



**Orange County Opioid Advisory Committee and  
Settlements Funds  
Friday, February 27, 2026  
9:00am-10:30am  
BCC Chambers 201 S. Rosalind Ave. Orlando FL 32801**



**Welcome & Introductions: Dr. Thundiyl, MD.**

**In Attendance:**

Name – *Organization*

**Panel:**

Dr. Josef Thundiyl, Orlando Health  
Dr. Christian Zuver- Medical Director Orange County EMS System  
Assistant Chief, Adrian Fernandez – EMS / Orlando Fire Dept  
Lt. Shane DeJarnett - Orange County Sheriff's Office  
Paul Maxwell – Central FL HIDTA  
Dr. Robert Karch – FL Dept of Health in OC  
Abraham Morris- City of Orlando  
Deputy Chief, Bri Barbour -STEPS

**Presenters:**

Dr. Thomas Hall, Director - OC Drug-Free Office  
Ronique Bain - FL Dept of Health in OC  
Battalion Chief, Alexander Ralls Novo – OC Fire Rescue  
Paul Maxwell - Central FL HIDTA  
Lt. Shane DeJarnett - OC Sheriff's Office  
Michelle Dodson – AdventHealth South  
Jaime Bridges - Orlando Health  
Kariely Negron - OC Drug Free Office

**Web-ex**

Name - *Organization*

Janet Rivera – Drug Free Office  
Jasmatti Seearam – OC Drug-Free Office  
Cristina Teixeira – Drug Free Office  
Dr. Raul Pino - Health Services  
LaTweika Salmon-Trejo - FL Dept of Health in OC  
Earl Hunt - OC Community & Family Services  
Jackie Ebert – Homeless Society Network Central Florida  
Jean Tucker – Florida Dept. of Children & Families  
Joshua Stephany- OC Medical Examiner's Office  
LaTashia C. Stephens – Orlando Police Department  
Stephen Teal - Florida Dept. of Children & Families  
Sabrina Brown –

**Audience:**

Megan Giddens – Drug Free Office  
Sarah Gold – Drug Free Office  
Annie Grace Funderburg- Drug Free Office

**Meeting Summary**

There was no public comment at the meeting, and the committee approved the drafted minutes.

Dr. Thomas Hall of the Orange County Drug Free Community opened the meeting by explaining that future meetings will include a more standardized format for reporting on opioid settlement-funded initiatives. He shared that a standardized slide deck is being developed to present performance measures consistently across funded projects and to highlight project activities and outcomes more clearly.

**Public Safety and Public Health Surveillance**

**Ronique Bain, MPH**, with the Florida Department of Health in Orange County, presented surveillance data for the fourth quarter of 2025. She reported that emergency department and urgent care visits decreased from the previous quarter across all drug categories, including opioids and fentanyl. Males continued to account for the majority of visits. White residents represented 55% of urgent care visits, followed by Black or African American residents at 19%, and 76% of visits involved individuals

identified as non-Hispanic or Latino. Adults ages 35 to 54 remained in the age group with the highest number of visits, totaling 369, followed by adults aged 55 to 74 with 283 visits. She also noted that the data does not include personal identifiers, so it is not possible to determine whether some visits involved repeat patients.

Dr. Hall then presented Orange County Drug Free Community overdose mortality trends. Between 2021 and 2025, overall overdose deaths declined by 53%. Fentanyl-only deaths declined even more sharply, dropping by 72% during that same period, with the highest numbers occurring in 2022 and 2023. Deaths involving opioids and polysubstance combined decreased by 69%. At the same time, Dr. Hall emphasized that non-opioid deaths are becoming a growing concern and noted an increase in these deaths over the same time period.

**Battalion Chief Alexander Ralls** of Orange County Fire Rescue reported on overdose response trends using Biospatial data covering January 1, 2025, through February 23, 2026. He stated that suspected overdoses have continued to trend downward in recent months, and suspected overdoses involving naloxone have also declined. However, the timing of overdoses shifted this quarter, with more incidents occurring after midnight than in previous reporting periods. Naloxone was administered in 99% to 100% of overdose incidents when it was indicated. It was most commonly given intranasally prior to EMS response and frequently administered intravenously on scene by EMS. Adults ages 30 to 39, both male and female, represented the leading age group for naloxone administration. By race, White patients accounted for 46.2% of cases, followed by Hispanic or Latino patients at 27.8% and Black patients at 22.7%. Heat maps showed concentrations of overdose activity around Orange Blossom Trail, Pine Hills, Oak Ridge, and the UCF campus. Chief Ralls also highlighted a continued decline in suspected opioid encounters, from 4,642 in 2024 to 3,140 in 2025 and 332 in 2026 to date.

**Paul E. Maxwell, Jr.**, representing Central Florida HIDTA, reported that fentanyl and heroin remain the leading drug threats in Central Florida because they continue to drive the greatest share of fatal and non-fatal overdoses. In 2025, Central Florida HIDTA initiatives seized 64 kilograms of fentanyl, while fentanyl dosage units increased to 667,246 pills. Although fentanyl and heroin seizures have decreased, heroin remains far less prevalent than fentanyl. Methamphetamine ranked as the second-highest drug threat, with purity levels between 95% and 98%. Methamphetamine seizures declined from approximately 398 kilograms in 2024 to 339 kilograms in 2025, though stimulant use appears to be increasing. Cocaine ranked third, with seizures decreasing from approximately 926 kilograms in 2024 to 617 kilograms in 2025. Mr. Maxwell also highlighted a major August 2025 seizure in Kissimmee in which DEA Orlando HIDTA Group 1 seized more than 100,000 counterfeit pills marketed as blue M30s and green Opana 80s. Laboratory analysis identified protonitazene and N-pyrrolidino protonitazene in the seized tablets.

