



## MERC Meeting Summary

Sept 17th, 2026

### **Discussion Items:**

Community survey: We are currently conducting a survey for residents of Madison County that helps us direct our work and get some data regarding stigma, knowledge of local resources, etc. If you are a resident of Madison County, please take the survey and share it with your networks. Anyone who is a Madison County resident is eligible to take the survey. Ideas for survey distribution:

- Dustin will share the link to all of the Oxford House group chats
- Cora will send it to churches she is in contact with
- The health department
- Dentist's offices, SIU Dentistry, doctor's offices, etc. (places with waiting rooms)
- The housing departments
- Businesses may be willing to put out the QR code
- Mark will be taking some to Rockin' for Recovery this weekend
- We have sent out an evaluation survey to assess how we can improve things that we can improve. Here is the link once again <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LFM365V>, we value your input.
- Here is the QR code for the survey:



Update from OEND/DOPP team: Between July 2025-June 2026 they distributed over 21,000 boxes of Naloxone and trained over 2,900 individuals. This team also distributes test kits to the community. If you or someone you know is in need of naloxone, you can reach out to [naloxone@chestnut.org](mailto:naloxone@chestnut.org). This team can also provide trainings for groups on Naloxone.

Updates from Paul and Elyse about new substances that are emerging: Cychlorphone – emerging on the West Coast, no test kit currently available, 1 overdose death attributed to it so far.

MEDETOMIDINE – OEND/DOPP team has ordered test kits for this and they should be available soon, non-opioid sedative that causes different symptoms than what is typically seen with overdoses, Paul reports that they have encountered it in the local area.

### **Upcoming events:**

- Rockin' for Recovery this weekend (Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>)
- Metro-East Pride (Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> – OEND team will be distributing Naloxone)
- Comprehensive Mental Health Annual Conference tomorrow (Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>)
- Out of the Darkness Walk for suicide prevention in Belleville (October 17<sup>th</sup>)
- NAMI Walk in Fairview Heights (Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>)

### **Discussion Items:**

- MERC is working with our community partners and council members to plan a Movie Night in the Park this spring now. This will be a family-friendly stigma reduction event available to the public. MERC will be sharing resources related to recovery/treatment efforts and community partners are welcome to attend.
  - What we still need: Snacks/Drinks, help with set up & Possible location (outdoor preferred). If you would like to partner with us on this event or provide materials/food, please reach out to Mark.

### **Workgroup updates:**

- Thanks so much to those who have attended our workgroup meetings. If you have volunteered in the past to participate in one of the workgroups, please contact Mark/Katie to confirm you're still able to participate, we encourage all members to add their experience, strength and hope. With Gratitude Thank you.

### **Announcements/upcoming events:**

- Please see all attached flyers for the upcoming events:
- At the Edwardsville Library there are monthly Stigma Conversations along with a Naloxone Demonstration. The next event will be held Oct 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Check the Library Facebook page for upcoming schedule. A link to the Facebook page can be found on their website [Home | Edwardsville Public Library](#).

### **Council Members in Attendance:**

Angella Holloway- St. Clair County ROSC  
Bev Holland- CHS Region 5 TA  
Cheyney Evans-Director of Outreach & Ed  
Christina Manchen-CCBHC Coordinator  
Centerstone  
Conswala Jones-St. Clair County ROSC  
Cora Hughes- United Congregation of  
Metro East  
Desarie Holmes, DR.-SIHF  
Dustin Percy- Oxford House  
Elyse Schoen-St Josephs

Jovanna Herron-CHS Metro Link  
Kathy Kerher-CHS  
Kenlea Avello-MCHD  
Kirsten Peterson-Director OBK  
Kristen Anderson-CHS  
Lindsey Minor-St. Francis Way Clinic  
Mark Knott-Madison County ROSC  
Mike Luther-CHS OEND/DOPP  
Paul Fischer-Porch Light Collective  
Towana Howard-St. Clair Health Dept.  
Violette Book- CHS/OEND Team

**MERC Upcoming Zoom Meeting**

**Oct 15th, 2026, at 9am/ Target group meeting TBD we will  
send a zoom link the day before the meeting**

**Metro East Recovery Council (MERC) Vision:**

A community system that nurtures and supports individuals and families  
seeking or maintaining recovery for themselves or a loved one.

**Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) Mission:**

Collaborating to build and empower communities of recovery.