

South Dakota Drug Court Advisory Council
October 14, 2025, 10:00am - 11:30am CST | Zoom

Council Members Present: Chief Justice Steven Jensen, Melanie Boetel, Michelle Boyd, Dr. Melissa Dittberner, Terry Dosch, Dr. Shannon Emry, Judge Francy Foral, Belinda Grave, Judge Robert Gusinksy, Tamie McMeekin, Judge Cullen McNeece, Judge Carmen Means, Ryan Mockler, Rick Olauson, Judge Patricia Riepel, Greg Sattizahn, Noreen Plumage and Shelby Meintsma.

Council Members Absent: Katie Dunn, Anthony Teesdale, and Justice Lori Wilbur

Others in attendance: Lara Roetzel, Eric Erickson, Beth Urban, Alisa Bousa, Tiffany Barthel and Kevin Killough.

Call to Order

Chief Justice Jensen called the meeting to order at 10:02am and welcomed the Council.

Approval of Minutes from April 2025

A motion to approve the April meeting minutes in their current form was made by Judge Foral, seconded by Greg Sattizahn, and unanimously approved.

Steering Committees and Advisory Boards – Noreen Plumage

Noreen Plumage provided an overview of the history and purpose of steering committees and advisory boards, noting that the establishment of the Drug Court Advisory Council in 2012 under Senate Bill 70 laid the groundwork for treatment court governance. She explained that, while statewide oversight has been effective, there is a growing need for stronger local governance structures to ensure consistency, communication, and program stability. Noreen presented a draft model for what a local governance structure could look like with a local Steering Committee and introduced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template previously shared with the group. The MOU outlines team roles and expectations, with an option to add or modify provisions as needed at the local level in the form of an addendum.

At the November statewide Treatment Court Conference, there is a planned workshop on Steering Committees.

Members discussed the value of establishing local steering committees and shared past experiences. Several noted that earlier committees lost momentum over time due to unclear purpose or lack of engagement. Members agreed that having a single committee per circuit or community, rather than one for each court, would be most efficient. Others highlighted that such committees provide an important forum for collaboration, helping address issues proactively and maintain program fidelity even as team members change.

Greg Sattizahn moved to explore the establishment of steering committees statewide, Judge Riepel seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Further discussion focused on ensuring clear expectations and accountability. An MOU can be reviewed annually to reaffirm commitments and clarify team roles. Chief Justice Jensen noted that the MOU provided serves as a flexible template that can be customized locally, while Noreen confirmed that addenda can be edited as needed.

Members also discussed which officials should sign the MOU, agreeing that the lead decision makers from the respective agencies should serve as signatories to reinforce oversight.

Terry Dosch suggested reviewing the MOU alongside provider contracts to ensure alignment, and Noreen encouraged members to share feedback privately for refinement.

A motion to move forward with the MOU template was made by Judge Gusinsky, seconded by Judge Means, and unanimously approved.

A finalized MOU will be provided at the November conference, with signatures to be collected annually at the start of each fiscal year.

Court Rule: Oversight of the State's Attorney on Entrance into Treatment Court – Greg Sattizahn

Discussions have been ongoing between representatives of the State's Attorney Executive Board and the UJS to clarify the State's Attorney's role in the entry process. The State's Attorney's representatives have emphasized the importance of solidifying their position as the gatekeeper for program referrals, while UJS continues to encourage engagement and participation in the Courts. Although no final agreement has been reached, both parties are hopeful for resolution in time for the November Supreme Court rules hearing, with a shared goal of presenting a unified approach. If additional time is needed, a second opportunity for agreement and presentation could take place at the February Supreme Court rules hearing.

During discussion, Judge Riepel raised a question about collecting data on individuals who are referred but not accepted into court programs, emphasizing the importance of understanding why participants are denied entry. Greg confirmed that this issue has been considered, and the current plan is to address it within the MOU rather than in a formal rule. He also noted that education and training will be an important part of ensuring the process is consistent and transparent across jurisdictions.

