Will County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (WCSAPC)
Main Meeting – January 2026
February 24th, 2026
9:30AM
In person & Zoom Meeting
Approved: March 24, 2026

Members Present

In-Person: Aishwarya Balakrishna (10), Yolanda Barnes (12), Kathleen Burke (11), Alexciana Castaneda (7), Caitlin Daly (10), Connie Dewall (11), Cecilia DiSomma (12), Courtney Garfield (7), Stephanie Hook (12), Bonnie McPhillips (7), Sam Ortega Hughes (10), Sheree Stilwell (8), Xiomaira Vila (10), Dan Vlastay (12), Katie Zacharias (7), Jeremy Zdzinicki (7)

Zoom: Tim Ackermann (10), Crystal Allen (12), Gloria Bloodsaw (12), Tim Cramer (12), Kayla DeCant (13), Dominica Dybas (12), Paula Ekstrom (12), Celeste Fonteca (12), Troy Green (12), Arielle Jones (10), Suni Leal-Markley (12), Bill McCarty (13), Amber Mitchell (5), Cristyna Ramirez (12), Michael Rojas (11), Kristen Schroeder (5), Joan Stefka (10), Neesha Stringfellow (12), Allison Thomas (12)

I. Call to Order/Welcome
Start: 9:33 a.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Introductions (Name & Organization)
Welcome to any first-time attendees: Sam Ortega Hughes, Xiomaira Vila, and Arielle Jones from Will County Health Department

IV. Reports:
- **Treasurer** - Loren Yaksich - Financial Report delivered via email and reported out by Courtney
  - $21,750.93 ending balance
  - 0 expenses in January
  - Motion from Bonnie , second by Aishwarya
- **Secretary** – Kayla DeCant- approval of January minutes
  - Motion from Dr. Burke , second by Shiree

Organization Highlight- Lewis University next month. If interested in sharing information about your organization, email Courtney.

V. WCSAPC Requirements:

- **DFC Grant Report** – Courtney Garfield
    - Coalition Survey: https://uic.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ehTnUYCBeYLmoei
        - $5 Starbucks gift card for completing survey
        - Will be closed at end of February
    - Annual Report is due March 10th
        - Serves as our non-compete continuation application for year 9

VI. Old Business:

- **Too Good for Drugs Update-** Brittany Gruver
    - On week 5 at Hadley Junior High—5th and 6th grade.
- **Deflection Grant Update-** Alexciana Castaneda
    - Launched annual training for sworn personnel.
    - Will represent our Coalition at an ICJIA Roundtable next week. Will report back next month.
    - If you have a client in need- reach out or refer
        - 815-724-1404 , acastaneda@willcosheriff.org
- **CADCA Leadership Forum Review**- Alexciana Castaneda
    - Book designed for parents that the tobacco/vaping subcommittee is looking into
    - Opioid webinars shared with the subcommittee
    - Emerging trends in the field
    - Effective vs. Ineffective prevention strategies
    - AI in prevention work
- **Advocacy Update-** Aishwarya Balakrishna
    - State legislature session- Aishwarya & Dr. Burke sit on legislative review groups
        - Multiple cannabis & hemp bills, many Kratom bills
        - Asked to consolidate bills, as there are so many
        - Will share list of bills with Coalition once they have been consolidated & finalized

VII. New Business:

- Assistance in filling the Youth Sector ASAP – Courtney
    - Will be talking to a few interested parties this week, but nothing finalized
    - Anyone under the age of 18, looking to fill ASAP
- Parent sector- Courtney
    - Also need a new representative for this area
- Announcement (if time permits)
    - Dr. Burke working with Give Back organization

        - Working to have a conference in April. Informing young people about job opportunities in the behavioral health field & the health department overall
    - Family Guidance Center- started young adult recover home for 18-24 year olds, at Mantino location

