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Annual Report of the Statewide Substance Use Response Working Group (SURG) 2024

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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.

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Executive Summary

Purpose

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.

Methods

Recommendations were established initially by each of the SURG subcommittees to include:



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

- Prevention (primary, secondary, and tertiary):
 - (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;**
- Harm Reduction
 - (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.
- Treatment and Recovery
 - (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**

¹ In 2021, guidance from Vice Chair Tolles, Dr. Woodard, and Dr. Kerns determined subcommittee alignment. The addition of a fourth subcommittee for Harm Reduction was approved by the full SURG in 2023, and it was staffed under the Prevention Subcommittee to process recommendations.

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.

- Response

- (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 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.

Subcommittee recommendations were then brought to the full SURG for adoption and [process to be determined for ranking]

2024 Recommendations

(INSERT DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS)

Recommendation
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Methodology

In 2022 Subcommittees for Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, and Response were created to support focused presentations and in-depth discussions. Members identified their preferred subcommittees to serve on and Chairs were appointed and approved through the full SURG.

In 2024, Subcommittee Chairs and Vice Chairs were appointed as follows:

Prevention

- Jessica Johnson, Chair
- Erik Schoen, Vice Chair

Treatment and Recovery

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

Response

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

The Subcommittee leadership members were 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.

The Office of the Attorney General provided 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)/)

Support from Social Entrepreneurs, Inc included survey development, distribution, and analysis; coordination of presentations from subject matter experts (SME); development of agendas and related materials; and support for justification of recommendations.

Ranking Recommendations

[To be updated following October and December SURG meetings.]

Recommendations

This section includes Recommendations, Justifications, Action Steps, and additional supporting information developed for each recommendation. See Appendix A for research links and other supporting information.

Appendix

A brief description of each of the documents contained within the appendix is offered below.

Appendix A

Additional Information Regarding Recommendations – Research Links: This table lists recommendations with any links to research used to support the recommendation.

Appendix B

Additional Information Regarding Recommendations – Target Population Impacted: This table cross-references special populations cited in AB374 by recommendation.

Appendix C

Additional Information Regarding Recommendations – Legislation Addressed: This appendix cites AB374 Sec 10 requirements followed by a cross-table indicating which requirements are met by each recommendation.

Appendix D

Status of Previous SURG Recommendations (As of mm/dd/yy): This table provides updates on recommendations for prior years.

Appendix E

Information Regarding SURG Membership, Structure & Activities Links are provided that offer information about SURG membership, bylaws, and access to meeting materials.

Appendix F

Information Regarding Opioid Settlement Funds

Opioid Litigation Tracker: <https://shorturl.at/JqHVT>

Appendix A: Additional Information for Recommendations - Research Links

Appendix B: Additional Information for Recommendations – Target Population Impacted

Recommendation	Veterans, Elderly Populations, and Youth	Persons who are involved in the criminal justice/juvenile systems ²	Pregnant women and the parents of dependent children	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning persons	People who inject drugs; (as revised)	Children who are involved with the child welfare system	Other populations overly impacted by substance use disorders
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² Full definition of this target population: Persons who are incarcerated, persons who have committed nonviolent crimes primarily driven by a substance use disorder and other persons involved in the criminal justice or juvenile systems

INSERT Legend

AB374 (2021 Session) Sec. 10. 1. The Working Group shall:

- (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.*
- (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;*
 - (3) Treat the medical consequences of a substance use disorder in a person and facilitate the treatment of the substance use disorder to minimize further harm; and*
 - (4) Reduce the harm caused by substance use, including, without limitation, by preventing overdoses.**
- (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.*
- (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.*
- (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 cooccurring 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.*
- (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.*
- (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.*
- (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.*
- (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; and**

(2) Reduce the harms associated with substance use and substance use disorders while referring persons with substance use disorders to evidence-based treatment.

(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 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.

(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.*

Recommendation	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q
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Recommendation	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q
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Appendix D: Status of 2022 Recommendations (As of mm/dd/yy)

Chair, Substance Use Response Working Group Date

Appendix E: Information Regarding SURG Membership, Structure & Activities

SURG Membership, Bylaws, and Meeting Materials are available online at

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