

EDGAR COUNTY ROSC Council

MEETING MINUTES

September 22nd, 2026
5:15 PM

Paris Hospital Conference Room D and on Zoom

Attendance in-person: Nicki Hanks, Jessica Parrill, Norm Wilson, Nate Alexander, Jacqui Miller, Bill Stidham, Lisa Foster, Mariah Witmer, Michelle Creech, Johnathon Burns, Mary Taylor, Rick Cook, Debbie Cook, Janice Watson, Tori Burns, Patrisse Hutson

Attendance on Zoom: Marilyn Frey, Kyra Graham, Andy Brandenburg, Amanda Thompson, Annie Blaudow, Kandis Mills, Lori Carroll, Tasha Chapman, Vicky Dick, Michelle Hibbard

Spotlight Speaker: “Walking in Their Shoes: The Reality of Early Recovery”

Nicki Hanks and Andy Brandenburg introduced plans for “**Walking in Their Shoes: The Reality of Early Recovery,**” an interactive simulation inspired by a reentry simulation they recently attended in Champaign. The Edgar County simulation will be designed specifically around the resources, services, and barriers that exist locally. Participants will step into the role of an individual beginning recovery and experience challenges related to identification, transportation, housing, employment, finances, incarceration, probation or parole, and accessing community services.

Participants will receive an identity, background information, and a scorecard outlining tasks they must attempt to complete during a simulated four-week period. Following the exercise, participants will take part in a debrief to discuss the barriers they encountered and how those barriers affect individuals trying to rebuild their lives. The goal is to increase understanding among community members, service providers, employers, and other stakeholders while identifying opportunities to make recovery and reentry easier to navigate in Edgar County.

Nicki and Andy will establish a planning committee to begin developing participant profiles, scorecards, scenarios, resource stations, and other materials. They will meet with Horizon Health Behavioral Health regarding a potential partnership and continue efforts to meet with HRC. Lake Ridge Christian Church has already offered to provide a meal and door prizes for the event. The simulation is tentatively planned for February or March to allow adequate time for development and community outreach.

Community Survey and Outreach

The ROSC Council received an update on the FY27 Community Survey, which has reached 224 completed responses. ROSC Council members were challenged to collect at least 10 additional surveys each before the next ROSC Council meeting to help move Edgar County closer to its overall participation goal. Electronic survey links and paper copies remain available through Nicki for members who need them.

Potter Fest was also discussed as an opportunity to increase survey participation. Donated prizes from Halls of Madness and Iron Pin will be used to create two “Boo Basket” raffle prizes. Community members who complete the survey will have an opportunity to enter the drawing.

Recovery Month and Community Events

The ROSC Council celebrated the success of the annual Recovery Picnic, which experienced its largest turnout to date with **more than 200 people participating**. Nicki thanked Edgar County ROSC Council members, community partners, and volunteers for helping create a welcoming and positive event.

Hike to Recovery: The Hike to Recovery will take place on **September 26, 2026, from 2:00–5:00 p.m. at Fox Ridge State Park**. The event will include hiking, yoga, and music therapy and is open to individuals in recovery as well as community members who want to show their support for recovery and wellness.

Potter Fest: Potter Fest will take place on **Saturday, October 3, 2026, from 4:00–8:00 p.m. on the courthouse lawn in Paris**. The Edgar County ROSC Council will participate by offering a family-friendly wand-making activity, sharing community resources, and encouraging attendees to complete the community survey.

Membership Protocols

Nicki introduced updated Edgar County ROSC Council membership protocols to help clarify formal ROSC Council membership and distinguish members from individuals who prefer to attend meetings without officially joining. Members were asked to complete the updated membership form, including information about their areas of interest and involvement. Nicki will use the information to update the ROSC Council membership and email roster. Participants attending through Zoom will receive the form electronically.

