



Durham Joins Together Taskforce Meeting Report

Committee	Treatment and Harm Reduction Committee
Committee Chair or Co-Chairs	Tremaine Sawyer, Durham County Justice Services Department Lacie Scofield, Durham County Department of Public Health
Date	November 6, 2025

Committee members:

Carlyle Johnson, Alliance Health; Sheriff Clarence Birkhead, DCSO; Rodney Jenkins, DCoDPH; Cindy Haynes, Duke Population Health; Donna Rosser, DCoDPH; Helen Tripp, DCo EMS; Carolynn Crowder, Lincoln CCHC; Arthur Payne, Morse Clinic; Eric Morse, Morse Clinic; Marc Strange, DCo JSD; Roshanna Parker, DCo JSD; Zandra Joiner, Milestone Healthcare Services; Kim Chansen, RI; Michele Easter, Duke Psychiatry; LA Cuttler, Hope Centre for Advancement; Meredith Niess, Duke Outpatient Clinic; Noel Ivey, Duke University Hospital; Anjni Joiner, DCo EMS; Jesse Battle, TROSA; Kristen Patterson, DCoDPH; Lindsey Bickers-Bock, DCoDPH; Kay Sanford, NCHRC; Loftin Wilson, NCHRC; Pablo Silva, El Futuro; Fred Johnson, Duke; Quanesha Archer, DCoDPH; Anna Gaddy, BAART; Paula Harrington, Oxford House; David Crispell, Jubilee Home; Timeka Harper-Purcell, Freedom House; Dee Gray, Freedom House; Micheal Edge, New Season Treatment Center; Nichole Shackelford, Hayti Reborn Justice Movement; and others.

Important Update – Name Change:

The name of this committee has been changed from the “Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Committee” to the “Treatment and Harm Reduction Committee.” The reasons for the name change include the following:

- Harm reduction is critical to the mission of the DJT Task Force.
- There are many active members on the committee who work on harm reduction programs and/or represent harm reduction focused organizations.
- Treatment and harm reduction are interconnected - for example, naloxone and MOUD are both treatments and critical harm reduction tools.
- The new name of the committee is easier to say and coordinates well with the name of the other DJT Task Force committee - the Prevention and Education Committee.

The DJT Task Force co-chairs, committee co-chairs, and committee members are supportive of this decision. As a group, the Treatment and Harm Reduction Committee will continue to focus on mental health and substance use treatment, while also adding a harm reduction focus.

Current Activities:

June 2025 Meeting

We had a presentation from guest speakers Erin Namovicz and Deborah M. Weissman from UNC School of Law. They spoke about the criminal legal system’s treatment of survivors of co-occurring intimate partner violence and brain injury, and their needs upon reentry.

Committee members also discussed the closing of Recovery Innovation's DRRC Outpatient Treatment Program in June. Nearly 100 patients were receiving therapy, medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD), and/or other mental health services there. The CLC Peer Support Specialists and other committee members were involved in efforts to connect all patients to alternative treatment providers. The CLC Program will continue to operate, and the peers will continue to provide support to clients at DRRC. They may also meet with clients at their new treatment homes.

August 2025 Meeting

Dr. Wanda Boone, CEO of Together for Resilient Youth (TRY) and co-chair of the DJT Task Force, spoke about TRY's involvement in the campaign "You Have the Power to Save Lives." This campaign was launched by Vital Strategies to raise awareness and promote access to naloxone in Black communities in seven U.S. cities, including Durham.

Joy Brunson-Nsubuga, COO at Recovery Innovations (RI), talked about the history of the DRRC Outpatient Treatment Program and why RI decided to close the program in June. RI will now focus on improving crisis services at the DRRC crisis facility and refer people to the community for MOUD. There are now many more MOUD providers and options for MOUD available in Durham than there were when the outpatient program started at DRRC.

Committee co-chair Lacie Scofield announced that the Durham County Department of Public Health finished an update of the Durham County substance use resource guide for 2025. Several committee members assisted with providing updated information and new resources which were added to the guide, including a brand-new section on MOUD providers. The updated English and Spanish versions of the guide can be accessed at the following website: <https://dconc.gov/substanceuseresources>.

September 2025 Meeting

Kellie Ross, Director of Operations for SouthLight Healthcare in Cumberland County, discussed the expansion of SouthLight's substance use treatment services in Durham. Outpatient services offered at SouthLight's Durham location now include medication management, office-based opioid treatment (buprenorphine and Sublocade), and Adult Outpatient Substance Use Intensive Outpatient Program (SAIOP).

Dr. Jennifer Carroll, Associate Professor of Anthropology at North Carolina State University, spoke to the committee about medetomidine, a veterinary sedative similar to xylazine but more potent, which is now present in NC's illicit drug supply as an opioid adulterant. This drug has been documented as causing unusually prolonged sedation and severe withdrawal that can be fatal without hospitalization. Committee members discussed the need for revised overdose response guidance and how to get information on medetomidine out to emergency responders, emergency department staff, treatment providers, and the public.

October 2025 Meeting

Dr. Greg Sahlem, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Duke University, spoke about his research study testing a clinical biomarker and repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) as a treatment for OUD. The clinical trial is currently enrolling people with OUD taking buprenorphine, and committee members agreed to share information with their patients who might be eligible to join.

Dr. LA Cuttler presented her idea to create an online inventory of supplies (e.g. basic necessities for patients, lockboxes, etc.) for committee members. This inventory would be for treatment and harm reduction providers in need of supplies or for providers to post surplus supplies that they are able to donate. Nichole Shackelford volunteered to help spearhead the effort.

Housing Subcommittee

The Housing Subcommittee continues to meet monthly. Kay Sanford stepped down as the subcommittee chairperson and David Crispell has agreed to serve as the new chairperson. Due to the joint efforts of subcommittee members, Freedom House now officially allows residents to take methadone at all locations, and the Durham Freedom House

has already accepted their first resident on methadone. Also due to subcommittee efforts, Cub Creek Sober Living has now officially designated one women's house as accepting of residents who take any type of MOUD. There are three women taking MOUD who have recently moved into the house. The Housing Subcommittee has also been working to encourage and enable housing agencies to distribute free naloxone to residents. Cub Creek Sober Living, Families Moving Forward, Just a Clean House, Restorative Transitions, and Freedom House have already been provided with cases of naloxone and wall/window signs that say, "Naloxone Available Here" or "We Have Naloxone in Case of Overdose." Subcommittee members have also assisted with translating these signs to Spanish.

On-going Activities:

- Provide status updates on Durham County's National Opioid Settlement funding decision process.
- Discuss community resources and ways to increase access to treatment, peer support, and harm reduction for people with SUD.
- Develop ideas and actions to address barriers to treatment and housing for people with SUD and justice-involved populations.
- Updates from committee members on all programs and agencies as available.
- Updates from the Housing Subcommittee.

Metrics/Measures:

- CLC Program – Program numbers and survey data reports
- Detention Center - MAT program numbers
- EMS - Opioid-related calls and buprenorphine induction numbers

Next Steps:

- Invite speakers to discuss 1) the Unshame NC campaign and 2) the recent RFP for a new day center for homeless people in Durham.
- Plan and organize an online inventory of supplies for committee members.
- Schedule meetings to encourage housing agencies to stock naloxone and distribute free kits to residents.
- Expand the Oxford House rental assistance program funded by Alliance Health.
- Finalize the fact sheet on free phone distribution.

Next Meeting:

December 9, 2025 from 3:00-4:30 PM via Zoom