### USAAV+ Council Mission and Duties

The mission of the Utah Substance Use and Mental Health Advisory (USAAV+) Council is to create and coordinate a comprehensive strategy to eliminate substance use and mental health disorders throughout Utah.

The Council’s statutory duties (§63M-7-301 through 306) are to:

- Provide leadership and generate unity for Utah’s ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate the impact of substance use and mental health disorders in Utah through a comprehensive and evidence-based prevention, treatment, and justice strategy;
- Recommend and coordinate the creation, dissemination, and implementation of statewide policies to address substance use and mental health disorders;
- Facilitate planning for a balanced continuum of substance use and mental health disorder prevention, treatment, and justice services;
- Promote collaboration and mutually beneficial public and private partnerships;
- Analyze and provide an objective assessment of all proposed legislation concerning substance use, mental health, and related issues;
- Oversee the implementation and evaluation of Utah’s Drug-related Offenses Reform Act (DORA);
- Monitor the use of beer tax funds annually distributed to municipalities and counties for purposes of alcohol- and substance abuse-related law enforcement, prevention, treatment, detection, prosecution, and control to ensure compliance with the statute (§32B-2-404 and 405);
- Oversee Utah’s Underage Drinking Prevention Media Campaign, ParentsEmpowered.org (§32B-2-306);
- Oversee coordination for the funding, implementation, and evaluation of suicide prevention efforts described in Section 62A-15-1101; and
- Report recommendations annually to the Governor, Legislature, Judicial Council, and Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice.

### USAAV+ Council 2021 Ruminations

I continue my many praises and thanks to each and everyone of our council members as we close out another unprecedented year. With changes to the legislative process to mostly virtual attendance, we adjusted and worked to inform the Governor’s Office and the Legislature of policy changes, reviewing over 250 bills, and taking a position on over 150 bills.

We also recognized the exponential need for behavioral health workforce and the public’s attention on need for mental health and substance use treatments made available to everyone, focusing on destigmatizing, and increasing resources.

As the USAAV+ Council, we have focused on partnerships with our nonprofit, private industry, and governmental partnerships and look forward to the coming year with the announcement of some monumental recommendations. All of these efforts are thanks to each and every one of our Council Members and your dedication to improving our State and its resources to best serve Utahns.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Klc
USAAV+ 2021 Legislative Priorities

The 2021 Utah Legislature passed the following USAAV+ priority bills and appropriations during one of the most unprecedented Legislative Sessions in our State’s history:

1st Sub H.B. 130 – Mental Health Coverage Amendments by Rep. Christine Watkins. This bill further ensures behavioral health parity in health benefit plans. Of important note, the bill requires a health insurer that offers a health benefit plan that provides a mental health and substance use disorder benefit to submit a report to the insurance commissioner each year that includes specified information and an analysis indicating the insurer is in compliance with certain state and federal laws governing mental health and substance use disorder benefits and requires the insurance commissioner to enforce certain federal laws governing mental health and substance use disorder benefits and specifies minimum enforcement actions that must be taken by the commissioner.

3rd Sub S.B. 155 – 988 Mental Health Crisis Assistance by Senator Dan Thatcher. This bill creates the Statewide Behavioral Health Crisis Response Account with the membership and duties as defined. This addresses the federal requirement that all states implement a statewide crisis response line with the designation of 988 to address crisis mental health emergencies and designates state funding to establish services and a public campaign to that purpose.

Behavioral Health Appropriations

Because of economic forecast changes, the Legislature held special sessions over the summer address pandemic concerns. USAAV+ Council advocated for the maintenance of critical behavioral health funding. Areas of focus included the underage drinking prevention campaign, continued funding of the behavioral health professional loan repayment program, and expansion of higher education behavioral health professional programs.
According to the most recent June 2021 survey of Utah parents, conducted by Cicero, the simplified messaging worked, with 68% percent of Utah parents rating themselves as the greatest influence in their children's decision to drink or not, representing a 19% increase from the previous survey and a record high.

Parents Empowered has become the most creatively awarded ad campaign in the state. During the recent 2020-21 Utah American Advertising Awards, the campaign won more total awards than any other advertiser in Utah, plus the coveted “Best of Show.”