**Lt. Shane DeJarnett** of the Orange County Sheriff's Office reported that fentanyl overdoses continue to decline locally. Narcan deployments dropped from 47 in 2024 to 33 in 2025. He also described a recent gang investigation that resulted in the seizure of 17 kilograms of cocaine, 337 grams of counterfeit M30 pills, 990 grams of individually packaged cocaine, 25 grams of crack cocaine, 6,851 grams of methamphetamine, and \$102,000 in U.S. currency. He added that K-9-related enforcement efforts also led to the seizure of 9 kilograms of cocaine.

## **Opioid Settlement Fund Activities**

**Michelle Dodson, LCSW**, presented AdventHealth's Quarter 4 updates for the East Orlando and Orlando campuses. AdventHealth reported 50 opioid use encounters treated in the emergency department, all of which involved face-to-face contact in the ED. No post-discharge telephone contact was reported. Of those encounters, 18 patients were offered buprenorphine treatment, 10 were induced on buprenorphine in the ED and scheduled for medication-assisted treatment appointments, and 7 were referred to community navigators within two business days. In the community consult portion of the program, 45 Better Access to Treatment clients were placed in transitional housing, 32 were referred to MAT, 17 were referred to behavioral healthcare, and 59 received wraparound social service referrals.

AdventHealth also reported strong retention outcomes. The program achieved 100% retention at both 30 days and 90 days, exceeding targets, and achieved 66% retention at 180 days, above the 50% target. Participation in case management also exceeded target, with 84% of clients attending at least one monthly in-person case management session. However, weekly in-person peer support attendance was 0%, falling below expectations, and weekly phone contact reached 84% against a target of 100%. Additional hospital activity included 1,453 consultations, 58 inpatient buprenorphine inductions, 58 MAT referrals, and 22 referrals to community navigators. In the community, 63 clients were served but not enrolled, with 12 housing referrals, 21 behavioral health referrals, 147 social service referrals, and 30 MAT referrals. Navigator staffing was reported as two BAT peers serving approximately 15 to 20 clients over 180 days.

**Jaime Bridges, LCSW**, presented Quarter 4 updates for Orlando Health. Orlando Health reported 163 opioid use encounters in the emergency department, all of which included face-to-face contact, and 130 post-discharge telephone contacts. All 163 patients were offered buprenorphine treatment, 29 were induced in the ED and scheduled for MAT appointments, and 13 were referred to community navigators within two business days. Community consult activity included 33 BAT clients placed in transitional housing, 31 referred to MAT, 42 referred to behavioral healthcare, and 62 referred for wraparound social services.

Program retention outcomes at Orlando Health fell below target. Thirty-day retention was 53%, 90-day retention was 9%, and 180-day retention was 0%. It was noted, however, that four clients completed a 14-day track following MAT induction in the ED. Monthly in-person case management attendance was 0%, although navigators reported contacting 100% of clients by phone each month. Weekly in-person peer support attendance was strong at 91%, exceeding target, and weekly phone contact reached 95%. Additional hospital activity included 211 consults, 21 inpatient buprenorphine inductions, 3 housing referrals, 29 behavioral health referrals, 118 MAT referrals, and 32 referrals to community navigators. Ancillary community encounters included 14 clients who served but did not enroll. Navigator caseloads were reported as four BAT peers serving up to 20 clients over 90 days.

Bri Barbour, LMHC, representing STEPS, reported that the women's residential facility maintained an occupancy rate of 90% to 95% during Quarter 4, reflecting continued demand for residential treatment services.

## **Proposed Prevention Campaign**

**Kariely Negrón**, Program Manager with the Orange County Drug Free Community, presented the CDC Free Mind campaign for proposed funding. She explained that youth mental health and substance use risk are closely connected and that the campaign is designed to address this intersection. The Free Mind campaign is nationally researched, youth-tested, grounded in behavioral science, and intended to deliver non-stigmatizing and empowering messages that connect stress, coping, and substance use risk. The campaign's goals are to prevent substance initiation among youth ages 12 to 17, reduce overdose-risk behaviors, increase awareness of healthy coping strategies, support positive decision-making, and equip parents and caregivers with practical resources.

Ms. Negrón stated that the campaign's primary audience is youth ages 12 to 17, including both novice and more experienced youth, while secondary audiences include parents and caregivers, educators and youth-serving adults, and community partners. She also explained that the proposal aligns with Opioid Settlement Exhibit B, Subsection G, including media campaigns to prevent opioid misuse, evidence-based public education, youth-focused prevention strategies, and mental health and resilience skill-building. The proposed 12-month budget totals \$125,000, including \$100,000 for media planning and paid placement, \$10,000 for community outreach, and \$15,000 for evaluation and reporting.

## **Committee Discussion and Adjournment**

Following discussion, a motion was made to approve the CDC Free Mind campaign, and all members present voted in favor. There were no additional community comments or discussion items. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

## **Minutes Prepared By**

- Camila Brugal (3/30/2026)
- Revised by Janet Rivera (3/31/2026)
- Approval pending