

# Ford County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

*Tuesday, February 24th, 2025, at 8:30 AM (via Zoom)*

**Definition of ROSC:** A Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that is person-centered and builds on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and communities to experience recovery and improved health, wellness and quality of life for those with or at risk of substance use and/or co-occurring conditions. The central focus of a ROSC is to create an infrastructure, or “systems of care”, with the resources to effectively address the full range of substance use and/or co-occurring disorders within communities.

**Our Mission: Bring the community together to build a recovery support system to improve health, wellness and quality of life, through education, stigma reduction, and access to resources.**

## **Attendance:**

1. Frankie Ward (Chestnut Health Systems, Recovery Specialist)
2. Kari Knapp (Chestnut Health Systems - Associate of Community Health)
3. Barbara Brumleve (Ford County ROSC - McLean County ROSC, Chestnut)
4. Dave King (Carle Addiction Recovery Center – Community Outreach)
5. Kami Garrison (Chestnut Health Systems, Statewide ROSC Region 3)
6. Tim Nuss (Ford County Board)
7. Betty Kay Benningfield (Ford County Public Health Department)
8. Jill Duden (Birth to Five)
9. Melissa Watson (Birth to Five)
10. Christine P. (Carle Outreach)
11. Mark Ecker (Ford County Public Health Department)
12. John Schneider (Community Member and Livingston ROSC)
13. Sandra Beecher (Gateway)
14. Ken Lyons (Ford County Workforce Development)
15. Clint Perzee (Iroquois Sheriff)
16. Melissa (LifeCil)
17. Odette Hyatt-Watson – East Central Illinois Community Action Agency
18. Mariah Brown – Paxton Headstart
19. Ken Lyons - Workforce Development
20. LaSienna Burton – Champaign Health Department
21. Megan Ramirez – Gibson Hospital
22. Abby Behrens – Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
23. John Schneider – RESTORE Ministry Recovery
24. Tia Schum – Piatt County ROSC

## Agenda:

- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **ROSC Spotlight: RESTORE Recovery Ministry – John Schneider**
- **Medication Assisted Recovery 101**
- **RESET Team Updates**
- **Agency Updates**

The Ford ROSC Team welcomed everyone to the February Ford ROSC Council meeting and Barb Brumleve asked everyone to introduce themselves. Barb then introduced the council to John Schneider to share about RESTORE Ministry.

## Community Resource Spotlight: RESTORE Ministry – John Schneider

John Schneider, a local resident of Ford County and a person in long-term recovery, shared a new program he has been developing, **RESTORE Ministry**, to be held on Wednesday evenings, starting **Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>** beginning at **6:45pm and encouraged to come at 6pm to break bread with a delicious dinner that will be served**. A meaningful part of this program is the opportunity to connect with others, share hope, and break bread with friends and family in a welcoming environment. John leads RESTORE Ministry, a Christ-centered recovery ministry based loosely on a 12-step model that focuses not on pointing out sin, but on healing, hope, and navigating life's circumstances through biblical guidance. Each meeting includes a scripture-based lesson with real-life application and RESTORE features both a HOPE Group and a Renewal Group. Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m., followed by the meeting at 6:45 p.m., and everyone is welcome. This is not an anonymous program; rather, it is designed as a family event. A full nursery is available, along with Wednesday night Sunday school classes for children aged four and up. Meetings are interactive and centered on fellowship, with participants gathering as family before moving into breakout groups to share what they have learned and what is on their hearts, encouraging participants to "recover out loud." The meeting lasts approximately one hour and fifteen minutes and is held **at 110 IL Hwy 54 in Roberts through Living Well Ministry. RESTORE Ministry can be followed on Facebook, and for more information, individuals may contact Restore Recovery at 217-249-4744 or [jjayprov36@gmail.com](mailto:jjayprov36@gmail.com).**

## MAR 101: Medication Assisted Recovery

Frankie Ward led the meeting with a "brush-up" on Substance Use Disorder and the Brain and how MAR can assist in recovery.

- Substance use changes the brain's survival systems
- The brain begins treating the substance as essential for stability
- Core regulation systems begin to shift

- Stopping use can activate a survival-level alarm

Frankie reiterated the importance of understanding **Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR)** by first examining how substance use disorder affects the brain. It was reviewed that the brain contains built-in survival circuits designed to prioritize essential needs such as food, water, safety, and connection. When these needs are met, the brain experiences stability.

**Substances directly interact with these same survival systems.** Over time, with repeated substance use, the brain adapts and begins to rewire its internal priority system. The brain can start to function as though the substance is necessary for stability, similar to basic survival needs like food or water.