VIII. Subcommittee/Action Team Reports

- **Alcohol** – Brittany Gruver
    - Alcohol & Nicotine compliance checks will occur soon
    - Committee is being revamped, doodle poll will come out in the next few weeks
    - Reach out to Courtney if interested in joining
- **Smoking/Vaping (formerly Marijuana/Nicotine)** – Aishwarya Balakrishna/ Joan Stefka
    - Tim Acklerman will be the new chair for the committee
    - Outreach & education about Kratom and new products
    - Focus on parents
        - 1-pager for HIPS trailer
        - Potential for a PSA
        - Potential partnership/collaboration with AOK
    - Next meeting- Friday at 10am before the main committee meeting, via Teams
- **Opioid –** Connie Dewall
    - Adulterants (such as Xylazine) being mixed with fentanyl (see DEA report)
        - Narcan will not be effective
    - Next meeting- 9am before the main coalition meeting, in-person
- **Social Media** – Courtney Garfield
    - Facebook: 3.1k views 792 reaches 70 new followers
    - Instagram: 153 views 33 reaches 2 new followers
- **Care Team Updates** –Courtney Garfield
    - First event scheduled March 14th
    - Looking to get some different items to update inside the trailer
    - Replacing shelving unit
    - Can request for community events, schools, etc. Can go anywhere within Will County if requested through Sherriff Office page, email HiddenInPlainSightForm@willcosheriff.org at least 30 days before event
- **Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) Update** – Dr. William McCarty
    - Currently registered: Fairmont, Homer Glen High, Hofford Jr High, Lockport East High, Reed Custer High, Wilmington High School & middle school. All Valley View schools
    - Joliet schools- would not be participating since it is not required, and they have other surveys to complete this semester

IX. Sector Reports & Sharing:

- **Business in the Community:** Brian Delli
    - No updates
- **Civic Volunteer Groups:** Loren Yaksich/United Way

