

2020 Substance Abuse Involuntary Commitment Workgroup

Members

Representative Steven Haugaard, Speaker of the House and Attorney
Judge Mike Day, 4th Circuit Presiding Judge
Tiffany Wolfgang, Behavioral Health Division Director, DSS
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Tom Weerheim, Attorney
Lucy Lewno, Yankton County Board of Mental Illness Chair
Greg Sattizahn, State Court Administrator
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Recommendations

- One of the recommendations from the Substance Abuse IVC workgroup was to provide training to attorneys on substance abuse involuntary commitments, similar to current offerings for abuse and neglect cases. Providing specific training for attorneys will contribute to more attorneys being trained and available to handle these cases.
- Another key recommendation relates to publishing information necessary to help families, service providers, and community organizations access materials and information necessary to support those needing substance abuse services. Key stakeholders include law enforcement, first responders, court services officers, churches, counselors, the Department of Social Services, and other community organizations. Mediums include websites and written materials to be distributed to help individuals understand the process and have key contact information.
- Following the second point, recommendations include focusing on additional training for those who come into contact with the substance abuse IVC process. Specifically, facilitating local conversations between the judiciary, service providers and law enforcement.
- Finally, South Dakota Codified Law currently provides for petitioners and relatives to be responsible for payment of costs related to the petition, treatment, and attorneys under 34-20A-66.1, 34-20A-70.1, 34-20A-76.1, 34-20A-85.1, and 34-20A-89. The workgroup suggests removing that burden from families due to concerns that the finances involved would be a barrier to seeking treatment services for individuals suffering from substance abuse disorders.