When the substance is absent, the brain activates a powerful internal alarm system comparable to a biological emergency response experienced during starvation or danger. This alarm response makes stress significantly harder to tolerate, emotional regulation feels nearly impossible, and decision-making more reactive rather than logical.

The group noted that this survival-mode response contributes to intense anxiety, irritability, and a strong biological drive to restore balance. At this stage, the brain is operating in survival mode and prioritizing relief from the alarm above other considerations.

**The discussion concluded with the guiding question: If substance use disorder alters survival and regulation systems in the brain, how should treatment approaches respond to these changes?**

### **What Is Medication-Assisted Recovery?**

- Evidence-based recovery pathway
- Treats opioid and alcohol use disorders
- Uses FDA-approved medications
- Reduces cravings and withdrawal symptoms
- Supports long-term wellness

Frankie explained one evidence-based approach that directly addresses those changes is **Medication-Assisted Recovery.**

**MAR** is a science-based recovery pathway used to treat opioid and alcohol use disorders. It is a medical approach used specifically to treat the brain when it has been impacted by substances. It is a legitimate recovery path.

As we've seen, the brain can get stuck in "survival mode," reacting as if substances are as vital as food or water. MAR works by stepping into those same survival systems to help the brain feel stable again.

**When the internal alarm is no longer dominating your system, you gain the space to heal. This allows people to move out of survival mode and focus on rebuilding their lives, strengthening relationships, and working toward long-term wellness.**

### **Medications Used in MAR:**

**Opioid Use Disorder** – Buprenorphine, Methadone and Naltrexone

**Alcohol Use Disorder** – Naltrexone, Acamprosate, Disulfiram

### How MAR Works:

- Reduces cravings
- Controls withdrawal symptoms
- Helps the brain and body return to balance
- Lowers the risk of overdose death
- Makes it easier to stay connected to recovery supports
- Supports daily responsibilities and routines
- Improves long-term recovery outcomes

Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR) helps reduce cravings and control withdrawal symptoms, allowing individuals to stabilize both physically and emotionally. By supporting the brain and body in returning to balance, MAR lowers the risk of overdose death and creates a more stable foundation for healing. When the brain is more regulated, it becomes easier for individuals to stay connected to recovery supports, maintain daily responsibilities and routines, and actively participate in their recovery journey. Overall, MAR improves long-term recovery outcomes by treating the underlying medical condition. **Medication addresses the biological aspects of substance use disorder—and that is recovery.**

### Common Misunderstandings:

- “MAR is just replacing one drug with another”
- “You’re not really in recovery if you choose MAR”
- “Medication alone isn’t enough”
- “MAR” should only be used short-term”

Frankie shared common misconceptions surrounding Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR), despite the strong body of evidence supporting its effectiveness. Many of these misunderstandings stem from long-standing beliefs about what recovery is supposed to look like. Historically, recovery has often been defined as total abstinence without medication, leading some to believe that individuals who use medication are not truly in recovery. Another common misconception is the idea that medication is simply “replacing one substance with another.”

**Frankie emphasized that MAR medications are evidence-based medical treatments designed to reduce risk, stabilize brain function, and support recovery.**

It was also noted that some believe MAR should only be used short-term. However, substance use disorder is recognized as a chronic medical condition, and—as with other chronic conditions—treatment duration varies by individual. For some, short-term medication use may be appropriate, while for others, long-term use may be the safest and most effective option. There is no universal timeline. Additionally, while counseling can be highly beneficial, it is not a requirement for MAR to be effective. Recovery pathways are individualized, and individuals choose the combination of supports that works best for them. Ultimately, recovery is defined by improved health, increased stability, and reduced harm, and medication directly supports these outcomes.



The group discussed strategies for breaking stigma surrounding medication-assisted recovery (MAR) and addressing the tendency to compare recovery pathways. **Mariah** raised the question of how to reduce stigma around medication use and how to stop individuals from comparing one another's recovery journeys. **Christine** noted that many people do not disclose their use of medication and emphasized the importance of explaining alternatives and increasing understanding. **Mariah** asked whether MAR should be viewed similarly to medications used for co-occurring conditions, such as antidepressants or heart medications. **Barb** added that medications are also used to treat alcohol use disorder (AUD), gambling disorder, and other behavioral health conditions.