Resource Guide and Deliverable Update

Nicki reported that requested edits to the ROSC Council’s resource deliverable have been completed. The document is currently moving through the required chain-of-command approval process and is expected to be available by the next ROSC Council meeting. ROSC Council members and partners were thanked for submitting updated information, which helped ensure that the resource materials accurately reflect services available in the community.

Priority Project Updates

Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off: The Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off Committee recently met and continues to make progress toward developing a sustainable model for Edgar County. While the final structure has not yet been determined, additional meetings and conversations are underway to identify how peer recovery support, healthcare providers, and community resources can work together to improve connections to care.

Second Chance Hiring Initiative: The Edgar County ROSC Council announced another **Sealing and Expungement Clinic for November 7 from 1:00–4:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church**, in partnership with Land of Lincoln. The clinic will assist individuals who qualify for sealing or expungement.

Harm Reduction Expansion and Stigma Reduction: The ROSC Council also reflected on the success of September's Recovery Month activities and their role in reducing stigma surrounding substance use disorder and recovery. Activities included community events, purple lights throughout the community, communication campaigns, and special media coverage. Lori Carroll reported that harm reduction kits have also been placed at a food bank in Newman, providing anonymous access and helping expand harm reduction resources beyond Paris.

Agency Updates

HRC (Norm Wilson, Amanda Thompson)

HRC reported continued growth in group participation and involvement in community activities. Amanda Thompson announced the launch of new domestic violence survivor support groups. The **Paris group will begin October 14**, and the **Marshall group will begin October 15**, with the Marshall group meeting from 2:30–4:00 p.m.

The ROSC Council also discussed the ending of funding for the HRC Living Room. Although the grant is ending, arrangements have been made to continue providing shower access several days each week through volunteer support.

Narcotics Anonymous (Jacqui Miller)

The NA meeting remains open so that individuals who may still be struggling with substance use can attend and receive support.

Celebrate Recovery (Janice Watson)

Celebrate Recovery continues to meet at Lake Ridge Christian Church 5:30 PM on Wednesday nights, and they continue to see new faces weekly.

Helping Hands Soup Kitchen (Vicky Dick)

The Soup Kitchen reported continued strong participation.

Doorway Community Distribution Center

An update was provided on the Doorway Community Distribution Center. The center's first movie night drew approximately 40 attendees and included popcorn and a donated pizza dinner. Plans are underway for a Halloween Fall Festival featuring games, activities, and costumes for children.

The distribution center continues to serve approximately **100–130 families each week**, providing food, clothing, household necessities, and other items. Because of the volume of donated household decorations and books, the center planned an additional Saturday opening. Efforts are also underway to provide clothing and other resources to area schools, including Crestwood. The center continues to accept gently used donations and assists with connecting community members to donated furniture.

Doorway to Hope (Nate Alexander)

Work is also continuing on a mailbox system for individuals experiencing homelessness. The mailboxes have been purchased, but legal and operational requirements are still being reviewed before the service can officially begin.

Partnership in Parenting (Lori Carroll)

Reported a successful Grandparents Day event with strong participation from grandparents, parents, and children. Upcoming activities include a prairie walk, Moms Mingle, mental health and breast cancer awareness information, and participation in the Edgar County Community Baby Shower.

HOPE (Mariah Witmer)

HOPE has activities planned for October's Violence Awareness Month. Clark and Edgar Counties will collaborate on an awareness event at Twin Lakes on **October 14 from 5:30–7:00 p.m.** Flyers include a QR code allowing community members to submit songs for an event playlist. Participants were encouraged to submit songs and help promote the event.

Community Updates

The ROSC Council also heard updates regarding the upcoming Freedom Rally, including plans to utilize the donated gym space, provide a dinner, and feature a Christian music performer with lived experience related to substance use and recovery. More detail to follow.

Warm Hearts Laundry at Vermilion United Methodist Church is nearing completion. The washers and dryers have been installed, with only minor maintenance work remaining before opening. A soft opening is anticipated during the first part of October. The program will provide limited free laundry services using two washers and two dryers, with opening information and service updates shared through the Warm Hearts Laundry Facebook page.

