



KANE COUNTY ROSC COUNCIL

Date: Thursday, September 17, 2026

Time: 3:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Location: Messenger Public Library of North Aurora, Main Meeting Room, 113 Oak St, North Aurora, IL (and via Zoom)

Hosted By: Serenity House Counseling Services, Inc.

Funding Source: Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery

I. Attendance

Present:

- Annette Villarreal – Kane County ROSC Coordinator
- Jarret Burton – DuPage County ROSC Coordinator
- Michelle Meyer – Kane County Health Department
- Lily Peterson – Kane County Health Department
- Sharon Cabrera – Kane County Health Department
- Alex Borower – Serenity House
- Daniel Laguori – Ampact Recovery Corp
- Jessica Mino – Kane County Conservation Foundation
- Toni Garcia – Kane County Health Department
- Kelsey Chavez – Ampact Recovery Corp
- Mark Matthews – Greater Family Health
- Kglover- Ercker Center Behavioral Health
- Andrea Hasko Marx – AidCares.org
- Vanessa Melendez
- Adam Pauley- Hesed House

II. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

The meeting was convened by the Kane County ROSC Coordinators. The Council formally recognized the convergence of three significant national observances occurring in



September: National Recovery Month, National Suicide Prevention Month, and Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month.

III. September Observances and Initiatives

National Recovery Month

- The 2026 national theme is "Recovery is Real. Restoring Every Aspect of Life."
- Governor Pritzker has proclaimed September 2026 as National Recovery Month in Illinois.
- The Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) is promoting the hashtag #RecoveryBelongs to normalize recovery and raise awareness of multiple pathways.
- The campaign emphasizes five interconnected themes: community and connection, reducing stigma through storytelling, wellness, multiple pathways to recovery, and youth and families.
- Attendees were encouraged to wear purple throughout the month to promote awareness.

Lived Experience Perspectives

- Coordinators Jarret Burton and Annette Villarreal provided personal accounts of their recovery journeys to model vulnerability and reduce stigma.
- Mr. Burton emphasized that all pathways to recovery are valid, including self-initiated, court-ordered, or institutionalized entry points. He highlighted the importance of listening to suggestions, utilizing sober living environments, and acknowledging that recovery extends to family members and loved ones.
- Ms. Villarreal detailed the specific barriers faced by women and the Hispanic/Latino community. She identified cultural stigma, familial expectations, and the association of mental health issues with weakness as significant obstacles. She noted a positive paradigm shift within the Latino community toward greater acceptance of therapy and harm reduction tools (e.g., Narcan, test strips).

National Suicide Prevention Month

- The 2026 theme is "Stronger Together: Connect, Support, Prevent."
- The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline remains a critical 24/7 resource. Spanish-speaking callers can call 988 and press 2, text AUDAS to 988, or chat online at 988lifeline.org.



- The ROSC's approach to suicide prevention centers on "warm handoffs" to partner organizations, including Suicide Prevention Services of America (Batavia) and Aid in Aurora (Association for Individual Development - AID), ensuring individuals are directly connected to appropriate care rather than left to navigate systems alone.
- **Data Presentation:** Statistical data was presented highlighting a 9.5% increase in the age-adjusted suicide rate among Hispanic individuals between 2018 and 2023, peaking among ages 25-34. In 2023, only 17% of Hispanic adults reported receiving mental health treatment in the past year, with 39% citing fear of familial judgment as a barrier.

IV. Community Assessment Survey

The Council introduced the annual Kane County ROSC Community Assessment Survey.

- The survey is available in English and Spanish, in both digital (QR code) and paper formats.
- The Council is specifically requesting participation from community members not currently working in the behavioral health field or in recovery, to avoid biased sampling.
- Two additional questions were added to the state-mandated 13 questions this year regarding the availability of Spanish-language services and recovery homes/support groups in Kane County. This was prompted by recent cases where Spanish-only speakers were turned away from local services or transferred to Chicago.
- **Action Item:** All attendees and partners are requested to distribute the survey widely within their networks.

V. Community Updates and Partner Reports

- **Overdose Awareness Night:** A successful event was recently held. The Stefani family (Hope for Healing) created a large purple ribbon art installation with smaller canvases painted by attendees in remembrance. This mobile art piece is currently housed at Serenity House.
- **DuPage County Crisis Recovery Center (CRC):** The CRC in Weaton recently celebrated its one-year anniversary. In its first year, it completed over 2,200 on-site assessments, safely supported 97% of visitors in the community (avoiding unnecessary hospitalization), and provided assessments to 386 youth.



- **Digital Epidemiology Presentation:** Daniel Laguori (Epidemiologist, Ampact Recovery Corp) will lead a presentation next Wednesday on utilizing digital surveillance (e.g., Reddit, TikTok, Facebook) as an early warning system for novel substances.
- **Serenity House Donations:** Alex Borower reported an urgent need for new/unused socks and underwear for the outreach van. Food donations (non-perishable items, chips, bread) are also needed for Sunday outreach to the unhoused at the Aurora Animal Shelter. Monetary donations are accepted.

VI. Announcements

- **Violence Prevention Coalition:** Meetings are open to the public; free gun locks are available.
- **Bilingual Training Series:** The County Behavioral Health team is offering a training series on reducing stigma and expanding access to substance use treatment (available in Spanish).
- **Symmetria Event:** A coffee and networking event will be held. Symmetria provides MAT services (methadone, Suboxone, Vivitrol) and counseling.
- **Post-Overdose Survey:** The DuPage Health Department and Behavioral Health Collaborative are conducting a survey for individuals who have experienced an overdose in the past few years to evaluate service delivery and harm reduction materials.
- **Kane Nature RX / Wandering with Wonder:** This self-guided nature wellness experience launched in September. It features audio files and signage in English and Spanish at four locations in Kane County. A meeting will be held tomorrow at the health department.
- **Youth Tobacco Use Prevention Summit:** Scheduled for November 4th at the Baker Center in St. Charles. The event will feature youth leaders, policy work, and a retailer scan presentation.

VII. Adjournment and Next Meeting

- The next Kane County ROSC Council meeting will be held at ALUS (Alpha US).



- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. Attendees were reminded to share the community surveys and celebrate those in recovery.