**Tim** shared that MAR has recently been discussed multiple times at Ford County Board meetings and expressed appreciation for the local ROSC efforts and the Sheriff's Department's strong support of MAR, describing it as a true turning point in addressing addiction in the community. He also noted that people in community automatically think of ROSC and Opioid Use Disorder, but he wants people to know there is MAR for alcohol use disorder too. **Melissa** thanked Ford County and John from Livingston County and shared that she once held misconceptions about MAR. She expressed gratitude for the open discussion, stating that it helped her better understand that MAR is not "swapping one vice for another." **Christine** also shared that they offer a 30-day injection option, which has been helpful in supporting individuals with stimulant use disorder.

The group concluded by discussing potential MAR-related trainings and identifying target audiences. **Betty Kay** emphasized the importance of educating the community that substance use disorder (SUD) is an illness, disease, and disorder that requires treatment. Suggested **training topics included understanding what SUD is and how medication supports recovery**. When identifying the best audience for these trainings, the consensus was broad community education, with Betty Kay specifically highlighting medical personnel as a key audience.

# Want to Learn More?

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**  
[samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment](https://samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment)

**National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)**  
[nida.nih.gov](https://nida.nih.gov)

**CDC – Medications for Opioid Use Disorder**  
[cdc.gov/drugoverdose](https://cdc.gov/drugoverdose)

**Illinois Department of Human Services – MAR Information**  
[dhs.state.il.us](https://dhs.state.il.us)

**Recovery Research Institute**  
[recoveryanswers.org](https://recoveryanswers.org)

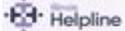


# MAR Resources



**Illinois Helpline (MAR Now)**

**833-2FINDHELP (833-234-6343)**  
Free, confidential, statewide support

The Illinois Helpline: 

- Helps find MAR providers near you
- Connects people to recovery and mental health resources
- Supports individuals and families
- Requires no insurance or referral

**Ford County ROSC Community Resource Guide**

The Ford ROSC Community Resource Guide connects people to recovery and community resources in the local area and surrounding communities.

Scan the QR code to:

- Find MAR and recovery-related services
- Explore basic needs supports like housing, food, and transportation
- Learn about other community resources





**Local MAR Providers**

**GROW**  
(Gibson Recovery Optimizing Wellness)

 (217) 784-2807

 10 Doctors Park, Gibson City, IL 60936



GROW is a local MAR provider offering Medication-Assisted Recovery and recovery-focused care.

**RESET Team Update:**

# What's gnome-ing on

## RESET Team Updates

Reframing Recovery  
Naloxone boxes  
Next Meeting: This Friday  
February 27<sup>th</sup> 9 am

## Resource Bags

Assembly complete  
Thank you to Megan, Christine, Melissa,  
Ava, and LaSienna



## Next Meeting

Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am via Zoom



## AGENCY UPDATES:

**Betty Kay Benningfield** from FCPHD gave an update on Naloxone (Narcan) Vending Machines. She shared the bowling alley in Gibson City approved having a vending machine in their parking lot (in March). The large vending machine just came in, and we will be installing it this Friday at the Ford County Public Health Department in Paxton. The vending machine has free Naloxone, Sharps Containers, Test Strips, Detera, CPR masks and Safe Sex Kits. She has also received approval for a Naloxone box and sharp container in Kempton and one for Piper City!! Lastly, the health department offers free STI health tests.

**Tim Nuss** extended an invitation to anybody and everybody to join the Ford County Board Meetings. They meet on the **2nd Monday of every month at 7pm in the basement of the Sheriff's office**. You'll always have a platform!!

**Abby Behrens** shared save the date information for the **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Illinois Alliance for Drug Endangered Children Conference, May 12<sup>th</sup>** at the Memorial Learning Center in Springfield.

**John Schneider** is starting a new RECOVERY meeting – **RESTORE Ministry** at Living Word in Roberts, IL, starting March 18<sup>th</sup>. Join us at **6pm for dinner and at 6:45pm the RESTORE meeting** will begin. **RESTORE** is a Christ-centered recovery and discipleship ministry created for those seeking hope and healing. Whether you're walking through addiction, past wounds, or simply longing for renewal- Christ meets us here. Hope. Purpose. Renewal!! Ford County & Beyond is Beyond Grateful 😊

## CONNECTION IS KEY!!!

We look forward to seeing you at the next ROSC council meeting, **via Zoom, on Tuesday, March 24th at 8:30am.**

As always, please reach out if you have any questions, ideas for collaborations, etc.

**Don't be a stranger... Gnome where to find us!**

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 [Ford.County.ROSC](#)

 [Ford-County-Recovers-a-ROSC-Community](#)

 [Ford County ROSC - YouTube](#)



