such strategies must include, without limitation, strategies to: (1) Help persons at risk of a substance use disorder avoid developing a substance use disorder; (2) Discover potentially problematic substance use in a person and intervene before the person develops a substance use disorder;
- (h) **Examine qualitative and quantitative data to understand the risk factors that contribute to substance use and the rates of substance use, and substance use disorders, focusing on special populations.**
- (q) **Study, evaluate and make recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services concerning the use of the money** described in section 10.5 of this act to address substance use disorders, with a focus on: (1) The use of the money described in subsections 1, 2 and 3 of section 10.5 of this act to supplement rather than supplant existing state or local spending; (2) The use of the money described in section 10.5 of this act to support programs that use evidence-based interventions; (3) The use of the money described in section 10.5 of this act to support programs for the prevention of substance use disorders in youth; (4) The use of the money described in section 10.5 of this act to improve racial equity; and (5) Reporting by state and local agencies to the public concerning the funding of programs to address substance misuse and substance use disorders.

Each year, members identify their preferred subcommittees on which to serve, and Subcommittee Chairs are appointed and approved through the full SURG. Harm Reduction was added to the Prevention Subcommittee in 2023.

In 2025, Subcommittee Chairs and Vice Chairs were appointed as follows:

Prevention and Harm Reduction

- Jessica Johnson, Chair
- Erik Schoen, Vice Chair

Treatment and Recovery

- Steve Shell, Chair
- Dr. Lesley Dickson, Vice Chair

Response

- Dr. Terry Kerns, Chair
- Shayla Holmes, Vice Chair

The Subcommittee leadership continues to be instrumental in driving forward the process to develop recommendations with comprehensive justifications and supporting the substantial contributions of all members. Their expertise, skills, and commitments are essential to the success of the SURG.

Progress in 2025

The SURG working group met in January, April, July, and October. In January members approved the 2024 Annual Report and presentations were made at the April, July, and October meetings on the following topics:

April

- **Compassionate Overdose Response** by Karla Wagner, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno School of Public Health
- **Presentation of Fund for a Resilient Nevada 2024 Annual Report** by Dawn Yohey, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Directors Office, Fund for Resilient Nevada (FRN)
- **Presentation on Legislative Bills from Behavioral Health Policy Boards** by Dorothy Edwards, Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Coordinator; Valerie Haskin, Rural Regional Behavioral Health Policy Coordinator; Mark Funkhouser, Southern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Coordinator; and Cherylyn Rahr-Wood, Northern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Coordinator

July

The July meeting highlighted current trends in substance use and included the following presentations:

- **Update for Opioid/Overdose Prevention Activities from CASAT** by Michelle Berry, MBA, Associate Director, and Morgan Green, MA, Project Manager, Center for Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT)
- **Nevada Substance Use Trends and Public Health Implications** by James Dardis, MS, Biostatistician III, Fund for Resilient Nevada, Office of Analytics, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
- **Current Drug Use and Seizure Trends in Nevada** by Christine Payson, Drug Intelligence Officer for Nevada HIDTA
- **Drug Testing Performed by Public Health Programs** by Karla Wagner, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno, School of Public Health
- **Surveillance of the Clark County Illicit Drug Supply** by Marco G. Méndez, MPH, Public Health Evaluator, Division of Disease Surveillance & Control, Southern Nevada Health District

October

- **Presentation of Strategic Plan from Division of Public and Behavioral Health** by Shannon Bennett, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention, Division of Public and Behavioral Health
- **Update on MOUD (Medications for Opioid Use Disorder) in Rural Jails** by Bill Teel, GROWLER Consulting
- **Update on the Clark County Regional Opioid Task Force** by Melanie Rouse, Clark County Coroner and Opioid Task Force Chair
- **Fund for Resilient Nevada Assessment and State Plan** by Heather Kerwin, MPC, CPH, Opioid & Infectious Disease Epidemiologist, Contractor, Office of State Epidemiology, Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Each meeting also included an update on Opioid Litigation, Settlement Funds, and Distribution by Chief Deputy Attorney General Mark Krueger, Office of the Attorney General.

Subcommittee Progress

Prevention and Harm Reduction Subcommittee members met in March, May, June, August, and November.

