



# McLean County ROSC – Dec. 2022

## *Summary of Community Evaluation Results*

### **Background:**

This report summarizes results recently obtained about the current status of substance use and mental health disorders (SUD/MH) within McLean County, including the role of the McLean County ROSC in this overall picture, as seen by community members and ROSC Council members. Approximately 30 members of the community were engaged and asked to help provide the McLean ROSC with point-in-time feedback pertaining to past ROSC accomplishments, its current state, and the future of the McLean ROSC. Formats for obtaining input included in-person interviews with key informants (leaders/members of key populations) and local PLEs (People with Lived Experience), focus groups, ad hoc discussions, and a brief self-evaluation survey (ROSC 'Healthcheck') using Survey Monkey. Our interviews and surveys targeted a variety of industry and community sectors with representatives present from Education, Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Centers, Local Recovery Community, Human Services, Law Enforcement, Faith-Based Organizations, Behavioral Health services providers, and more.

In the context of this document, "participants" refers to the combination of everyone providing the McLean ROSC with information, thoughts and opinions, including key informants interviewees, subject matter experts (SMEs) from both Human Services and local Recovery Community, People with Lived Experience (PLEs) (including those from local A.A., C.A., and Al-Anon), Family and Allies of PLEs, our Community Needs Assessment (CNA), and the 2022 Healthcheck Survey Respondents.

### **Executive Summary/Key Findings:**

- In general, a significant majority of participants and respondents indicated they are pleased with the direction of the McLean ROSC and feel it is positively impacting the community (over 65%). That said, results of interviews and surveys also illustrate about one-third of council and community members would like more input on overall strategic direction.
- At least survey 75% of respondents felt the ROSC Council topics were relevant and worthwhile of their time. The others neither agreed nor disagreed. Nobody stated they disagreed with the monthly topics. Over one-third sought more opportunity to influence or vet future topics though.
- Community in general is still largely unaware of ROSC sober recreation initiatives despite the ROSC coordinating, marketing, and executing a multitude of sober recreation activities and events, including but not limited to sober picnics and fundraisers, all-recovery softball games, clothing drives, holiday events and parties, recovery-oriented panels, and more.
- Additional efforts, adjustments, and resilience required in order to continue increasing education and awareness about all things McLean ROSC (see below). Potentially includes partnerships to help educate within schools, churches, businesses, etc.
- McLean ROSC needs to do more outreach in lower income urban and rural areas of the county, not just service the mainstream Bloomington-Normal area. McLean County has a population of approximately 171,000 people of which 131,823 live in Bloomington-Normal. This leaves roughly 41,000 people in outside rural towns who could also benefit from ROSC services.
  - Lack of housing, safety concerns over lethal substances, lack of safe sober outlets for youths, community population influxes, are all areas of concern according to focus groups.



- The need for collaboration was a key theme for addressing SUD in McLean County (among agencies and coalitions, among recovery community and ROSC, among recovering people and community, and more).
- Many of the same concerns from our 2018 Community Needs Assessment (CNA) are still relevant today, such as insufficient sober living capacity, lack of adolescent services, poor access to co-occurring/mental health counseling, and a need to increase overall education and awareness about addiction as a disease and local recovery services available in our community.
- Quantitative Analysis of Key Informant Data:
  - Main Concerns Regarding SUD in McLean County: Youth population and accessibility to substances (80% of key informants).
  - Most Common Contributing Factors to SUD Issues in McLean: Difficulty coping with stress, trauma and/or mental health issues (50%), economic development in Bloomington-Normal.
  - Most Known Community Services for SUD: Chestnut Health Systems (60%), Carle Bromenn, Project Oz, and PATH Crisis Center.
  - Agencies/Organizations Most Known for Working/Collaborating with McLean County: Chestnut, McLean County ROSC (30%), Carle Bromenn, PATH.
  - Recommendations for Needed Services in McLean County: Awareness of services available (50%), collaboration among agencies and organizations, increased youth prevention, and stigma reduction.
  - Knowledge of Existing Recovery Support in McLean County: Need additional SUD/MH Supports (60%), “Don’t Know” about local recovery supports (30%), and aware of 12-step community (20%).

