

HHS INTERIM COMMITTEE SUNSET REVIEW of Utah Substance Abuse and Mental Health Advisory Council

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Is the statute necessary?

Yes, the USAAV+ Council is an essential voice that brings together 40 different stakeholders representing state government, local governments, nonprofit groups, criminal justice entities, the public, and other behavioral health-related entities. The USAAV+ Council participates and lends a critical voice to the behavioral health prevention, treatment, and criminal justice topics at all levels.

The Council also provides important feedback and input during the legislative sessions on bills related to behavioral health and other related topics. We would **strongly urge the continuation of the Council.**

Is the program accomplishing its objective? Should it be extended?

USAAV+ Council continues to accomplish its purpose in [statute in 63M-7-303](#) that outlines the objectives of the Council. **USAAV+ Council would request to be extended for an additional 10 years.** The objectives of the Council are outlined as:

- *Provide leadership and generate unity for Utah's ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate the impact of substance use and mental health disorders in Utah through a comprehensive and evidence-based prevention, treatment, and justice strategy.*

¹ With the passage of [HB 387 Boards and Commissions Amendments](#) in 2019, USAAV+ Council will be under CCJJ as of January 1, 2023.

The USAAV+ Council has statutorily included subcommittees for prevention, treatment, and justice and also addresses other topics for subcommittees that include Utah Behavioral Planning and Advisory Committee, the DUI Committee, the Behavioral Health Workforce Workgroup, and is prepared to address behavioral health issues as they arise in importance. The USAAV+ Council is also working on behavioral health issues found in the Governor's One Utah Roadmap as well as Legislative priorities they are asked to focus on by Committees or individual legislators.

- *Recommend and coordinate the creation, dissemination, and implementation of statewide policies to address substance use and mental health disorders.*

The USAAV+ Council coordinates closely with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) to ensure alignment with statewide strategies. Through its Council meetings and subcommittees, USAAV+ Council strives to recommend policies and programs that address substance use and mental health disorders. One such example is addressing the need for increased behavioral health workforce in Utah. In 2020, USAAV+ Council worked with now Lt. Governor Deidre Henderson to recommend long-term goals of increasing higher education student slots to increase the number of individuals entering the workforce in the coming years. Also part of the efforts is a retention tool through the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health in the form of a loan repayment program to help our public behavioral health agencies retain their employees for at least 3 years. Another example is considering the possible impacts of medical cannabis use in behavioral health treatment centers, which has been referred to our Treatment Committee to make possible recommendations to the Council for best practices.

- *Facilitate planning for a balanced continuum of substance use and mental health disorder prevention, treatment, and justice services.*

The USAAV+ Council has worked diligently on implementing the Sequential Intercept Model to prevent, treat, and aid those in recovery. The Council, in collaboration with DSAMH, the Utah Hospital Association, and other private and public partners, is working on a substance use and mental health disorder master plan that would address all levels of care, point out gaps in our system and make recommendations for consideration to build on for years to come.

- *Promote collaboration and mutually beneficial public and private partnerships.*

The USAAV+ Council regularly has presentations from both public and private entities and vets those presentations to make recommendations to the Governor's

Office and other state agencies. One such partnership is working with DSAMH, the Utah Hospital Association, Huntsman Mental Health Institute, Local Mental Health and Substance Abuse Authorities, Intermountain, and Steward Health to implement a behavioral health master plan that will describe mental health and substance use disorder needs across the state.

- *Coordinate recommendations made by any committee created by the Council.*

The USAAV+ Council uses its subcommittees and hears reports regularly to guide its priorities and policy efforts.

- *Analyze and provide an objective assessment of all proposed legislation concerning substance use, mental health, and related issues.*

USAAV+ works with the Legislature, particularly during the Legislative Session, USAAV+ takes official positions and gives feedback to legislators weekly.

- *Oversee the implementation and evaluation of Utah's Drug-related Offenses Reform Act (DORA).*

This is the section that we would suggest be eliminated as it is DORA has been absorbed in the context of larger Justice Reform efforts.

- *Monitor the use of beer tax funds annually distributed to municipalities and counties for purposes of alcohol- and substance abuse-related law enforcement, prevention, treatment, detection, prosecution, and control to ensure compliance with the statute (§32B-2-404 and 405).*

The USAAV+ Council receives annual reports for the beer tax funds by December 1st. The latest report can be found here: <https://prezi.com/view/jAUwG2Feizft64Cpjghr/>.

- *Oversee Utah's Underage Drinking Prevention Media Campaign, ParentsEmpowered.org (§32B-2-306).*

USAAV+ Council receives the ParentsEmpowered report annually by October 1st. The latest report is attached.

- *Oversee coordination for the funding, implementation, and evaluation of suicide prevention efforts described in Section 62A-15-1101.*

USAAV+ Council participates actively on the State Suicide Prevention Coalition run by DSAMH and has a specific Council Member as a designee from the Coalition as a representative voice as well.

- *Report recommendations annually to the Governor, Legislature, Judicial Council, and Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice.*

USAHV+ Council regularly reports to the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice Executive Director and the Commission as a whole as part of its staffing structure and communicates its concerns to the Governor and his cabinet through CCJJ. USAHV+ works with the Legislature and particularly during the Legislative Session, USAHV+ takes official positions and gives feedback to legislators weekly. USAHV+ Council also works with the Judicial Council and has three Member positions to represent the judiciary branch.

Are there ways to improve the statute?

USAHV+ Council no longer needs statute related to the Drug-related Offenses Reform Act (DORA), as DORA has been absorbed in the context of larger Justice Reform efforts.

USAHV+ Council and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health have also recommended the inclusion of the Forensic Mental Health Coordinating Council as one of the reporting responsibilities to USAHV+ Council; its responsibilities can be included under USAHV+ statute, much like the required Utah Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council was moved under USAHV+ recently.