



## MERC Meeting Summary

December 18, 2025

9-10am via Zoom

### Introduction/Meeting Attendees

Council members introduced themselves and their agency/program. Each person briefly shared their favorite Thanksgiving food.

In attendance today:

- Angella Holloway-CHS/SCC ROSC
- Ashley Ramos- Gateway Foundation
- Conswala Jones-CHS/SCC ROSC
- Cora Hughs-Community Faith
- Daniel Hutchison-CHS/ Director of Community Health
- Dustin Pearcy-Oxford House
- Elyse Schoen-St. Francis Way Clinic
- Jennifer Schultz- Centerstone
- Jen Nagel Fischer- Porchlight Collective SAP
- Kara Wardein-CHS
- Kathy Kehrer-CHS/CCE
- Katie Wilson-CHS/MERC Madison County ROSC
- Kristen Anderson-CHS Community Outreach
- Mark Knott-CHS/MERC Madison County ROSC
- Mike Luther- CHS/OEND/DOPP
- Patrick Small- HSHS Highland/ Greenville
- Paul Fischer- Porch Light Collective SAP
- Sheridan Jordan- Take Action Coalition/ Clinton County ROSC
- Tracy Dones-CHS/FAITH
- Violette Book- CHS/OEND

### Agency Spotligh/Guest Speaker

- There was no guest speaker for the month of December. Interested in sharing about your agency or program? Email [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org) to get on an upcoming meeting agenda.

## **Discussion**

- **Community Survey Updates:**

- Mark Knott gave an update about MERC's Survey data that was collected via QR Code and paper copy survey. Attached is the data from the Madison and St. Clair County survey.
- If Mark or Katie have provided you with physical copies of the survey that are ready to be picked up from you, please email [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org) to arrange a time for them to connect with you.

## **Workgroup Reports**

A workgroup planning meeting will be held on 12/23/25 from 3-4pm via Zoom, hosted by Mark Knott and Katie Wilson. Workgroup volunteers will meet to collectively discuss how to achieve the 3 goals below set in the strategic plan. To learn more or to join a workgroup, email [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org)

- **Stigma Reduction Workgroup:** Group focus on reducing stigma connected to people who use substances, people experiencing mental health problems, and those seeking treatment or recovery support services. Inclusive of the entire community with specific focus on the impact stigma has on compassion towards the unhoused.
  - Work group members: Mark Knott, Katie Wilson, Kathy Kehrer, Dustin Pearcy, Jennifer Schultz
  - There was no report out during the November meeting.
- **Awareness and Access to Services/Recovery Support Workgroup:** Group focus is to increase community knowledge of services available and increase awareness of how to access them by developing targeted educational campaigns that will include information about behavioral health issues specific communities are experiencing, what types of resources are available in or near these communities, and how these resources can be accessed.
  - Workgroup Members: Mark Knott, Katie Wilson, Kara Wardein
  - There was no report out during the November meeting.
- **Education and Access to Harm Reduction Workgroup:** Group focus is to develop targeted public awareness campaigns that will highlight what harm reduction services are available, why these services are vital to the community, and where these services can be accessed.
  - Workgroup Members: Mark Knott, Katie Wilson, Jen Nagel-Fisher, Paul Fisher, Mike Luther
  - There was no report out during the November meeting.

## **Announcements and Upcoming Events**

- **Upcoming ROSC Events:**

- “Recovery Without Stigma” Held at 6pm the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Edwardsville Library, hosted by Mark Knott of MERC. This is an open stigma conversation and naloxone education event. To learn more, email [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org) or visit [Recovery Without Stigma | Edwardsville Public Library](#)

- **Upcoming Council member events/announcements:**

- Katie Wilson asked council to share any events and flyers happening within other council members organizations to share on social media pages.
- Patrick Small informed the council of the HSHS AA meeting hosted at the HSHS Highland Hospital on Monday Nights.
- Kara Wardein informed council of SMART Recovery which is help both in person and online via zoom. [www.smartrecovery.com](http://www.smartrecovery.com)

## **Adjournment Announcements**

- Next meeting will be January 15, 2025, via Zoom. Link and reminder will be sent before the meeting.
- Next Workgroup meeting will be December 23, 2025, from 3-4pm. Mark or Katie will send more info, including a meeting link closer to the day.
- Please see flyers accompanying this summary for important and exciting things happening!



**Metro East Recovery Council (MERC) Vision:** A community system that nurtures and supports individuals and families seeking or maintaining recovery for themselves or a loved one.

**Metro East Recovery Council (MERC) Mission:** Collaborating to build and empower communities of recovery.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MetroEastRecovery](https://www.facebook.com/MetroEastRecovery)

For more information: [www.govst.edu/Recovery-Support/Southern-IL-ROSC/MERC-ROSC-Council/](http://www.govst.edu/Recovery-Support/Southern-IL-ROSC/MERC-ROSC-Council/)