Parents Empowered also leads in its community partnership opportunities. Because Utah ranks seventh in the nation for residents who identify as a gender or sexual minority, the 2019 SHARP Survey opted—for the first time—to include questions regarding sexual identity. The student-reported data showed that one tenth of Utah County students identified as LGBTQ+. Yet when a local prevention coordinator assessed current resources to help address problem behaviors associated with LGBTQ+ youth, the critical gaps in prevention services became apparent. For example, of all 12th grade students surveyed in Utah County who also identified as straight, six percent reported consuming alcohol in the last 30 days. Yet, with the same scenario for those identifying as LGBTQ+, the rate was 13 percent. Further, binge drinking rates among LGBTQ+ twelfth graders almost triples that of their hetero classmates, from 4% for straight peers to 11.4% for LGBTQ+ youth.

**FY 2021 Beer Tax Funds**

The USAAV+ Council monitors the use of beer tax monies distributed annually by the Utah State Tax Commission to Utah’s municipalities and counties from the *Alcoholic Beverage and Substance Abuse Enforcement and Treatment Restricted Account* for alcohol- and drug-related activities (§32B-4-4, 1Utah Code).

The Legislature appropriated $5,651,400.00 for the fiscal year 2021. The total amount of funding expended may be less than the amount distributed because some municipalities and counties did not utilize all their funding during the fiscal year, in which case they may carry it over into the new fiscal year. The figure to the above shows how beer tax funds were utilized during FY 2021. The figure to the left was presented to the USAAV+ Council on total net distribution, dollars spent, and carryover dollars. The USAAV+ Council has committed to continuing conversations about best uses of Beer Tax Funds and how to work with all the parties to increase the usefulness to address alcohol and substance use issues in municipalities and counties.
2021 Utah Substance Use and Mental Health Advisory (USAAV+) Council Members

Commissioner Jess Anderson  
Commissioner of Public Safety

Judge James Blanch  
District Court Drug Court Judge

Janae Duncan  
Executive Director of the Department of Health’s Designee

Dr. Karen Buchi  
Chair, Drug Endangered Children Committee

Daniel Burton  
Attorney General’s Designee

Dennis Cecchini – VICE-CHAIR  
Resident Who Has Been Personally Affected by a Substance Use or Mental Health Disorder

Santiago Cortez  
Chair, Treatment Committee & Behavioral Health Workforce Workgroup

Commissioner Bill Cox  
Elected County Official

Dr. Michael Crookston  
Representative of Treatment Professionals

Tom Ross  
Executive Director, Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Ron Gordon  
State Court Administrator’s Designee

Patrick Fleming, CHAIR  
Citizen Representative

Mark Foote, M.D.  
Representative of the Physical Health Care Field

Brent Kelsey  
Chair, Recovery Residences Committee

Clarissa Stebbing  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Designee

Mayor Howard Madsen  
Representative of Utah League of Cities and Towns

Judge Mary Manley  
Juvenile Court Drug Court Judge

Mary Jo McMillen  
Representative of a Statewide Advocacy Organization for Recovery from Substance Use Disorders

Deborah Kreeck Mendez  
Criminal Defense Attorney

Diane Moore  
Director, Utah Division of Child and Family Services

Kimberly Myers  

Chair, Statewide Suicide Prevention Coalition

Sigrid Nolte  
Co-Chair, Utah Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Committee

Chief Ken Wallentine  
President, Utah Chiefs of Police Association

Eric Clarke  
Prosecutor

Nubia Peña  
Director, Division of Multicultural Affairs

Brett Peterson  
Director, Division of Juvenile Justice Services

Carrie Cochran  
Chair, Board of Pardons and Parole’s Designee

Mike Haddan  
Executive Director, Utah Department of Corrections

Doug Thomas  
Director, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Rob Timmerman  
Chair, UPAC/Prevention Committee

Judge Vernice Trease  
District Court Mental Health Court Judge

Carlene Walker  
Chair, DUI Committee

Rob Wesemann  
Representative of a Statewide Advocacy Organization for Recovery from Mental Illness

Christina Zidow  
Representative of Youth Services Providers

Sherri Wittwer  
Representative of a Statewide Advocacy Organization for Protection of Rights of Individuals with a Disability

Colonel Gary Harter  
Military Service Member/Veteran

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Elizabeth Klc, USAAV+ Council Director

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USAAV+ Beer Tax Funds Program Manager

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Pending:  
Director, Division of Indian Affairs or Designee  
Representative of Prevention Professionals  
Certified Peer Support Specialist