

Tobacco and Health Board of Trustees

January 24, 2024

Via Microsoft Teams

The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at this link

<https://youtu.be/alMU4AzLLX0>

Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees - Members in Attendance: Claudio Gualtieri (Chair), Robert Boris, Ayesha Clarke, Anne Foley, Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, Toni Harp, Rep. Cindy Harrison, Mathew Jasinski, Tricia Orozco, Michael Rell, Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, Andrew Salner, and Jody Terranova

Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees - Members Excused: None

Board of Trustees Staff: Melissa Morton, Office of Policy and Management (OPM)

Guest Presenters:

Meeting called to order by Chair Claudio Gualtieri at 10:32 A.M.

Agenda Item	Minutes
Welcome and introductions	Chair Claudio Gualtieri, (OPM) called the meeting to order at 10:32 A.M. and introduce new member Christopher Moran appointed by Senator Bob Duff to replace former member Elizabeth Keyes who accepted a new position in state government. Mr. Moran shared that he is an attorney for the State of Connecticut and is pleased to be joining the Board. Melissa Morton, (OPM) called the role.
Adopt Minutes from November 13, 2023 Meeting	Claudio Gualtieri called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the November 13, 2023 meeting. Anne Foley made a motion to adopt. Andrew Salner seconded. Anne Foley requested that minutes be emailed to members after they are posted. Eleven (11) members voted in favor and one (1) member, Tricia Orozco abstained. Motion approved.
State Goal of Today's Meeting	Chair Claudio Gualtieri reviewed the following goals of today's meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the October and November meetings the Board expressed interest in learning more about surveillance activity and tobacco prevention and cessation programs the state offers, a desire for more participation from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and updates on the JUUL settlement. DMHAS staff is joining us today to provide just that information.• After the DMHAS presentation Melissa Morton will walk members through the written allocation plan that will be submitted to the legislative Committees of Cognizance in early February. It is not new material, rather, it is the formal presentation of the plan voted on by members at the November 13th meeting. Mr. Gualtieri said that after the presentation of the plan the Board can decide if it wishes to vote on the plan today or convene a special meeting to vote at a later date.
DMHAS Presentation on Regional Prioritization and Reports	Chair Claudio Gualtieri introduced Jennifer Sussman from the DMHAS Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics at UConn Health to provide an overview of the regional prioritization reports. The full presentation can be found on the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund (THTF)

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DMHAS Presentation on Regional Prioritization and Reports	<p>web page. The following are highlights from Ms. Sussman's presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are five (5) Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs) that are required to develop biannual strategic plans consisting of identified priority areas. The strategic plans and priority areas are developed by a priority setting workgroup that includes stakeholders, providers, consumers and state staff. Planning takes six (6) months and includes the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The priority setting process is being revised for the next round to ensure inclusion of groups such as the THTF Board. Planning begins for a new strategic in 2025 but the current plans will be updated during the intervening year. • The current plans include Tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) product utilization as two of the named priorities. • The use of local and state surveillance and epidemical data is used and compared to national data. Regions create epidemiological profiles and use this data to develop priorities for the region. • There is a large emphasis on the use of qualitative data to set priorities because hearing from the community is the best way to gather local information. This data is collected using set survey questions. Ms. Sussman offered to share the stakeholder data collection questions that are asked of community members. • ENDS use is driving concern across the regions, especially as delivery system for substances. Tobacco concern has remained low mostly because of youth and young adults transitioning from traditional tobacco to ENDS utilization. • Emerging issues identified that align with THTF Board work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of oral nicotine pouches ○ ENDS/vaping – growing among youth and young adults and on the rise post COVID. These devices are being modified to increase nicotine and THC delivery. ○ Underserved populations include immigrants and the LGBTQ communities. There is no numeric representation but the populations were flagged based on anecdotal mentions in the survey process. • Key gaps in services include human resources/staff for community programs, tobacco/vaping services for youth, and school education resources. • Regional Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased funding at the local level, especially for prevention councils. The councils receive money from DMHAS for ENDS prevention. This may be an opportunity for THTF to gather local level data.

Agenda Item	Minutes
DMHAS Presentation on Regional Prioritization and Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to improve access to prevention and cessation services at the local level. Meet people where they are and promote local prevention councils as a resource. • State level recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to remind people they can recover from tobacco use – some users do not know this is possible. ○ Written materials need to use non-stigmatizing language. • DMHAS is working on the development of additional data elements that can be mined for groups like the THTF Board. • The Board can reach out to the regions with specific questions. • The regional strategic plans and reports can be found here. <p>Upon conclusion of the presentation the following discussion ensued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Claudio Gualtieri suggest that as the Board approaches the next phase of its work consideration should be given to inviting RBHAOs to be part of evaluation team or to serve as subject matter experts during the RFP development and review process. • Andrew Salner inquired as to whether there is data available concerning what regional entities have now in terms of programs and what the budgets and outcomes may be for those programs. Jen Sussman responded that each report includes a summary of the resources available within the region. She noted that there is room for improvement monitoring outcomes at the regional level. Sarju Shah, DMHAS, added that DMHAS contracts with the RBHAOs currently focus on primary prevention activities but she can look into other program areas if the Board would like. She also shared that contracts are funded through a block grant that looks a substance abuse treatment and recovery. DMHAS has a tobacco prevention program that focuses on undercover buying – looking to see how many retailers are selling to those under age 21 (approximately 13% sell to underage youth). • Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin stated that it would be helpful to see what resources are available in each region and more information on where the regional prioritizations came from. Jennifer Sussman responded that the prioritizations come from epidemiological and stakeholder survey data. Once collected there is a group ranking process using qualitative and quantitative data. • Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin inquired whether DMHAS could specify what substances people are buying for ENDS use – cannabis or nicotine? Sarju Shah said that nine (9) investigators go into communities across the states. They identify different types of END products being sold. She noted that DMHAS also looks at dispensaries and has a partnership with DCP so they can do the enforcement piece. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin followed up by asking if DMHAS looks into the advertising contracts retailers