Next Meeting: October 27th, 2026, 5:15–6:15 PM at Paris Hospital Conference Room A and also on Zoom.

Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off Committee Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Nicki Hanks, Michelle Hibbard, Jenna Hays, Ali Henson, Samantha McCarty, Mariah Witmer, Kyra Graham, April Stowers, Jessica Parrill, Tara Ogle

Warm Hand-Off Program Context

The committee reviewed ongoing efforts to develop a sustainable **Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off Program for Edgar County**. Members discussed the work completed during previous meetings and continued refining what a local warm handoff process could look like using existing services and partnerships.

The discussion reaffirmed that the warm handoff process would primarily focus on **medically cleared, voluntary patients presenting to the emergency department with substance-use-related needs who are interested in treatment or recovery support**. The goal is to create a clear pathway from the emergency department to peer recovery support, treatment, and other appropriate community services.

Local Overdose Data and Emergency Department Data

Samantha provided an update on available overdose data. EMS recorded 7 **overdose-related responses during 2025**. Additional emergency-department data related to substance-use visits is still needed to better understand the number of individuals who may benefit from a warm handoff program.

Samantha explained that the emergency-department information would require additional data retrieval. Nicki will email Samantha with the specific data being requested and the appropriate timeframe. Samantha will provide the available Horizon Health emergency-department substance-use data by email.

Patient Experience Survey

Nicki presented the updated **Emergency Department Patient Experience Survey**, which was developed to gather feedback from individuals who have experienced a mental health or substance-use-related emergency.

Nicki will circulate the updated survey to committee members for review. Members were asked to email Nicki with any suggested questions or their approval to move forward with the survey.

Once finalized, Nicki will distribute the survey during community outreach efforts to gather feedback directly from individuals with lived experience. The information collected will help the committee identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to improve the emergency-department experience and connection to services.

Overdose Resource Bags

Ali reported that no overdose resource bags had been distributed from the Horizon Health Emergency Department since the previous committee meeting. Supplies remain available and adequate.

The committee discussed continuing to ensure emergency-department staff are aware of available resources and referral options. Ali will document Nicki's Thursday open-office hours and referral information so emergency-room staff have another option for connecting individuals to community support.

Rosecrance Behavioral Health Urgent Care and Coordination

Michelle Hibbert provided information regarding Rosecrance's work with OSF and its behavioral-health services in Champaign. The model includes mobile crisis response, on-site assessments, treatment referrals, behavioral-health urgent care, diversion from hospital emergency departments, and connections to detoxification and other levels of care.

The Rosecrance Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center is available to individuals outside of Champaign County. Michelle will provide Nicki with a flyer containing information about the behavioral-health urgent care services.

Michelle also provided an update regarding efforts to arrange a meeting between Rosecrance and Horizon Health so Rosecrance can share its experience and discuss potential opportunities for collaboration.

HRC Crisis Services and Living Room Closure

The committee discussed HRC's crisis services and the upcoming closure of the Living Room program. Terra reported that the Living Room will be closed permanently **September 30**.

The closure creates a transition gap for individuals who previously could have been connected to the Living Room following an emergency-department visit.

Terra explained HRC's crisis-evaluation process for Horizon Health patients, while Samantha confirmed that Horizon Health currently has **24/7 in-person crisis response available in the emergency department**.

The committee discussed the importance of determining how existing crisis services and peer recovery support can work together once the Living Room is no longer available.

Ideal Emergency Department Warm Handoff

The committee discussed what an ideal warm handoff should look like for someone seeking substance-use treatment through the emergency department.

Samantha explained that emergency services are responsible for stabilizing patients and connecting them to the appropriate next level of care. She emphasized that a true warm handoff should involve a **face-to-face connection with a peer support or recovery specialist**, rather than simply providing a phone number or resource information.

The committee discussed a potential process in which a medically cleared patient who voluntarily wants substance-use treatment or recovery support could be directly connected to peer support before leaving the emergency department or as soon as possible following discharge.

