

# Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

## Join Together Atlantic County

November 5, 2020 3:00 – 4:15pm

Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

**In Attendance:** Chief Bruce DeShields & Sgt. Jen Cugini (Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office), Laurie Smith, Bob Zlotnick, Amber Cutano & Brian Wilson (JTAC/APR), Dorothy Bowker (Retired-EHT Schools/Eagle Academy), Jen Pielhau (Atlantic County Municipal Alliance), Sean Kolins (Seabrook), Dylan Wulderk (AtlantiCare Foundation), Assemb. John Armato (NJ State Leg), Joe Bunting (Bunting Family Pharmacy), Georgett Watson & Rachel Campbell (South Jersey AIDS Alliance), Lindsey Komar (Hope One & AC LEAD), Dr. Kifle Mihrete (Atlantic City Health Depart.).

Laurie opened the meeting, welcoming the attendees and introductions were made.

Minutes from the July meeting were approved via email, if anyone did not have a chance to review them and see a change, email Laurie. We did not have a meeting in September due to the JTAC full coalition retreat. The minutes are posted on the JTACNJ.org website. Laurie also sent the JTAC Updates email earlier today, fliers from that email will be referenced in the meeting.

### **Updates:**

**Grant Updates:** Federal Grants-DFC (Drug Free Communities Grant) and CARA specific to opioid prevention have been moved from SAMHSA to the CDC. We are still waiting for the Notice of Award for the DFC grant but we were notified it is coming later than normal. For the transfer to the CDC we have attended several virtual trainings.

Opiate and Athlete prevention grant- We have placed ads in the Glory Days online athlete magazine as well as banner ads on their website. We are also planning a workshop with several prerecorded 15-20 minute presentations including one from Sgt. Jen Cugini, Joe Bunting, and Don Rogers among others. We are prerecording them since the dates for practices are all different for each school and some students are in attendance, hybrid or virtual. Prerecorded presentations allow the coaches and athletic directors to have students watch them based on their schedules. The videos will also be available for parents to watch. We did discuss having the opportunity for people to ask questions live but that would not work with this setup so Brian came up with the idea that questions can be asked through our website and then posted on the website for all to see. This setup is best because we are not sure if there will even be indoor Winter sports due to COVID. Recordings of the presentations will begin in two weeks. We previously printed a toolkit for this grant and continue to provide technical assistance.

**AC LEAD Program:** Chief DeShields reported the program is continuing, they had three graduates this past year however due to COVID things have slowed down. Recovery Court is still mostly virtual.

**Hope One:** Hope One has served 722 people in treatment as well as with referrals. We continue to expand the program with continuum of care linkage to treatment and IOP and have done a lot of transporting of clients as well as collaborating with other agencies to help transport people to treatment. With sober living we have been doing case management and started weekend on call shifts.

The new Hope One bus has been going out more frequently, we are still going out 2-3 times a week during the day and twice at night. Laurie asked if the number of people they have referred to treatment has been reduced compared to last year due to COVID and staff working from home? Lindsey said the numbers have actually gone up, the total number from last year was 1,229 for the whole year, as of now they are at 722 so she thinks the end of the year total will be a little higher for 2020.

**Narcan Trainings/Deployments:** There were 358 law enforcement Narcan deployments as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, this number is just for law enforcement deployments in Atlantic County not ambulance, EMS or EMT's. Out of 358 deployments, 327 were successful, and there were 31 fatalities. As of October 30<sup>th</sup>, there have been 94 deaths so far this year but the numbers are 4-6 months behind due to the time it takes for the Medical Examiner's reports. Last year there were at 125 fatalities so the numbers will probably surpass last year's total

Lindsey reported Hope One is doing a lot of Narcan trainings, 973 so far this year. With the Rowan University grant we have been going into the community with an overdose response team, providing resources and Narcan to individuals who overdosed but refused to go to the hospital, information is given to them and their family members. Laurie asked when you do Narcan training do you give them Narcan or prescription? Lindsey said they give them Narcan and it is being scanned and tracked along with answers to several questions to be put into a database for Rowan to track statistics.

Laurie emailed the Urban Treatment Narcan training flier earlier today.

Georgett reported South Jersey AIDS Alliance gives out Narcan on Tuesdays and Fridays through their syringe access program so it is being given directly to those who are actively using. SJ AIDS Alliance gave out 1,033 Narcan kits Jan-Oct and 200 kits were given out in October.

