



## **MERC Meeting Summary**

November 20, 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
- Beverly Holland-CHS/Statewide ROSC
- Carrie Mckenzie-Gateway Foundation
- Conswala Jones-CHS/SCC ROSC
- Cora Hughs-Community Faith
- Daniel Hutchison-CHS/ Director of Community Health
- Dustin Percy-Oxford House
- Elbert Jennings- ISP
- Elyse Schoen-St. Francis Way Clinic
- Heather- NAMI
- Jen Nagel Fischer- Porchlight Collective SAP
- Kara Wardein-CHS
- Kathy Kehrner-CHS/CCE
- Katie Wilson-CHS/MERC Madison County ROSC
- Kristen Anderson-CHS Community Outreach
- Linzy Clark- Community PLE
- Mark Knott-CHS/MERC Madison County ROSC
- Mike Luther- CHS/OEND/DOPP
- Morgan Hempin-CHS
- Paul Fischer- Porch Light Collective SAP
- Tawana Howard-St. Clair County Health Dept.
- Teresa Cornelius- HSHS- Highland/Greenville
- Tracy Dones-CHS/FAITH
- Tyrone Hill-Amare
- Violette Book- CHS/OEND

## Agency Spotlight/Guest Speaker

- There was no guest speaker for the month of November. 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 ongoing efforts to collect data via the FY26 Community Survey. To date, approximately 100 physical surveys have been completed, and 30 digital surveys have been completed via the QR code.
  - This survey will remain open until December 7<sup>th</sup>. **We need your help** as we continue efforts to collect information about substance use, mental health, and Medication Assisted Recovery services in Madison County. The survey flyer with QR Code is attached to the email accompanying this summary. Here is the direct link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JFBXDW3>. Please share widely to your clients, patients, peers, family and friends who live in Madison County.
  - If you would like physical copies of the surveys or physical flyers with the QR code to distribute, please email [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org) to arrange a time to have some dropped off to you.
  - 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.
- **Community Resource List Updates:**
  - Time was spent showcasing the Community Resource List and the general types of resources included in the list. MERC plans to share these electronically and will also print physical versions that can be disseminated.
  - Before we share this resource with the community, please review to ensure your agency/program is included. If we forgot you, this was an accident and if you email use at [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org) we'll make sure to get your info inserted before we begin to distribute.

- If you'd like copies of the Community resource list to provide to your clients, email [merc@chestnut.org](mailto:merc@chestnut.org) to arrange a time for us to get them to you.

## **Workgroup Reports**

A workgroup planning meeting was held on 10/23/25 from 2-3pm via Zoom, hosted by Mark Knott and Katie Wilson. Workgroup volunteers met to learn more about the goals associated with the workgroups as outlined in the ROSC program description. 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 Percy, 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:**

- Tyrone Hill shared that Amare is doing a food/clothing drive. If you donate clothing, please ensure items are clean and in good shape. For more information reach out to Tyrone at [thill@amarenfp.org](mailto:thill@amarenfp.org) or see the flyer accompanying this summary.
- Tyrone also announced that Amare will be opening an 11 bed Sober Living House for men in Granite City. The anticipated launch date is 1/1/26. More info to come soon!
- Dustin Percy shared that Oxford House is opening and 8 bed home for men on 11/24/25 in Fairview Heights. As of today (11/20/25) there are still 7 open spots. To learn more or make a referral reach out to Dustin at [dustin.percy@oxfordhouse.org](mailto:dustin.percy@oxfordhouse.org) or call him at 773-318-8559.
- Kara Wardein shared that Chestnut Health Systems will be hosting a walk-in Primary Care Clinic at their new Wood River location (337 East Ferguson Ave.) on 12/10/25 from 9am-3pm. This clinic is for anyone ages 2 and up. For more information email Kara at [krwardein@chestnut.org](mailto:krwardein@chestnut.org) or see the accompanying flyer.

### **Adjournment Announcements**

- Next meeting will be December 18, 2025, via Zoom. Link and reminder will be sent before the meeting.
- Next Workgroup meeting will be December 11, 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/)