After-Hours and Weekend Discharge Pathways

The committee discussed how the warm handoff process would work when individuals present to the emergency department during evenings, overnight hours, or weekends.

Samantha explained that individuals who have a safe discharge plan generally return home or to another safe location and receive **seven days of crisis follow-up**. Individuals who do not have a safe discharge plan may be referred for inpatient placement.

Members discussed the importance of developing a process that works outside normal business hours and does not rely entirely on immediate peer availability.

Potential Peer-Support Staffing Model

Jenna proposed exploring whether HRC, Rosecrance, Our House, and navigator capacity could be coordinated to provide peer recovery support for eligible emergency-department patients.

One possibility discussed was establishing a process where an individual could receive a **same-day or next-business-day peer-support appointment** when an immediate face-to-face connection is not available.

Michelle Creech reported that Rosecrance currently has five Certified Recovery Support Specialists, although two are primarily assigned to employment services. Additional discussion will be needed to determine whether Rosecrance could designate peer-support capacity specifically for emergency-department follow-up.

Michelle Creech will meet with Susan to discuss Rosecrance's available peer-support capacity. Jenna Hays and Michelle Creech will also coordinate a discussion with Susan regarding how peer-support resources could potentially be coordinated across participating agencies.

Crisis Care Continuum and Follow-Up

Michelle discussed Rosecrance's crisis care continuum and explained that the model developed in response to individuals missing follow-up appointments after mobile crisis evaluations.

The model uses follow-up staff and peer support to help individuals remain connected after the immediate crisis has passed. This can include confirming appointments, assisting individuals with phone calls, helping navigate services, and providing continued support to reduce the likelihood of individuals falling through the cracks.

The committee discussed how similar follow-up components could potentially be incorporated into Edgar County's warm handoff model.

Clarifying the Lead Warm-Handoff Partner

Terra asked for clarification regarding whether the proposed warm handoff process would primarily connect patients to HRC or to another outside agency.

Terra explained that Horizon Health already refers individuals to its own substance-use treatment program and can arrange enrollment quickly. Nicki will provide Terra with previous meeting minutes and other warm-handoff information to help clarify the committee's previous discussions, goals, and proposed model.

The committee agreed that additional discussion is needed to clearly identify the roles of each participating agency and determine who would provide the initial peer connection, treatment referral, and ongoing follow-up.

Warm Handoffs and Overdose Classification

The committee clarified that the proposed warm handoff process is intended primarily for **non-crisis emergency-department patients who are medically cleared and voluntarily seeking substance-use treatment or recovery support**.

Samantha explained the difference between stabilized overdose patients who may be discharged with resource packs and individuals who remain medically unstable and require transfer to a medical unit or another appropriate level of care.

This distinction will be important as the committee develops eligibility criteria and referral procedures for the warm handoff program.

Research on Warm Handoff Models

Nicki asked committee members about warm handoff programs being used in other communities that could help guide development of Edgar County's model.

Additional research will continue to identify models that could be adapted to fit Edgar County's available resources, hospital system, peer-support capacity, and community needs.

Data Collection and Referral Coordination

The committee agreed that additional data will be important before determining the final structure of the program. Nicki will send Samantha the specific emergency-department data being requested and the timeframe needed.

Nicki also shared information about her **Thursday open office hours** as another potential referral option for individuals needing assistance connecting with recovery resources. Ali will document this information for emergency-room staff.

Nicki will CC relevant participants on introductory emails to help strengthen communication between participating agencies.

Program Scope and Next Steps

Terra clarified that her program primarily focuses on psychiatric evaluations for individuals who may require placement rather than providing substance-use treatment.

The committee agreed to continue coordinating introductions between agencies, researching existing warm handoff models, collecting local data, evaluating peer-support capacity, and identifying realistic referral and follow-up pathways.

Additional meetings and conversations will take place before the next committee meeting so members can continue refining a sustainable warm handoff model specifically for Edgar County.

Next Meeting: October 21st, 2026 2-3 PM