

EDGAR COUNTY ROSC Council

MEETING MINUTES

December 23rd, 2025

5:15 PM

Paris Hospital Conference Room A and on Zoom

Attendance in-person: Nicki Hanks, Jessica Parrill, Doug Cochran, Vicki Dick, Lori Carroll, Janice Watson, Amanda Thompson, Norm Wilson, Cindy Spencer, Annie Blaudow, Sue Sheeran, Mary Morgan Ryan, Janice Watson, Nate Alexander, Bethany Wagoner, James Sanders, John Dick, Cory Hanks

Attendance on Zoom: Meeting was in-person only

Community Survey Results

Nicki opened the meeting by presenting the findings from the Edgar County ROSC Council Community Survey, which received 484 responses. She noted that this strong response rate provides reliable insight into community perceptions of mental health, substance use, recovery, and access to services. Overall, the data reflects both encouraging progress and ongoing challenges within the community.

Nicki first discussed community attitudes and stigma. Survey results showed that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that people who use drugs and people with mental illness deserve respect. However, despite these positive attitudes on rating scales, stigma emerged as the most frequently cited barrier in open-ended responses. Many respondents shared experiences of being judged, denied employment or housing, and feeling afraid to seek help. This indicates that while public attitudes may be improving, stigma continues to negatively impact real-life recovery experiences.

The discussion then moved to access to mental health and substance use services. A significant percentage of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it is difficult to find treatment in Edgar County. This concern applied across mental health treatment, substance use treatment, harm reduction services such as Narcan, and Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR). The data suggests that access to services—not awareness or willingness to seek help—is a major barrier for many residents.

Nicki highlighted strong community support for harm reduction and MAR. Most respondents agreed that harm reduction services reduce the risks of drug use, that MAR is an effective treatment, and that community-wide Narcan trainings and MAR education are important for

reducing stigma. Despite this strong support, many respondents also reported difficulty finding harm reduction services and MAR providers locally, reinforcing a consistent theme of high support but limited access.

The survey also demonstrated strong agreement that a Warm Handoff Program would improve recovery outcomes for individuals with substance use disorder. Additionally, many respondents indicated that they or someone they know has experienced an overdose or substance-use-related emergency requiring medical attention. Nicki emphasized that this points to an opportunity to strengthen coordination between hospitals, emergency services, and community-based recovery supports.

Employment challenges were identified as a significant concern. Nicki shared that 52.5% of respondents reported that they or someone they know has faced difficulty finding employment due to substance use history or criminal justice involvement. At the same time, the majority of respondents agreed that the community should actively promote second-chance hiring. This reflects both a clear need and a willingness within the community to address employment barriers.

Nicki then reviewed the 310 open-ended responses regarding barriers to recovery. The most common themes included stigma and discrimination, lack of affordable housing and sober living options, transportation barriers, limited access to treatment and recovery services, employment challenges, and poor coordination between systems such as healthcare, courts, law enforcement, and recovery supports. These responses underscored that recovery extends beyond treatment and requires stability, support, and opportunity.

Finally, Nicki addressed awareness of community resources. While most respondents were aware of physical health services (85.3%), mental health treatment (74.6%), and substance use treatment (71.5%), awareness was significantly lower for affordable housing resources (58.7%) and domestic violence services (43.4%). This highlights a notable gap in resource awareness, particularly for housing and crisis-related supports.

In closing, Nicki summarized key takeaways from the survey, noting that the community largely supports recovery, harm reduction, MAR, Warm Handoffs, and second-chance opportunities. However, stigma remains a major barrier, and access to services, housing, transportation, and employment continues to be a challenge. The data strongly supports continued stigma-reduction efforts, expansion of harm reduction and MAR services, development of Warm Handoff programs, employer engagement around second-chance hiring, and stronger system coordination across Edgar County. Nicki thanked all survey participants and council members for their ongoing commitment to supporting recovery in the community.

Agency Updates and holiday Party

Nicki stated that, due to the scheduled holiday ROSC party, the agenda was adjusted to allow time for agency updates. She opened the floor for council members and partner agencies to share updates and announcements. During this time, Nate Alexander highlighted the Homeless Project

and recognized Bill Stidham for his commitment to reaching all of the outside communities and ensuring individuals received warm winter items.

Following the agency updates, the formal portion of the meeting concluded, and the council transitioned into the holiday ROSC Council party activities. The evening ended with members participating in games and informal networking, providing an opportunity for relationship-building, collaboration, and connection among council members and community partners.

Next Meeting: January 27th, 2026, at Paris Hospital Conference Room A and on Zoom.