Mock Meeting Script

Hello, thank you for meeting with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am the (position/organization). We are in Tallahassee today with a group of over 100 adults and 50 youth participating in Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Advocacy Day.

As prevention and drug policy professionals, our mission is to prevent substance use, increase access to care, and promote and encourage sustained recovery. It is vital to us that the strategies we support in these areas are evidence based, and driven by data and research.

Although there are many drug demand reduction efforts we are working on, today we are focused on raising awareness on several specific issues and we have included one-pagers on each of these issues that are sourced with talking points that we will leave behind with you today.

The first area of concern is the influx of THC Delta 8 and similar products being sold over the counter in our neighborhoods. As you can see in the one pager, these products are designed to be appealing to youth, and being sold over the counter leads many to believe they are safe for use. The impacts of use are like those of Delta 9 THC, the components of the marijuana plant that gets you high and in large doses, can result in respiratory depression and severe sedation. There is little regulation of these products and left unchecked, they will continue to pose a threat to our youth.

The next issue is supporting peer support. A peer support worker is someone with the lived experience of recovery from a mental health condition, substance use disorder, or both. They provide non-clinical, strengths-based support and work to compliment, not replace, or duplicate the role of therapists, case managers or other members of a treatment team. There are many benefits of peer support including reducing stigma, recidivism, and relapse rates and increasing treatment outcomes. Currently there are several serious barriers to becoming a certified peer support specialist and we are looking for support in reducing those.

The last issue we want to briefly discuss is primary prevention. Decades of research show addiction is both preventable and treatable. Primary prevention in substance abuse refers to strategies aimed at preventing the onset of substance use or abuse before it occurs. Ninety percent of all individuals with substance use dependence started using before the age of 18, and half started before the age of 15. ­ For this reason, prevention MUST be a critical component of state and local drug demand reduction strategies. We understand that there is a lot of money coming in from the opioid settlements and we urge you to push for a certain percentage of those funds to be dedicated to primary prevention strategies.

I know we threw a lot at you in this meeting and don’t expect you to remember it all which is why we have these great resources to leave behind. Please count on us to assist in providing you additional information on these or any drug related issues as you continue through session.