



Meeting Minutes: Kane County ROSC Council

Date: April Meeting

Presented by: Annette Villarreal, Kane County ROSC Coordinator

Co-Facilitator: Jarrett Burton

Guest Speaker: Lisa Krieghbaum, Senior Deputy, Kane County Coroner's Office

Host: Kane County Coroner's Office

Attendees:

Juanita Velazquez

Adam Pauley

Sarah Mendoza

Toni Garcia

Lily Peterson

Sharon Cabrera

Brianna Haug

Matilda Faria

Kelsey Chavez

Marissa Thompson

Jessica Mino

Carissa Felber

Donna Rennaud

Meeting Purpose: Monthly meeting of the Kane County ROSC Council to review local overdose data, host a guest speaker from the Coroner's Office, and share community updates and harm reduction efforts.



Key Discussion & Guest Presentation

1. Welcome & Icebreaker

Annette Villarreal opened the meeting, thanking the Kane County Coroner's office for hosting. Jarrett Burton served as co-facilitator. Attendees introduced themselves and shared a unique skill or talent.

2. Data Overview (Annette Villarreal)

National/State: 2024 overdose rates showed a 24% decrease nationally. Illinois recorded 2,419 deaths.

Kane County: Drug-related deaths dropped from 93 (2023) to 59 (2024), a 37% decrease. Of those, 37 were opioid-related.

Context: DuPage County had 61 opioid fatalities. The 37% reduction reflects the impact of collective work, though every death represents a continued need for action.

3. Guest Speaker: Lisa Kriegbaum, Senior Deputy Coroner

Annette Villarreal interviewed Ms. Kriegbaum about her role, trends, and challenges.

Role & Passion:

The job requires a deep passion for people and families. Coroners work 12-hour shifts that often extend to 15-17 hours, leading to high burnout.

A key part of the role is helping families on their worst day with person-centered, dignified care.

Substance Use Trends:

Fentanyl remains the most common substance involved in fatalities.

A recurring theme is that many individuals say they do not want fentanyl and seek heroin, but the drug supply is unpredictable. Pills are often pressed with fentanyl, making testing strips a critical harm reduction tool.



Barriers & Gaps:

Family Barriers: Families may be unaware of the decedent's use or may be in denial, limiting information for investigators.

System Gap: The most significant gap is the transition from hospital discharge after an overdose to rehabilitation and ongoing support. There is a lack of immediate resources for the recovery phase.

Cultural/Caseload Patterns: Most overdose cases come from the Aurora and Elgin areas, with a predominantly white population affected, though the speaker noted this may reflect reporting or substance type (e.g., others may focus more on alcohol).

Data & Toxicology:

The office uses a private lab in Pennsylvania, which typically returns toxicology results in about four weeks.

The lab actively works to identify new synthetic compounds, moving them from clinical to forensic testing.

Prevention Recommendations:

Lisa Creekbob emphasized the importance of **family support and connection**. She noted that parents often say, "I didn't know," and stressed the need for stronger family bonds, teaching coping mechanisms, and fostering independence and self-esteem in children and teens to build resilience against substance use.

Audience Q&A Highlights:

Unclaimed Decedents: The office works to identify all individuals. If no family is found or family declines to claim the person, veterans may receive services through the VA and local funeral homes. Others are cremated and placed in local cemeteries. Some funeral homes hold public memorial services for unclaimed veterans.

Forensic Tools: The office is exploring a rapid toxicology testing machine (Radox) that can provide a positive fentanyl result in 30 minutes, allowing for faster death certification and supporting law enforcement investigations.



Fear of Death: When asked how the work affects her personal outlook, Ms. Creekbob responded that she does not have a heightened fear of death but is more aware of risks, making her a more cautious parent.

Annette Villarreal thanked Ms. Kriegbaum for her service and partnership.

Community Updates & Announcements

4. Recent Community Event

Jarrett Burton and Annette Villarreal shared highlights from a health fair at Anna M. Jeans Elementary School in Willowbrook.

The event featured a “Hidden in Plain Sight” demonstration for parents, showing everyday items (e.g., drink containers, vapes) that can be used to conceal substances.

Parents expressed surprise at the variety of items and the prevalence of synthetics available at gas stations.

Upcoming Events & Partner Announcements

Safe Kane County Pickup Event (Gun Locks & Safes): April 21st and April 23rd, 4:30-6:30 PM. Biometric gun safes will be given away.

Greater Family Health (Elgin Community College): Free, confidential, bilingual rapid HIV testing available Mondays and Tuesdays.

Kane County Health Department Event: “Double Jeopardy: Addressing Substance Use Disorder and Problem Gambling” with presenter Mark Sanders.

Geneva Office Drop-in Center (State Street): Offers a warm, safe space, weather-appropriate clothing, harm reduction materials, and toiletries.

Women’s & Men’s Re-entry Fellowship Programs: Tuesdays (women, bilingual) and Thursdays (men). A non-program-specific support space for justice-involved or formerly incarcerated individuals.

Sunday Harm Reduction Van (Aurora, near Hesed House): 2:00-3:30 PM. Provides supplies and conversation. New seasonal needs include spring/summer clothing, socks, underwear, men’s jeans, toiletries, body wipes, and mosquito spray.

Tobacco & Nicotine Cessation Videos: The department is filming a series of videos featuring diverse perspectives (individuals, social workers, educators) on quitting, using, or being affected by tobacco.

Kane County



ROSC Council Meetings Minutes April 2026

Live for Loi: Karissa, the new Program Manager for Kane and DuPage Counties, is interested in connecting with council members.

Upcoming Stigma Reduction Campaign (“Language Matters”)

Annette Villarreal announced a new strategic goal to reduce stigma through a campaign titled “Language Matters,” focusing on person-first language and updating community terminology. The council is seeking partners for social media content.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: May 21st, 2026, Mutual Ground in Auroura.