

Effingham County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, January 19th, 2026 (MLK Day)

Time: 1:00-2:00 pm

Location: Zoom only

Meeting Facilitator: Samantha Hicks

Attendees:

Zoom:

Alex Schneider (HSHS Community Health Outreach Specialist)

Heather Greenwood (Southeast Illinois Area Health Education Center)

Jeannetta Workman (Mental Health Counselor, Wright Choice Counseling)

Norbert Soltwedel (Effingham County Board member)

Rhonda Lagois (Randolph & Washington County ROSC Council Coordinator)

Samantha Hicks (Effingham County ROSC Council Coordinator)

Tommy Alsobrook (Senior Outreach Coordinator, Oxford House)

Minutes

Introductions

Council meeting attendees introduced themselves and the agencies they represent or explained why they were attending.

Rhonda stated she is a new ROSC Council coordinator. She spent 15 years in law enforcement—IL in a county jail and in Missouri as a correctional officer. She stated she has experience with family members in addiction. She also runs her Celebrate Recovery at her church. She took the position to help decrease the stigma of addiction and help be a part of the solution to make things better in her community.

Tommy stated he is in recovery and being a part of this is personal to him especially in his career getting to provide safe housing for individuals in recovery. He also stated Oxford House has opened their 2nd home in Effingham (12 bed men's home). He's needing help to fill 6-8 beds currently. Reach out to him or Samantha for information.

Jeannetta stated Wright Choice Counseling is looking for ways to better help serve the community. Before she entered into private practice, she worked for a community mental health center where her focus was on addiction. She's also worked for the area's problem-solving court. She states she's trying to integrate that into the services offered at Wright Choice.

Norbert stated the Effingham County board has opioid funds & talked about some of the recipients of those funds so far. He stated there isn't enough awareness or willingness to help

this segment of the population. He states he has deep respect for folks who have fallen into substance use and would like to be able to help in some way.

Heather stated she doesn't have lived experience and substance use was never in her face growing up. She states her husband is a police officer in Flora. She states she just has a deep passion for helping people and connecting individuals who need help to service providers in the area. She states she wants to be here to be a connector to the ROSC Council & the people we serve.

Samantha gave an in-depth ROSC Council overview:

- ROSC Council goals & her role within the ROSC Council
- Touched on updated strategic plans & target audience focuses
- Importance of focusing on targeting 2-3 sectors at a time each year to make tangible systemic change
- ROSC Council promotes all pathways to recovery—not just complete abstinence. This include harm reduction.
- Stigma reduction—being at community events continuously.

Committee updates

Samantha gave updates for each ROSC Council committee & gave brief overviews:

Roads to Recovery Committee (transportation)

- Had a meeting with **Nathan** at CIPT to gain knowledge of inner workings of transportation services for Effingham County
- Meeting with CEFS Transportation director, Beth, has been set up. **Madison** LeMay and **Samantha** will be attending.
- Had a meeting with Effingham Transport, Holly, to learn the inner workings of their services & how they could possibly help bridge the gap with Probation & getting clients to treatment out of county; only transports to MAR methadone clinics outside of Effingham County; only takes insurance; **Samantha** explained the process of getting set up with transportation services
- Focusing on faith-based community to compile a volunteer list to transport to treatment

Healing Families Committee

- Nailed down a target audience for this committee—individuals affected by substance use in the home—i.e. parents of a child using, grandparents tending to children whose parents use, family members living in the home of someone who uses
- Needing resources for adults for support—something like a peer to peer support group

Pathways to Peer Support

- No update

Persons with Lived Experience (PLE) Committee

- Explained that the ROSC Council has had a PLE committee for the last 2 years but members have moved on or got different jobs, etc.
- No one came to 1st formal committee meeting this month—idea will need to be reworked into possible focus groups or 1:1 meetings with PLEs to identify current, past, or future barriers

Comments about the committees

Samantha asked if there are any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Norbert asked if family members are a resource for transportation for an individual needing to go to treatment.

Samantha stated the individual needing transport may have burned bridges with family members. She stated probation reaches out when they need transport because that's their only option.

Rhonda stated finances are another barrier. She stated she had just learned that Medicaid and Medicare will reimburse you for mileage for transportation if the ride is approved through insurance. **Samantha** asked for clarification. **Rhonda** stated a family member can take someone to a medical appointment and get reimbursed.

Samantha stated the ROSC Council & Probation gives out gas gift cards to volunteers who transport.