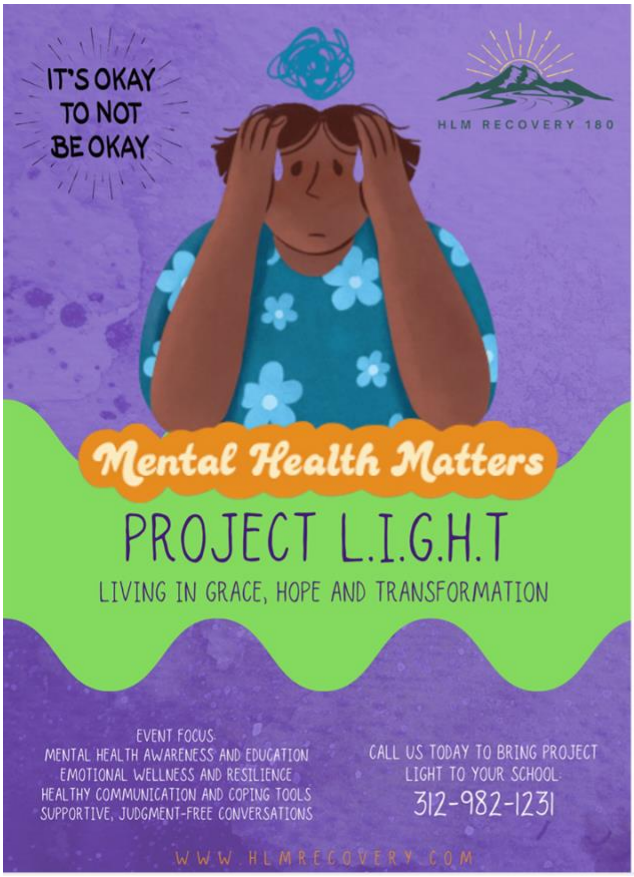
- No updates

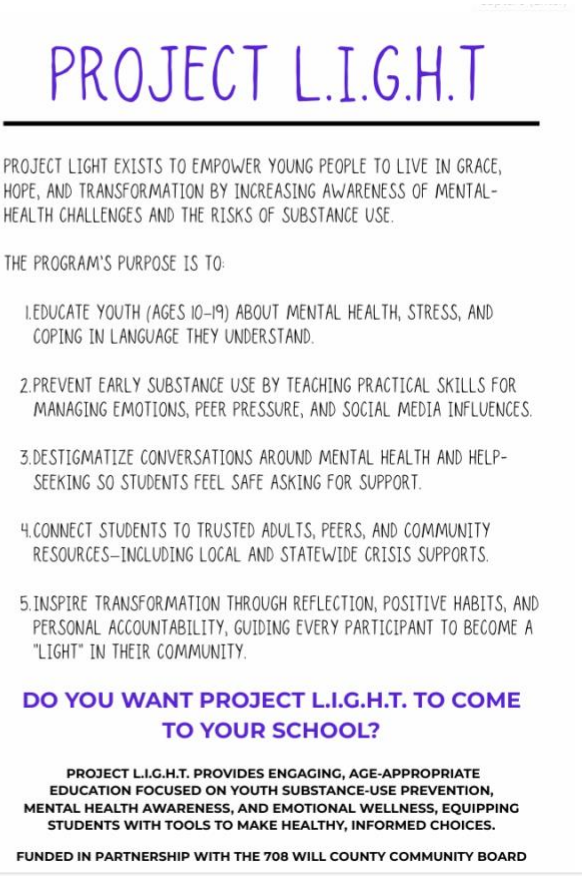
- **College or University-** Kayla DeCant/Lewis University
  - Training with End Technology Enabled Abuse tomorrow, 2/25/26, focused on AI's impact on relationships through social media, dating apps, and more
- **Faith-Based, Religious or Fraternal Organizations:** Sheree Stilwell
  - Continue to hold meetings
- **Healthcare Professionals:** Allison Thomas/Rosecrance, Gloria Bloodsaw & Troy Green
  - Rosecrance
    - Open house April 10th 11am-1:30pm at new Dyer, Indiana location
    - Residential bed availability
      - Still have waitlist for Medicaid beds
      - Waitlist for adolescent boys
      - Openings for adolescent girls (mental health & SUD)
    - Planning CEU for Spring
  - Gateway Foundation
    - 32 beds added to Aurora location
    - Expanded services to include focused mental health
      - 1:1 in Bloomington, Peoria, Downers Grove (in person and virtual)
    - Seeing an increase in DUI calls, need for IOP (75 hours)
      - Do have availability for that
    - Virtual IOPs available in Joliet, in person (evenings) or online
      - Basic outpatient and individual counseling as step-downs
- **Law Enforcement Agency:** Lockport PD
  - Should be done with too good for drugs by Mid-March
- **Media:** Diane DeVries
  - No updates
- **Organizations Focusing in Substance Abuse:** Tim Cramer
  - No updates
- **Parents:** OPEN
- **Schools:** Kristen Schroeder/ Homer Glen District 33C
  - Today, all 900 students at Hadley Middle School are taking a mental health screener
  - Beginning Illinois Science Assessment next week (only for 5th grade)
  - IAR (State standardized tests) will be in two weeks
  - Lincoln Way Special Rec led a PE takeover experience two weeks ago to help students understand peers with physical disabilities, learning about inclusion and acceptance
  - Too good for Drugs is in week 5, providing a lot of valuable instruction in line with IL mandated education and to build positive relationships between local officers and students
- **State or Local Government Agencies:** Kathleen Burke
  - Trained 80 people with New Lennox virtual Narcan training
  - Opiod Remediation Fund

        - Asking for transportation funding to support individuals getting to 12-step meetings, recovery orgs., housing, jobs, etc.
        - Proposal was accepted, NOFO is open
    - Currently distributing survey to learn more about becoming a recovery-friendly organization
    - 8 more red boxes to distribute to community
        - 2 will be given to University of St. Francis
        - 6 others will be sent based off the waitlist of requests
    - Mental-health school-based program
        - Working with Joliet, Plainfield, and Lockport this year
        - Expanding as staffing/funding is available to do so
- **Youth:** OPEN
- **Youth Servicing Organizations:** YMCA

Other Announcements

- Dominica Dybas- Drug Enforcement Administration
    - Take Back Day is scheduled for April 25th from 10am-2pm
    - Fentanyl-Free America Campaign will happen again in April
    - CADCA and DEA will be doing a mid-year conference together in July in Orlando
    - Walk against Fentanyl: Saturday, July 11th
- Paula (Wilmington CHC)
    - March 16th- Basset class training from 4-8pm at Lions Hall in Wilmington, $10 registration includes dinner
    - Prescription Take Back & Shredding Event: April 25th 10am-noon in front of CVS
- Neesha Stringfellow- Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC)/Heartlife Ministries Recovery
    - Meetings today- 11am is Will County, 12:30pm is Grundy County, 2pm is Kankakee
    - Looking for service providers to highlight at meetings
    - Starting to partner with schools in Will County to do substance use prevention work

- 



Adjournment
End Time: 10:27 AM

Next Meeting: March 24th, 2026 9:30am In person/Via ZOOM. Opioid subcommittee meeting at 9am before full Coalition meeting. Next member appreciation meeting in April.

Drug-Free Communities Definition of a Coalition:
A community-based formal arrangement for cooperation and collaboration among groups or sectors of a community in which each group retains its identity, but all agree to work together toward a common goal of building a safe, healthy, and drug-free community.