

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, February 20, 2026

Location: Virtual (ZOOM)

Time: 1:00 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Erica Bledsoe (KCI) at 1:06 PM.

2. Attendees

- Cherone Mayes (KCI)
 - Ron Bratcher (KCI)
 - Kenneth Bell (Chestnut)
 - DeShunn Bray (KCI)
 - Jahari Stamps (S.H.A.R.P. Organization)
 - Rhonda Poole (Community Member)
 - Aaron Saunders (Community Member)
 - Kimberly Haywood (BBC)
 - Samuel Bloomingburg (Community Member)
 - DeShara Shells (FSSRC)
 - Erica Bledsoe (KCI)
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Approval of Minutes

Motion: Ronald Bratcher

2nd: DeShunn Bray

Introduction to ROSC and Kates Community Initiative ROSC Council

A **Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) Council** is a collaborative group of community stakeholders—including service providers, people in recovery, family members, and local organizations—who work together to strengthen and improve recovery support services. The council focuses on building a coordinated system that promotes long-term recovery, reduces stigma, and ensures individuals have access to the resources they need such as housing, employment, healthcare, and peer support.

Kates Community Initiative ROSC Council is a community-driven coalition that brings together partners and voices with lived experience to support individuals and families impacted by substance use and mental health challenges. The council is dedicated to creating pathways to recovery by connecting

people to services, advocating for equitable resources, and fostering a supportive, recovery-friendly environment within the community.

Old Business

a. Community Engagement in Wrightwood/Ashburn and Stigney/Burbank

- **Wrightwood / Ashburn (Chicago)**

Limited Access to Behavioral Health & Recovery Services

Many residents seeking mental health, substance use treatment, or recovery support must travel outside the immediate neighborhood. The shortage of nearby providers can lead to long wait times and inconsistent care.

Transportation Barriers

Although public transit exists, some parts of Ashburn—particularly residential pockets like Wrightwood—are not directly connected to rapid transit. Residents may rely on multiple bus transfers or personal vehicles to reach services, healthcare, or employment opportunities.

Economic and Employment Challenges

While Ashburn is often considered more stable than some neighboring communities, residents still face job insecurity, underemployment, and limited access to workforce development programs located within the community.

Youth Engagement and Safe Spaces

There is an ongoing need for more structured youth programs, mentorship, and after-school opportunities to help prevent involvement in risky behaviors and to provide positive outlets.

Awareness of Available Resources

Many services exist across Chicago, but residents often report difficulty **finding out what programs are available or how to enroll**, especially for behavioral health and recovery support.

Stickney / Burbank Area

Stigma Around Behavioral Health and Substance Use

In smaller suburban communities, stigma can discourage individuals from seeking help for mental health or substance use disorders because of concerns about privacy and community perception.

Language and Cultural Barriers

Burbank and surrounding areas have a **large and growing immigrant population**, which can create barriers when services are not culturally responsive or available in multiple languages.

Disconnection Between Providers and Residents

Many residents are unaware of county or regional resources (like recovery support, harm reduction services, or family assistance programs) because information is not consistently shared within suburban community networks.

Raw Survey Data

The **Kates Community Initiative ROSC Council** continues to collect raw data to better understand the needs of residents in communities such as Wrightwood/Ashburn and Stickney/Burbank. This information helps ensure that recovery supports and community resources are aligned with the real challenges people face.

The council gathers data through **community surveys, outreach events, listening sessions, and collaboration with local service providers**. These efforts allow residents, individuals in recovery, and families to share their experiences related to substance use, mental health, and barriers to accessing services.

The raw data collected helps the Kates Community Initiative **identify service gaps, understand community trends, and guide strategic planning**. By using community-driven data, the ROSC Council can develop targeted outreach, strengthen partnerships, and improve access to recovery resources for individuals and families in the region.

New Business

Region 1 ROSC Meeting-Tuesday, March 24, 2026, via ZOOM has been CANCELED and will resume in April.

Statewide ROSC In-Person Meeting-April 21, 2026, Heartland Community College, Normal, IL.

6. Open Issues

The **Kates Community Initiative** will be hosting Community Resource and Wellness Fairs in **Ashburn** and **Burbank** to connect residents with essential services and promote overall wellness.

These events brought together local organizations, service providers, and community partners to share information about **recovery support services, behavioral health resources, employment opportunities, and family support programs**. Residents will have the opportunity to speak directly with providers, ask questions, and learn how to access services available in their community.

The fairs also focused on **holistic wellness**, highlighting the importance of mental health, physical health, and community connection. By creating a welcoming space for residents to gather, the Kates Community Initiative helped increase awareness of available resources while reducing barriers that often prevent individuals and families from seeking help.

Burbank-04/29/2026 at Prairie Trails Public Library 8449 S. Moody Ave., Burbank, IL., from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM. We are confirming the date and space.

Ashburn-05/18/2026 at Monumental Faith Church (The Ment) 2750 S. Columbus Ave., Chicago, IL., from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Ronald Bratcher
Second: Cherone Mayes

This meeting was adjourned by Erica Bledsoe (KCI) at 1:57 PM.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, April 17, 2026, at 1:00 PM via Zoom.