Samantha asked if **Norbert** would be attending the meeting set up with Pastor Mike from the Lutheran Church in Effingham. **Norbert** said he would be. He stated he's been trying to get the Pastors of this area to come together for quite sometime but has proved difficult. Pastor Mike has agreed to host this upcoming meeting and invite other Pastors from the area. **Samantha** stated she and Madison will be there to talk about ROSC Council, present data, & include the transportation committee goals.

Strategic plan review

Samantha went over the updated strategic plan & asked Council members to reach out to her via phone or email if they wanted to set up a 1:1 meeting with her to go over it more in-depth.

Drug trends discussion

Samantha brought up the "High in Plain Sight" training she attended last week. She discussed the over the counter drugs people can buy at smoke shops, convenient stores, and gas stations. She touched on drugs such as 7-OH, Kava, Kratom, & vapes. She talked about pros and cons of banning Kratom in unincorporated cities like some counties have already done. She talked about the upcoming trends of psychedelics. She stated she will type up the notes from the training and send them out to the Council later this week. The training was presented by Jermaine Galloway, jermaine@tallcopsaystop.com. Follow him at Tall Cop Says Stop on Facebook and other social platforms.

Heather asked why this stuff can't be stopped. **Samantha** stated because our generation and the current youth are the test subjects. There's not enough information on how it works, how to test for it, what it does, how to treat it yet. So, we're just trying to maintain. She stated bans only work if their enforced and oftentimes the laws aren't trickled down to law enforcement to enforce it. So, stuff slips through the cracks.

Samantha also stated this information was all received from the training of an expert in his field. He and his colleagues will come speak, but are very expensive, but is very worth it. Samantha will email Heather that information & anyone else who wants it.

HSHS St. Anthony Narcan update

Samantha asked **Alex** to give an overview of the processes that ideas and changes have to go through via the healthcare system as her and Alex have worked in collaboration to try and get Narcan in HSHS St. Anthony, for several months, to be dispensed to the public.

Alex stated, "There are a lot of federal regulations, especially in a hospital setting of how medicine can be given out. And it is always for patient safety on how restrictive they are on where medicine comes from, how it is stored, who it is supplied to, who is responsible for that. And it takes a lot of steps in order to get approval, especially for something we're trying to give away for free, which we are making those steps. But it is all important for patient safety to monitor what medicine the hospital gives out."

Samantha thanked Alex for his insight. She states it's important to realize and understand the work being done will not happen overnight.

MAR Panel Event

Samantha gave an overview of the next ROSC Council hosted event:

- Friday, February 27th @ 11:30am-1:00pm @ HSHS. St. Anthony's auditorium
- Panelists include: Effingham County Sheriff Kuhns, Shelly Kuhns, APRN-FPA, CCNS from Gentle Care Consultants, Dr. Workman from Family Care Associates, Stephanie Jackson, APRN from HSHS Medical Group
- Hybrid event; in-person & on Zoom—Zoom link to come.
- Jersey Mike's is catering & in-person participant will receive a free "Harm Reduction is Healthcare" tote
- Free & available to anyone

Samantha asked for help in spreading the word, especially to healthcare providers—doctors, nurses, staff, etc. That is the target audience.

Partners for Progress Deflection initiative

Samantha asked **Heather** to provide the update.

- Launch date is March 3rd @ 12:00pm-4:30pm @ Flora Church of Nazarene, Flora, IL

Heather stated, "Our specific initiative is targeting those with mental health challenges, with substance use challenges, and those experiencing being unhoused homelessness and it is helping those individuals before they get into the judicial system before they commit a crime." She stated, "So those who are in frequent contact with law enforcement who are not committing a crime, but don't go to the jail, but don't go to the hospital, but then where do they go?"

She stated, "So this is where deflection comes in. And for our eight counties, we will start off with two deflection specialists that are assigned to all eight counties that will grow as the demand as the referrals come in. But what will happen is an officer comes in contact with an individual who meets the criteria. It's mostly officer discretion. Again, if this person has committed a crime and they need to go to jail, that's where you're going to go. Deflection is not an option B of being arrested."

Heather talks about the referral process, relentless engagement, and the importance of this program coming to our counties VERY SOON.

Samantha asked if there are any more questions or comments. She announced the next meeting date and to get ahold of her via text or email with any questions or suggestions.

****NEXT ROSC COUNCIL MEETING****

Date: Monday, February 23rd @ 1:00-2:00PM

Where: 104 E. Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom

Contact emails:

ROSC Council Coordinator: Samantha Hicks; samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org

ROSC Council Program Supervisor: Jenna Hays; jennah@hourhouserecovery.org

Where to find past meeting minutes: <https://www.govst.edu/Recovery-Support/South-Central-IL-ROSC/EFCRC-ROSC-Council/>



Effingham County ROSC Facebook page