Jen Pielhau reported the county program will be discussed in the coming weeks, there is some Narcan leftover from the Alliance program. There will also be Narcan available through the Chapter 51 program funds, she will know more in the coming weeks.

Joe Bunting with Bunting Family Pharmacy was one of the pharmacies distributing Narcan on the statewide pharmacy distribution day, they received 120 doses to distribute but they only gave out 12. He received several calls from local physicians who wanted it for themselves or their staff and he explained they were not one of the groups it was being distributed to this day. They did post the information about the distribution event on social media and their website as well as posters were hung for patients and sent to physician offices to send their patients over that day. The state came in a couple of times that day to see how many had been dispensed and after the event they came back and took the leftover doses. Georgett shared that 72,000 doses were given out throughout the state. Laurie said sometimes the lower numbers with an event like that may be that Narcan is more available at different locations for people to access. It happens with the drop off boxes, when police departments see a decrease in the number of meds being dropped off it could be due to more locations for people to dispose of medications and more Deterra being distributed throughout the county and not due to people once again keeping their medications for a long time.

**Brochure for Narcan Reversals:** As noted in the last meeting minute's the brochure had been sent to the state and they once again wanted to make several changes, this was after changes were made they requested previously. A meeting was held between the state, the Atlantic County Prosecutor's office, Assemb. Armato and Laurie Smith. Chief DeShields reported at that meeting and we had a chance to

explain that the brochure was to be given to people who refused to go to the hospital after an overdose. He was happy to announce we received approval for the brochure, it has been printed and will be distributed at the Chief's Association meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month.

Opioid Overdose Recovery Program (OORP) at AtlantiCare: Dylan said they are still continuing services, they have been in discussions due to COVID regarding the number of people who refuse to go to the hospital since the program is designed for patients who come into the emergency room. They are looking at innovative ways to link recovery specialists with people who do not come into the ER.

**Opioid Town Hall:** On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Chief DeShields, Scot Gras of AtlantiCare, Angela Conover from the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ and Laurie Smith participated in a Radio Opioid Town Hall Meeting. The event was moderated by Harry Hurley and Bob Zlotnick. We did cover statistics for Atlantic County but we mostly highlighted what the different organizations are doing in Atlantic County. As you know we were planning for an in-person event with Shore Medical Center back in March which was cancelled due to COVID and the state shut down. We will plan another event in-person in 2021. The October 13<sup>th</sup> radio town hall can be heard through a link on our JTAC website.

**Pharmacy/Veterinarian/Hospice Outreach:** Each year we visit each of the pharmacies, veterinarians and hospice organizations. We briefly meet with them and talk about the coalition and discuss properly securing and disposing of medication. We distribute to them rack cards, posters, magnets that have proper securing and disposing information for their patients and clients. We also offer Detera drug deactivation disposal bags to them. If they want to join us in distributing information we ask them to sign a pledge that they will distribute the information.

Pharmacies- We distributed 4,900 rack cards, 47,000 stickers, 2,500 magnets, 48 posters and 2,500 bags of Detera, visiting 55 pharmacies and 39 signed the pledge. Dylan handled the 5 pharmacies within AtlantiCare and Dylan will get those pledge forms to Brian.

Veterinarians- We visited 19 veterinarian offices, 13 signed pledge forms, we distributed 1,500 rack cards 750 magnets 800 bags of Detera and 45 posters.

Hospice Organizations- We do not visit them individually anymore because they now reach out to us throughout the year when they need more materials. Previously there were 8 or 9 hospice organizations but some have closed and we now have 6 organizations in the county. We mailed them letters with information about the project as a reminder to reach out if they need more materials. As a result of the mailing, 4 contacted us, they signed the pledge forms and we distributed 400 rack cards, 200 magnets, 12 posters and 400 Detera bags to them total.

**Prescription Drop Boxes, Detera and Locking Medicine Cabinets:** As part of the pharmacy outreach this year Brian discussed with the smaller pharmacies about having a permanent prescription drop box placed at their location. Brian received information about the MedSafe program from a pharmacy in Cape May County. The coalition would pay for the initial box and liners for a pharmacy. Bunting Family Pharmacy has been wanting a box for several years and this new process went very smoothly. There are a couple different size boxes, and due to the size of the pharmacy we decided to go with the 18-gallon box which costs around \$1600 and includes the first four liners. Once the box is filled the pharmacy calls the company and they have FedEx pick up the medication for disposal. Brian also reached out to five

other smaller pharmacies, they are all interested but unsure how they will cover the cost of the liners that will need to be purchased after the initial JTAC purchase of the four liners are utilized.