Update on SCPIRS Grant in Sioux Falls – Dr. Mo and Dr. Shannon System and Community Interventions to Prevent Incarceration and Reduce Stigma

Dr. Mo shared updates on their continued work to expand care and support for participants in Sioux Falls. After taking time to identify their role within the system, the program has now developed a smooth operational flow, connecting with individuals while they are still in jail to assess needs and coordinate services. SCPIRS provides flexible supports, including temporary hotel stays instead of shelters, transportation assistance, helmets, and access to peer support from individuals with lived experience. The program is also

engaging families of participants through support groups and continues to collect and analyze data, including efforts to align LSI-R risk scores with outcomes. Additional initiatives include STI testing and strengthening reporting for grant compliance, which has received positive feedback from government partners.

Dr. Shannon, a physician in Sioux Falls, provided an overview of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and its importance within the treatment court context. She emphasized that MAT is evidence-based, lifesaving, and significantly increases long-term recovery success. The period immediately following release from jail or hospitalization is the highest risk for overdose, and medications like buprenorphine can reduce overdose deaths by more than 50%. She noted that methadone requires a separate prescribing clinic. South Dakota ranks among the top five states for alcohol-related deaths and methamphetamine use disorder, yet there are currently no approved MAT options for meth use. However, contingency management (a behavioral approach rewarding positive progress) has been shown to double abstinence rates compared to standard care.

Dr. Shannon and other members emphasized the need to normalize MAT for substance use disorders, remove barriers to access, and integrate contingency management and early medical engagement into treatment court programs. These tools do not replace accountability but make recovery more achievable and sustainable. Dr. Shannon expressed willingness to provide additional support, and members agreed that available medical resources, should be more fully utilized.

Terry also encouraged the group to consider the cost implications for uninsured clients when expanding treatment options. Dr. Shannon confirmed that in South Dakota, buprenorphine is covered under Medicaid.

Recidivism Update - Shelby Meintsma

An update was provided on the revised Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards (2024) and the resulting changes in how success is defined and measured. The revisions expanded the way recidivism is tracked to ensure a more accurate picture of treatment court outcomes. Under the new approach, recidivism is measured for all participants, not only those who graduate, beginning at program induction rather than graduation. Outcomes are now reviewed at three and five years from sentencing, which allows for a more complete assessment of long-term impact and reflects the entire intent-to-treat population.

To implement these changes, the Recidivism Workgroup, which included Terry Dosch, Tony Teesdale, Michelle Boyd, Tamie McMeekin, and Noreen Plumage, reviewed national standards and developed a consistent statewide definition for use in South Dakota. The Council formally adopted this definition in January 2025. When applied statewide, the data indicated that approximately 16% of participants reoffended within three years, 16.5% within five years, and 27.5% overall from sentencing through the five-year mark. These results provide a more accurate and meaningful view of treatment court outcomes.

Members expressed appreciation for the revision and numbers and agreed that the new definition provides a clearer and more accurate picture of participant outcomes. They also noted that adopting a consistent statewide definition will improve data integrity, align South Dakota with national best practices, and strengthen the credibility of program evaluation. Continued data tracking and periodic review will ensure that the definition remains relevant and reflects evolving practices.

A small workgroup consisting of Judge McNeece, Rick Olauson, Noreen Plumage, and Shelby Meintsma was established to develop a dashboard that will include the newly defined recidivism data for public release. The dashboard will provide a clear and accessible way to share statewide treatment court outcomes and highlight the impact of these programs. The group will focus on ensuring the data is presented accurately, transparently, and in a way that supports both accountability and public understanding of treatment court effectiveness.

Training and Outreach

1. South Dakota Rise Statewide Treatment Court Conference, November 5-6 in Pierre
2. DCAC Meeting in Person, Pierre, January 28, 2026
3. Treatment Court at the Capital, January 28, 2026
4. Treatment Court in Legislative Lobbies, February 24, 2026

Meeting concluded at 11:30am.