

**From:** [McNett, Michael M.](#)  
**To:** [Lee, Chris](#)  
**Subject:** RE: City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force Meeting 9/15/17  
**Date:** Thursday, August 24, 2017 9:58:52 AM

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Hi, Chris,

When I was speaking before your group, Commissioner Baker asked me about the economics of providing substance abuse treatment vs. the cost of opioid abuse to the county. I told him I could not give those numbers but would do some research and get back to him. Could you please forward this to him for me?

I found the following report: <https://www.painnewsnetwork.org/stories/2016/9/15/cdc-prescription-opioid-abuse-costs-785-billion-annually>

In it, they cite CDC findings that total economic costs (direct costs, costs of overdose treatment in ERs and hospitals, lost productivity, etc.) of opioid abuse are \$78.5 billion a year. They also cite a study that finds that approximately 2 million patients are abusing or addicted to opioids. That indicates that the total costs per year per opioid-abusing patient can be estimated to be \$39,250.

*I would note that this cost is highly disproportionately distributed to those with severe addiction, particularly heroin addiction. The large majority of opioid abusers have mild opioid abuse disorder and generally keep their jobs, don't OD, don't use ERs, etc. Because of this, the cost per hard-core abuser would probably be far, far higher.*

Aurora has done an economic analysis of the costs of running a buprenorphine-based outpatient treatment facility for opioid abusers, and it has shown that such a facility would return a profit, since the services can be billed to insurance (we are anticipating bringing it into operation in 2018). There is also a Boston-based for-profit buprenorphine program called "Clean Slate" which has recently announced plans to open two sites in the Milwaukee area (although it should be noted that they don't accept Medicare or Medicaid patients). Unfortunately, as is all too obvious, even with these sites opening, there are far too few resources available to people with opioid use disorder, and the waits to get into buprenorphine treatment programs – particularly for those with less generous insurance – are several weeks long, by which time many patients have fallen back into their addiction and don't keep their appointment.

Primary annual costs of running a buprenorphine program could be estimated from what the county currently pays:

1 physician (Actually, 10 physicians each working 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an FTE. Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants have recently been given the ability prescribe buprenorphine, and they cost about half as much.)

1 nurse care coordinator

1 medical assistant/receptionist

Drug test kits: \$7.25 (done every time a patient is seen)

Building and overhead costs: depends on the building used

Were the county to consider such a program, my recommendation would be to seek to hire 10 buprenorphine prescribers each working a half day a week in the clinic. Since the maximum number of patients that can be seen by a newly trained buprenorphine prescriber is 30 the first year, 100 the second year, and 275 the third year, this would allow such a clinic to see up to 300 patients in the first year, with the potential to expand far beyond that in subsequent years.

In my opinion, it would be highly desirable for the county to consider developing buprenorphine treatment programs, particularly targeting areas of poverty where patients may otherwise have poor access to healthcare resources. Adding these services to already-functioning clinics, if possible, would be very highly desirable and more cost-effective.

Please feel free to contact me if you or Commissioner Baker have any further requests.

Best wishes,  
Mike

Michael McNett, MD  
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**From:** Lee, Chris [mailto:clee@milwaukee.gov]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2017 8:46 AM

**To:** Alberte, Nancy; Armour, DeAndre; Baker, Bevan; Baldauff, Melissa; Barajas, Yesenia; Barian, Joanne; Robert J Bell - US Attorney's Office; Bielinski, Justin (Citizen Action of WI); Biernat, Karen; Black, Carolyn; Bohl, James; Bretl, Cassandra; Bullard-Cawthorne, Lisa; Caballero, Steven; Calderon, Martin; Casey, Evan; Cervera, Marisol; jon.cohn@gffd.us; Colella, Mario; Coleman, William (Safe & Sound); Collier, Elizabeth; Colon, Hector; Coren, Jody; Dela Cruz, Madrina; Domurat, Annemarie; Dynek, Julia; Ellzey, Dameon; Fairweather, Wendy; Faulhaber, Patricia; Feierstein, Judy; Fellner, Therese; FINGER, CHERYL; Fleege, Janet; Foley, Colleen; Formolo, Paul J; Fumo, Nicole; Gales, Kenneth (USAWIE); Gonda, Jennifer; Gutierrez, Patricia; Hagy, Angela; Hauch, Jaimie; Hochstein, Jeff; Hooker, Tracey; Hough, Heather; Jaskulski, Michelle; Jeffers, Bernestine; Johnson, Raeanna (Exodus House); Kaftan, Gregory; Kegley, Cari; Knutson, Alec; Koltun, Raisa; Kuglitsch, Paul; Kurter, Selahattin; Lappen, Michael; LeBaron, Ann; Lee, Morris, III, Dr. George; Lerch, Kari; Lerner, E. Brooke; William Lipscomb - US Attorney's Office; Karen Loebel - District Attorney's Office; Lopez, Guadalupe; Luedke, Joanie; Mabra, Monte; Mac Gillis, James; Macias, Michael; Mapp, Jodi; Mathy, James; McFerrin, Dionna; McNett, Michael M.; Mercado, Rafael; Morgan, Sara (Molina Healthcare); Morton, Sherman; Mozina, Paul; Murphy, Michael (Alderman); Norfolk, Tea; Nzinga, Khalid; O'Brien, Mallory; Parnau, James; Peterson, Brian; Pfeiffer, Eric; Pinzl, Mari; Potapenko, Mandy; Rafenstein, Krystal; Rainey, Khalif; Reiss, Tess; Richards, Jonathan; RIEGG, STEVEN; ROHLFING, MARK; Schmitz, Kathy; Schreiber, Sara (ME Office); Shermach, Kevin; St. Marie-Carls, CoryAnn; Stamper II, Russell; Stokes, Scott; Stone, Amy; Strong, David; Thomson, Dana; Vann, Michael (WRC); Vasquez, Jose; Veloz, Ana; Vignieri, Viet; West, Amy; West, Peggy; Westrich, Christine; Wilson, Carly; Wofford, Phyllis; Zarate, Sarah; Zellmer, Laura

**Subject:** City-County Heroin, Opiod and Cocaine Task Force Meeting 9/15/17

**Importance:** High

Greetings Task Force Members, Essential Staff, Participants, and Interested

Persons,

This is notification that there is scheduled a regular meeting of the **City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force for Friday, September 15, 2017 at 9 a.m. in Room 301-B, Third Floor, City Hall, 200 E. Wells St., Milwaukee, WI 53202**. I am the staff assistant to this task force.

Attached is an **email Outlook Calendar appointment** for your use for this meeting, if needed.

The meeting agenda and previous meeting minutes will be forthcoming.

Materials for meetings past, present, and future can be accessed electronically from Common Council File Number 161554 at <https://milwaukee.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2965576&GUID=0563F682-215F-46EF-B751-663D43F417EC&Options=ID|Text|&Search=161554>.

If you do not want to receive these emails, please notify me to remove you from the contact list.

Should you have any questions, please contact me. **DO NOT REPLY ALL.**

Sincerely,

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Council Records Section  
City Clerks Office  
City of Milwaukee  
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