Laurie thanked Joe and Brian for all of their hard work getting a permanent prescription drop box in the Bunting Family Pharmacy.

Hamilton Township Police Department- Laurie spoke to Det. Armitage at the DEA Take Back Day about having a box at their police department and the JTAC coalition would pay for the box. Brian made a follow up call to the department and set up a meeting with Det. Armitage and Chief Ciambrone. The department is now doing the paperwork and their DEA waiver form to have a box and we have ordered the box from the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ.

JTAC ordered another 3000 Detera disposal bags in June and just recently ordered 500 more locking medicine cabinets that should be delivered in December.

**Parent Presentations:** Last week Laurie emailed a link for a 15 Minute Child Break webinar from the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ. The presentation is 24 minutes long and can be viewed by parents until January 31, 2021. We also have two more resilient parenting workshops “How Best to Support Youth in a Virtual Environment” scheduled, one on November 13th and the other on December 11<sup>th</sup>. This is the same workshop for parents being offered twice and the presenters are Dr. Lori Desautels from Butler University and Michael McKnight with the NJ Department of Education. We also have an upcoming underage drinking presentation for parents, information regarding this presentation will be sent on Thursday with the JTAC Updates/Member News.

**School Resiliency Training:** We continue to send the schools information and provide technical assistance. In 2021 we look forward to having a follow-up training to the two 3-day trainings that were held this past summer. We will also be holding a training just for administrators once everything with the schools is back on track

### **New Business:**

**Overdose Fatality Review Teams:** Jen Pielhau informed the group of a grant Atlantic County received for a new initiative, Overdose Fatality Review Teams. Other counties across the state have teams in year 2 and those counties will be mentoring counties that just received the grant, there are now 18 teams throughout the state. The grant is to a team to do a social autopsy on an overdose decedent to find gaps in the system of where that person could have been helped and then make recommendations for organizational or government policies. Several members of the Opioid Task Force wrote letter to support for the grant proposal and she wanted to let the group know they did receive it and are working on the details of the teams. The state will have trainings for the grant and the team will be getting together once a month with information on a decedent. They will then analyze that information and make recommendations. The grant is for one year and they are not sure if there will be additional funding. In addition to the county receiving the grant the Atlantic City Health Department also received the grant specifically for Atlantic City and Jen turned the discussion over to Dr. Mihrete. Dr. Mihrete introduced himself to the group and said he looks forward to working with collaboratives. Laurie introduced who was on the call to Dr. Mihrete. Laurie also stated if they ever need to hold a meeting after the OTF meeting they could coordinate that in the future. Assemb. Armato asked Jen to reach out

if they see any ideas of legislation that could help the epidemic. He also asked how they will have access to the autopsy report. Jen said they will have a letter of agreement with medical examiner's office and the ME's office will be part of the review team. Assemb. Armato also asked the length of time before an autopsy report is released? Chief DeShields mentioned it can take 3 to 4 months to get results returned to them. Jen said she believes they want to look at overdose decedents within the last 2-3 years, looking mostly at newer overdose data. The state has a questionnaire that will be given to each team member to help find information regarding the history of the decedent. HIPAA information will be addressed, agreements will need to be signed. This model is used by other states for similar issues. Dorothy asked what the team looks like, will it include family interviews? Dorothy stated she is very interested in the program. Jen said the team is very specific about who they will contact to gather information, social workers through the state will be interviewing family members. The questionnaires are a part of a universal format that has already been developed. Jen is looking forward to seeing the involvement of the project. The program started October 1<sup>st</sup>. Dorothy offered her assistance in any way to help with the project. Dylan congratulated both the Atlantic County and Atlantic City Health Departments for receiving the grant.

