

South Dakota Drug Court Advisory Council
January 27, 2026, 3:00pm CST

Council Members Present in Person: Chief Justice Steven Jensen, Melanie Boetel, Michelle Boyd, Terry Dosch, Tamie McMeekin, Judge Carmen Means, Ryan Mockler, Judge Patricia Riepel, Justice Lori Wilbur, Greg Sattizahn, Noreen Plumage and Shelby Meintsma.

Council Members Present on Teams: Dr. Melissa Dittberner, Dr. Shannon Emry, Katie Dunn, and Judge Franci Foral

Council Members Absent: Rick Olauson, Belinda Grave, Judge Cullen McNeece, and Anthony Teesdale

Others in attendance: Beth Urban

Call to Order

Chief Justice Jensen called the meeting to order at 3:01pm and welcomed the Council.

Tamie McMeekin made a motion to approve the October 2025 meeting minutes. The motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

Community Steering Committees – Noreen Plumage

Noreen presented a proposal for the establishment of Community Steering Committees and a standardized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The proposal was informed by a recent statewide conference presentation and workshop in which teams began planning for steering committees.

The intent of the provided packet is to outline the purpose and function of the steering committee and to supply guidance and supporting documents. Past efforts to implement similar committees were unsuccessful due to a lack of structure and guidance. Best Practices emphasize the importance of strong local foundations and community support.

Regarding the MOU, all but one court currently have an agreement in place. The proposed MOU was developed by All Rise. Historically, MOUs were signed by team members; however, under this proposal, MOUs would be signed by agency directors, presiding judges, or other decision-makers. Agency directors would be responsible for assigning team members to fulfill the duties outlined in the MOU.

Any proposed changes to the MOU would be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee. It was proposed that all courts sign the MOU (UJS 809) by July 1, 2026, and maintain it on file. If the structure of the steering committees changes, the MOU would be revised accordingly.

Steering Committees are intended to restore director-level engagement and support. A step-by-step implementation package will be provided, including sample agendas and guidance for ongoing meetings.

Discussion points included:

- Steering Committees would be established per county, while MOUs would be per court, to reduce duplication in counties with multiple courts.
- The Treatment Court Judge would generally chair the Steering Committee; in some counties, the Presiding Judge may designate a Treatment Court Judge to serve as chair when there are several courts within a county.
- Coordinators would serve as ad hoc members, responsible for note-taking and data reporting.
- Committees would meet at least once per year, with flexibility to meet once or twice annually, as needed.
- Additional community members may be included at local discretion; however, only decision-makers would be required to sign the MOU.
- Steering Committees would serve as a forum to proactively address systemic issues impacting treatment courts.

Noreen asked if there were any concerns with the MOU as written. No significant issues were identified. All in attendance expressed general support for the concept.

Chief Justice Jensen indicated that Supreme Court approval was not required and that the group could proceed with a vote.

Motion:

Judge Carmen Means made a motion to authorize Treatment Courts to form Community Steering Committees, with the following deadlines:

- Chair identified and stakeholder invitations sent within 60 days
- Steering Committees established by July 1, 2026

Second: Judge Francy Foral

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

Lived experience – Noreen Plumage

Noreen proposed adding a member with lived experience to the DCAC, specifically an individual who has previously participated in Treatment Court. Melanie shared an example of an application process currently used by DSS. A small group would be formed to collect and review applications, score candidates, and make a recommendation.

Dr. Mo volunteered to participate in the review process. Judge Means indicated she would work with Dr. Mo, and Melanie would also serve on the group.

Greg suggested that the small group review the application form, develop a plan to solicit applications, and return with a recommendation for appointment to the Chief Justice.

Discussion included:

- Whether a single lived-experience representative could adequately reflect the differences across court types (e.g., Drug Court, Veterans Court).
- Consideration of compensation, including stipends and reimbursement for meeting attendance.

- Establishing minimum recovery length criteria.
- Identifying candidates who are comfortable participating in discussions with justice-system leadership.
- The possibility of appointing more than one lived-experience representative, to be determined by the reviewing committee.

Motion:

Greg made a motion to appoint a three-member committee (Dr. Mo, Judge Means, and Melanie Botel) to review the application process and bring back a recommendation.

Second: Ryan Mockler

Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

Outreach updates

The Chief Justice expressed strong support for the outreach efforts, noting this as an important opportunity to showcase the work of the Treatment Courts.

Noreen provided an update on Treatment Court at the Capitol, which will be held twice, at 12:45 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. Attendance levels are unknown.

Planned agenda:

- The Chief Justice will open with a welcome.
- Noreen Plumage will provide a brief (approximately 60 seconds) overview of what attendees are about to observe.
- Judge Klinger will conduct court, with her team and participants seated in the front of the courtroom. Judge Klinger reported that all of her participants expressed interest in attending.
- Following the approximately 25-minute court session, Judge Klinger will answer court-specific questions.
- After the court session concludes, DCAC members will move to the front table, with representatives of treatment court roles from across the state seated at the opposite table.
- The Chief Justice will provide an overview of DCAC and its oversight role and introduce DCAC members.
- Greg will then moderate a question-and-answer session.

Legislators will be provided with the Impact Report and the Treatment Court map. Additional outreach opportunities will occur during the legislative lobbies in February, which will allow for further questions and discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding potential questions from legislators.

Recognition of outgoing members

The Council recognized several outgoing members for their service and contributions to Treatment Courts.

Justice Wilbur and Judge Riepel were acknowledged as trailblazers in the development of Treatment Courts. Justice Wilbur reflected that, while the work initially began with strong stakeholder engagement, focus later shifted to day-to-day court operations, and the system is now returning to a renewed emphasis on community support.

Judge Riepel described her involvement in Treatment Courts as the highlight of her judicial career.

Judge Foral was also recognized as an outgoing member and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve.

Judge Gusinsky was acknowledged for his service and noted that, following his appointment to the Supreme Court, he will be rotating off the Council.

Belinda Nelson was also recognized as an outgoing member for her service to the council. She was not in attendance.

Judge Riepel thanked Chief Justice Jensen for continuing the leadership and vision originally advanced by Justice Gilbertson.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, April 28th from 10:30am – 12:00pm CST.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20pm