

Special Commission to Study and Make Recommendations on the Public Health and Safety Concerns Posed by the Proliferation of Xylazine (“Xylazine Commission”)

February 9, 2026 Meeting Notes

Agenda

1. Welcome and Attendance
2. Approve Minutes of the December 11, 2025 Public Meeting
3. Presentation of Draft Report Process and Feedback
4. Next Steps and Discussion

Attendees *(listed alphabetically by last name after the Co-Chairs)*

Appointing Body	Name	Present?
House Chair of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery	State Representative Mindy Domb (Co-Chair)	Yes
Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery	State Senator John Velis (Co-Chair)	No
Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (“EOHHS”)	Millie Bhatia , MPH, Health Policy Manager, Office of EOHHS Undersecretary Kiame Mahaniah	No
Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (“EOPSS”)	Undersecretary Angela Davis , EOPSS Undersecretary for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice	Yes
Speaker of the House of Representatives	State Representative Kate Donaghue	Yes
Senate Minority Leader	Ernie Gates , President/CEO, Gates Healthcare Associates, Inc.	Yes
Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association	Matthew Hogan , BVetMed, MS, MRCVS, DACLAM, Attending Veterinarian, McLean Hospital	Yes
Senate President	State Senator John Keenan	Yes
Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (“BSAS”)	Simeon Kimmel , MD, MA, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Boston University Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine and Boston Medical Center	Yes
Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health (“DMH”)	David McGarry , MD, Medical Director, Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital Facility; Acting Medical Director, Office of Inpatient Management	Yes
Commissioner of the Department of Public Health (“DPH”)	Sarah Ruiz , MSW, Deputy Director for Strategy and Community Health, DPH	No
Governor	Kevin Simon , MD, MPH, Pediatric Addiction Medicine Psychiatrist, Boston Children’s Hospital; Chief Behavioral Health Officer, City of Boston; Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School	Yes
House Minority Leader	State Representative Steven George Xiarhos	Yes

1. Welcome and attendance

Chair Domb called the meeting to order at 10:03am. **Chair Domb** offered brief opening remarks. **Chair Domb** then took attendance for the record, and noted that Chair Velis remains on active-duty deployment with the Massachusetts National Guard.

2. Approve Minutes of Prior Public Meeting

Chair Domb asked Commissioners to vote to approve the draft meeting minutes from the Commission's previous public meeting on December 11, 2025, which were shared with Commissioners prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously and will be posted on the Commission's website.

3. Presentation of Draft Report Process and Feedback

At **10:10am**, Chair Domb shared reminders about the timeline for the Commission's final report and the agenda for today, which included a PowerPoint presentation of the Commission's current draft of the report. **Chair Domb** then asked Commission staff to facilitate the PowerPoint presentation and discussion.

A. Commission Overview - PowerPoint Slides

Jessica Bresler presented PowerPoint slides regarding the proposed format of the final report, table of contents, commission overview, and background information on licit versus illicit xylazine.

Commissioner Hogan, Commissioner Kimmel, and Commissioner Davis provided feedback on the background information regarding licit versus illicit xylazine.

B. Best Practices for Oversight & Enforcement - PowerPoint Slides

Jessica Bresler presented PowerPoint slides on key findings and recommendations included in the final report regarding oversight and enforcement, including background information on current scheduling of xylazine.

Commissioner Xiarhos noted his support for enhanced penalties for illicit distribution of xylazine and asked for clarification regarding xylazine's classification as a schedule VI substance.

Chair Domb advocated to include recommendations for the Massachusetts Attorney General's office to coordinate information sharing and convene stakeholders, including law enforcement, prosecutors, and members of the legal community, on the topic of emerging drug threats, including xylazine scheduling and how to approach xylazine-related cases.

Chair Domb and **Commission Keenan** advocated to include law enforcement throughout various recommendations.

Commissioner Kimmel advocated to adjust recommendations to require consistent reporting of toxicology results.

Commissioner Davis and **Chair Domb** advocated to clarify the definition of first responders to include fire personnel.

C. Outreach & Treatment - PowerPoint Slides

Gabe Adams-Keane presented PowerPoint slides on key findings and recommendations included in the final report regarding outreach and treatment.

Commissioner Gates advocated to expand recommendations for target audiences to include healthcare providers, particularly nursing and pharmacy, with less understanding or awareness of xylazine.

Commissioner Donaghue shared thanks for the section's recommendations and highlighted recommendations regarding family and community awareness.

Chair Domb highlighted the importance of training and outreach to providers in this section's recommendations for the benefit of people who use drugs and their families, friends, and community members, who should be able to expect providers are well trained in these topics.

D. Education & Training - PowerPoint Slides

Jessica Bresler presented PowerPoint slides on key findings and recommendations included in the final report regarding education and training.

Chair Domb noted that firefighters should be included among first responders.

Commissioner Gates asked for clarification on recommendations regarding education and training databases. **Jessica Bresler** explained the recommendation.

Commissioner Donaghue asked about recommendations regarding stigma around receiving care at halfway houses with xylazine wounds. **Jessica Bresler** explained recommendations included in the written report. **Chair Domb** suggested a specific recommendation for ensuring and providing access to care for individuals with wounds.

Chair Domb advocated to adjust recommendations to encourage clinicians to share knowledge with referral networks, and highlighted the need for accurate and timely information sharing to ensure access to care.

Chair Domb advocated to include a recommendation to establish a taskforce on emerging drug contaminants to ensure access to consistent, accurate information that is evidence-based and stigma-free, as well as to avoid the proliferation of misinformation. **Commissioner Xiarhos, Commissioner Donaghue, Commissioner Gates, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Keenan** noted their support. **Commissioner Donaghue** noted that such a taskforce should not limit its work to contaminants, but to the drug supply more broadly as new chemicals are introduced. **Commissioner Davis** and **Commissioner Keenan** noted their support.

Commissioner Kimmel noted resources he had shared in the meeting chat regarding publicly available data on substance use and drug trends. **Jessica Bresler** noted the resources citations in the written report.

Commissioner Donaghue recommended adding recommendations for raising awareness about myths related to treatment specifically wound care and how transitional housing may foster a supportive environment for assisting individuals in getting care. **Chair Domb** expressed support for this approach as a way to close outreach and treatment gaps and other barriers that exist.

4. Next Steps and Discussion

Following the conclusion of the presentation and commissioner feedback, **Chair Domb** thanked both Commissioners and Commission staff for their participation and hard work. Prior to adjourning, **Chair Domb** discussed the timeline and process for Commissioners to submit feedback on the draft report, to be sent by the end of the week, prior to the next public meeting of the Commission on March 9, 2026.

At 11:55am, **Chair Domb** requested a motion to **ADJOURN** the meeting. **Commissioners Donaghue** so motioned and **Davis** seconded. The meeting adjourned.