**Physician Outreach:** Previously this project was done in-person, similar to a pharmaceutical rep going into a doctor's office, JTAC staff would go into a physician's office and present information about opioid prevention and medication security and disposal. Due to COVID this project will not be done in-person this year. Amber explained to the group a letter was written about the project and the mailing will include a prescriber guide from the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ, CRAFFT survey questions regarding underage drinking, medication disposal and security information and information regarding the Atlantic County Quit Center (tobacco). If an office has a group of physicians, one packet will be sent for the whole office in hopes the office manager will disseminate the information. We normally do around 25 offices each year in-person but since we are mailing the information this year we will be able to do over one hundred packets.

**Faith Based Outreach:** Brian reported in the past JTAC had faith-based organizations meeting on a regular basis, we are going to recreate that program and are having a meeting for faith-based organizations on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. We emailed/mailed information to over 130 faith-based organizations in Atlantic County. The information has also been shared on our website and through social media. If anyone knows of any organizations who would like more information please let us know.

**Involuntary Transport/Commitment Laws:** Previously this group has discussed the Florida Marchman Act, where a family can have someone involuntarily committed for treatment purposes. Bob Zlotnick's son, an EMT in Colorado had told Bob about what they are doing related to the topic. Laurie sent the members information she found online about a week ago. There are three aspects to this discussion: involuntary transport, when someone has overdosed or is intoxicated the person cannot refuse to be taken to hospital because they are deemed under the influence; 72 hour hold if transported to a hospital or another location such as a treatment agency for 72 hours, and the involuntary commitment similar to the Marchman Act. The information that was sent even included the Colorado Springs Fire and Medical Response about involuntary transport refusal is allowed unless the person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Other states have similar laws. Laurie asked if there is any feedback from members if they had a chance to look over the information. Assemb. Armato mentioned that people will say it is a constitutional right to refuse medical transportation. Legislation is being reviewed for possible laws in New Jersey. Bob Zlotnick asked Assemb. Armato if he has anyone in his office that can reach out to the National Conference on State Legislators they may have a white paper on the topic. Assemb.

Armato asked Bob to text him that information. Sean Kolins asked what if the person is deemed dangerous to themselves or others. Assemb. Armato mentioned that is different, yes if they are a danger but who makes that determination. Laurie mentioned that once a person is given Narcan and the Narcan wears off they are then possibly a danger to themselves again and that could be the legality of the danger to themselves. Costs associated with the ambulance transport and emergency room visit is another issue. We can look into other states and legislation over the coming months as to what is being done elsewhere.

**Oregon Legislation:** Laurie shared her screen with an article she had emailed the group regarding Oregon decriminalizing heroin, meth, and other street drugs. Sometimes the links in the emails do not work but she wanted to make sure the group was aware of the passing of that law. Another coalition in the state is sponsoring a virtual workshop on November 18<sup>th</sup> about Portugal's National Drug Policy, and their decriminalization of drugs. This topic has been discussed within this group previously so we wanted to share the latest information.

### **Announcements:**

Partnership Drug Free NJ is still hosting their Knock Out Opioid Abuse webinars, the next one is for pharmacies, Laurie shared the information with the pharmacies and health care employees they work with directly.

JTAC Meeting: JTAC meeting is Tuesday November 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.

SJ AIDS Alliance- Georgett shared information regarding their Buprenorphine program for the clients who access their needle exchange. Laurie will email the information out and include it with the minutes. Rachel mentioned the program previously in another meeting.

Assemb. Armato's bill regarding a prescription for Narcan to be given with each prescription for opioid medication came out of the health committee, it was unanimous and hopefully it will come up this month on the floor for a vote. The number of COVID cases has increased recently even though hospitalizations and deaths have decreased so he was recommending extreme caution and getting flu shots. If you have a question on any ideas for possible legislation please call his office.

Lindsey Komar mentioned an event, Thursday November 12<sup>th</sup> giving away coats and other articles of clothing in Atlantic City. They also have a coat drive going on, if you have any new or gently used coats you would like to donate, please contact Hope One.

Bob will be a guest on a radio show today at 4:30pm on WOND about marijuana legalization.

Laurie emailed information on Smart Approaches to Marijuana live Facebook event Friday at 4:00pm, a municipal alliance reached out about possible prevention ordinances regarding this topic.

### **Next Meeting:**

Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm, virtual. Meeting dates for 2021 were shared. Once we can meet in-person again it will be back at the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office.

**Motion to adjourn the meeting:** Bruce DeShields 1<sup>st</sup>, John Armato 2<sup>nd</sup>, Meeting Adjourned