Agenda Item	Minutes
DMHAS Presentation on Regional Prioritization and Reports	<p>have with ENDS products. Sarju Shah said that retailers must post certain signage and DMHAS investigators identify if it present or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tricia Orozco inquired as to whether there is an opportunity to partner with school-based health centers around prevention and cessation. Sarju Shah said that is a great point.
DMHAS JUUL Settlement Update	<p>Chair Claudio Gualtieri introduced Sarju Shah, Director of the Prevention & Health Promotion Division at DMHAS to provide a brief update on the status of the JUUL Settlement. The full presentation can be found on the THTF web page. Highlights of the presentation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarju Shah reported that JUUL entered the market in 2015 and in 2022 the FDA made the company stop selling vapes. There are individual and multistate settlement agreements. As a result of the settlement agreement that CT is part of the state may receive \$16.2 mill over 6-10 years. P.A. 23-92 provides the parameters for utilization of these funds. • The DMHAS Commissioner is required to disburse funding to the RBHAOs to support the “abatement, mitigation, cessation, reduction or prevention of the use of nicotine or nicotine-synthetic products by residents under 21 years of age”. • At this time, Connecticut has received \$1.5 million dollars and will provide \$300,000 to each of the five (5) RBHAOs. DMHAS is currently developing contracts. Funds must be expended by June 30, 2024. A report must be submitted to THTF Board by September 1, 2024 <p>Upon conclusion of the presentation the following discussion ensued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toni Harp asked about how goals for use of the funding will be set. Sarju Shah said there is a well-informed strategic framework used by the RBHAOs. Ms. Harp added that she hopes DMHAS’s report to the Board in September includes baseline data and what they are hoping to accomplish over the next few years. • The JUUL settlement is focused on vaping products. DMHAS will focus on prevention and helping youth to make informed health decisions. Regional plans will all be customized based on the identified needs and culture of each region.
Discussion and Vote on Allocation Plan	<p>Chair Claudio Gualtieri reminded members that at the November 13th meeting the Board voted on the allocation breakdown for the 2023 funds that are available for distribution. Everyone received a copy of the written allocation plan that needs to be submitted to the Committees of cognizance for approval before the competitive bid process can begin. He introduced Melissa Morton to review the plan and answer member questions and collect feedback. Mr. Gualtieri stated that after the presentation the Board can discuss whether they feel comfortable voting on the plan today or would prefer to schedule a special meeting in early February solely for the purpose of voting on the plan.</p> <p>Melissa Morton, OPM, presented the written allocation plan to the Board and reviewed each section which includes: (1) Introduction –</p>

Agenda Item	Minutes
Discussion and Vote on Allocation Plan	<p>comprised of a review of Board history, (2) Recommendations for Disbursement – includes an overview of the Board’s statutory charge as defined in C.G.S. Section 4-28f, as modified by Public Act 22-118 (Sections 196 and 197) and Public Act 23-92 (Section 4) which allocates \$12 million in 2023. (3) Disbursement Proposal – a comprehensive overview of the Board’s adoption of the CDC funding allocation recommendations, CDC definition of each funding category and a review of programs previously funded under the individual allocation categories. (4) Appendices that include the statutory language and Board composition.</p> <p>The following are highlights of the ensuing discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Foley raised the matter of interest and asked that OPM staff determine the actual amount of funds available based on interest earned on the \$12 million. She asked if the Board should consider granting out the full amount of funds available including the accumulated interest. Chair Claudio Gualtieri recommended the Board disburse the \$12 million this round and then get an interest report and total account balance just before the next round of funding is allocated. • Toni Harp asked if the THTF dollars are going to supplant existing funds used for prevention and cessation activities. Deputy Commissioner Terranova informed the group that it is actually forbidden for states to supplant federal funds with other dollars so this funding will be in addition to federal funds put towards prevention and cessation efforts. • Chair Claudio Gualtieri asked members of the Board if they wish to vote on the allocation plan today or prefer to defer the vote to a future meeting that would be convened in short order. • Andrew Salner stated that he felt comfortable putting forward a motion to vote today. <p><u>VOTE</u>: Andrew Salner made a motion to adopt the 2023 allocation plan as presented at today’s meeting. Anne Foley requested the opportunity to put forward an amended motion in order to allow for comments and edits from members to be shared with Melissa Morton and incorporated into the plan. Chair Claudio Gualtieri said he would entertain a revised motion. Anne Foley made a motion to approve the 2023 allocation plan with edits and conforming changes. Andrew Salner seconded. Chair Claudio Gualtieri called for a roll call vote. Melissa Morton called the roll. Votes were as follows: In Favor: Claudio Gualtieri, Robert Boris, Anne Foley, Toni Harp, Rep. Cindy Harrison, Mathew Jasinski, Tricia Orozco, Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, Andrew Salner, and Jody Terranova Opposed: None Abstained: None Absent at time of vote: Ayesha Clarke, Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, and Michael Rell</p>

Agenda Item	Minutes
Discussion and Vote on Allocation Plan	<p>Motion carried and the 2023 written allocation was approved with edits and conforming changes.</p> <p>Melissa Morton requested that any edits and comments to the plan be submitted to her by February 1st.</p>
Public Comment	None
Adjourn	<p>Chair Gualtieri called for a motion to adjourn. Tricia Orozco made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Andrew Salner. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 12:07 P.M.</p>