Presentations were made on the following topics:

- **Low Barrier Emergency Department Based Naloxone Distribution** by Kelly Morgan, MD, Emergency Physician; Medical Director, Las Vegas Fire & Rescue; Cofounder/Chief Medical Officer, Elite 7 Sports Medicine and Josh Luftig, PA-C
- **Update on Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Project** by Kaci Fleetwood, M. Ed, BCBA, LBA; Dr. Ashley Greenwald, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA; and Brooke Wagner, MSC-SC, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA
- **Boys and Girls Club of Nevada Alliance: Fund for Resilient Nevada SMART Moves Tween & Teen Initiative** by Noelle Hardt and Tamika Shauntee Rosales
- **Presentation on Naloxone Distribution in Nevada Hospital Emergency Departments** by Darla Zarley, Pharm.D., Nevada State Board of Pharmacy

Future presentations may include:

- How to adjust existing recommendations related to cannabis and tobacco to make them more actionable

Treatment and Recovery Subcommittee members met in March, May, June, August, and November.

Presentations were made on the following topics:

- **A Retrospective Assessment or/and Prospective Study to Assess the Outcomes of Patients Following Discharge From Detoxification and Examine Mortality and Overdose** by John Hamilton, Liberation Programs, Connecticut
- **CFR 42, Part 8: Updating Regulations for Opioid Treatment Programs** by John Firestone, Executive Director, Life Change Center, Reno
- **Trends and Opportunities Related to Substance Misuse Treatment** by Dr. Jose Maria Pardita Corona, Pardita Corona Medical Center, Las Vegas

Future presentations may include:

- Treatment modalities
- Research on retrospective assessments of outcomes of patients following discharge from detoxification

Response Subcommittee members met in March, May, June, August, and November

Presentations were made on the following topics:

- **Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act Community Education and Prescription Take-Back Programs** by Jamie Ross, CEO, PACT Coalition, Director, Nevada Statewide Coalition Partnership and Daria Singer, Executive Director, Partnership of Douglas County
- **Emergency Bridge Program** by Kelly Morgan, MD, Emergency Physician; Medical Director, Las Vegas Fire & Rescue; Cofounder/Chief Medical Officer, Elite 7 Sports Medicine

- **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)/Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Access in Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)** by Mark Disselkoen, MSW, LCSW, LADC Project Manager, Center for Application of Sub-stance Abuse Technologies (CASAT), University of Nevada, Reno, and Lori Follett, Social Services Chief II, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP), Behavioral Health Benefits Coverage Team
- **Update on Wastewater Surveillance of High-Risk Substances in Nevada** by Daniel Gerrity, Ph.D., P.E., Principal Research Scientist, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and Edwin Oh, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Neurogenetics and Precision Medicine Lab, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- **Presentation on Behavioral Health Education, Retention & Expansion Network of Nevada (BeHERENV)** by Sara Hunt, PhD, Executive Director BeHERE Nevada and Roberta A. Miranda-Alfonzo, PhD, CPC-S (NV), LCADC-S (NV), NCC, ACS, CPCG-I (NV), Associate Director of Recruitment and Outreach, Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine, UNLV

Future presentations may include:

- Nevada's Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative
- Drug and alcohol prevention, education, and enforcement

All subcommittees were provided with an update on prior recommendations and bills moving through the 2025 legislative process. The status of prior recommendations, as presented in the Spring of 2025, is included in the appendix, as is a list of related legislation reviewed by the SURG.

Appendix

A brief description of each of the documents contained within the appendix is offered below. [The final content for appendices will be included upon approval by the SURG at the October 8, 2025, meeting.]

Appendix A

Status of Prior Recommendations (As of December 2025): This table will provide updates on recommendations made in prior years.

Appendix B

Related Legislation: Legislation reviewed and tracked by SURG members will be listed.

Appendix C

Information Regarding SURG Membership, Structure & Activities: Link will be provided that offers information about SURG membership, bylaws, and access to meeting materials.

Appendix D

Information Regarding Opioid Settlement Funds: This will include a link to the Fund for Resilient Nevada dashboard.

Signature Page

Chair, Substance Use Response Working Group

Date

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