### **Gaps/Concerns:**

- Over a third of respondents disagree or not confident that they have ample opportunity to provide input on McLean ROSC initiatives and strategic direction.
- Insufficient adolescent and young peoples’ recovery services (e.g. support groups, residential treatment, etc.). Majority of interviewees feel this issue is exasperated by legalization of cannabis.
- Results indicate overall positive perceptions of the McLean ROSC, yet some level of ambivalence or lack of clarity among community members’ role in helping to shape and flourish the ROSC.
- Moderate levels of confusion regarding ROSC terminology and nearly half find it difficult to quickly understand or succinctly explain what the ROSC is to a layperson.
- Mixed opinions on whether ROSC can be doing more to support multiple pathways of recovery. ROSC has spun off three separate support groups but almost half of respondents were unaware they existed.
- Over 50% of members who replied either disagreed or were indifferent about how widespread the ROSC Council is represented. In other words, there are still sectors, industries, agencies not yet engaged as stakeholders (e.g. churches and faith systems, PLEs, rotary clubs, veterans, etc.) but this type of input, including specifics as much as possible, is valuable to receive from council members.

### **Observations:**

- Key informants interviewed were not subject matter experts on SUD/MH issues. They were delegates from key stakeholder areas reporting what they were seeing and hearing with their own eyes and ears (e.g. a need for more adolescent services, more education and prevention, etc.).
- Many of the same issues from our initial Community Needs Assessment in 2018 persist. Examples include Sober Living (not enough beds or sober living facilities available), lack of Adolescent-based



Treatment Services, and lack of Education and Awareness regarding substance use and mental health disorders.

- Concerns about an absence of adolescent-focused SUD/MH services seem to have grown to the point where nearly 75% of key informants and survey respondents mentioned youth/adolescent services as a primary concern relative to substance use issues within McLean County. This is likely at least partly due to marijuana legalization and its perceived increase in accessibility.
- Despite fairly rigorous marketing campaigns (social media, flyers, email), results indicate the variety of McLean ROSC activities (Sober Recreation, Events, Holiday Parties, Panels, etc.) are not yet known about much beyond the immediate ROSC Council and mailing list.
  - Attendance at special events varies and is generally difficult to predict. Events that are requested are not always supported. However, recent holiday events brought in record numbers of people so perhaps this concerns is trending in a positive direction.
  - Increased collaboration with existing 12-step and Celebrate Recovery (CR) communities should also improve awareness and/or participation levels.
- While the majority of participants were supportive of efforts to help install a Recovery Community Center (RCC) in the community, there is an emerging, minority contingent who do not feel this is the best use of ROSC time and resources.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Seek ways to engage council for increased input on strategic direction and tactical objectives on a regular, periodic basis (i.e. quarterly).
2. Continue to prioritize ROSC recruitment and collaboration among agencies, PLEs, recovery communities, 12-step and CR, and others.
3. Consider revisiting and overhauling 2018 Community Needs Assessment process; involve ROSC Council in this activity and potentially “outsource” to ROSC sub-committee. This exercise could be a solution to above bullet item.
4. Ensure constituents have opportunities to suggest or weigh in on relevance of ROSC Council meeting topics, as well as overall ROSC goals and activities (e.g. quarterly Council ‘working sessions’).
5. Continue to updated council on Recovery Community Center (RCC) initiatives and ensure buy-in.
6. Speak with subject matter experts and recovery community members to identify **new** support groups that could potentially thrive in McLean County (e.g. a substance-specific group like K2/Spice Anonymous, behavioral-specific groups, new recovery programs not presently represented with “brick and mortar” meetings, and so on).
7. Continue rigorous efforts to recruit and retain PLEs from larger, established local recovery programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery.
8. Determine ways to involve local media in ROSC messaging and promotion to increase exposure and help “create a community buzz” about ROSC.
9. Work with local dispensaries on Harm Reduction and SUD campaigns; risks of cannabis use, particularly among adolescents, and consider other potential areas of collaboration.
10. Discuss with ROSC Council the pros and cons of creating and assigning/voting in ROSC “officers” or Board of Directors with set terms for these service commitments.
11. Continue to offer opportunities for ROSC Council and local PLEs to weigh in on ROSC goals and activities.