

Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

Join Together Atlantic County

March 4, 2021 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), Gretchen Halfpenny & Dorothy Bowker (APR/OFRT), Virginia Williams & Dawn Crilley (APR Interns), Jen Pielhau (Atlantic County Substance Abuse Services), Sean Kolins (Seabrook), Dylan Wulderk (AtlantiCare Foundation), Assemb. John Armato (NJ State Leg), Lindsey Komar (Hope One and AC LEAD), Scott Gras (AtlantiCare), Keelin McGee (JBRC), Ed Bertino (Egg Harbor Township Police Dept.), Rachel Campbell (South Jersey AIDS Alliance), Joe Bunting (Bunting Family Pharmacy), Erin McGonigle (All Roads Recovery), Josiah Bunting (Bunting Family Pharmacy)

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

Minutes from the January meeting were approved via email and are posted on the JTACNJ.org website.

Updates:

Grant Updates: Federal Grants-DFC (Drug Free Communities Grant) – Year 8 renewal coming up soon and CARA (opioid prevention) – ending later this year.

Opiate and Athlete prevention grant- State grant – Did five videos for athletes and opioid prevention that have been recorded, and posted on JTAC's website. There have been 57 views so far, we will be doing some more outreach and Laurie will be following up with athletic directors. Sgt. Cugini recommended reaching out to the trainers and Laurie said she will include that in her follow up with the athletic directors.

JTAC Committees: We will be holding marketing, membership and sustainability committee meetings, Laurie will email information out for anyone who is interested. The marketing committee will be putting out a plan for the year that won't just be for opioids but all of grants (underage drinking, marijuana use, etc.). We previously were working on movie theater ads which were put on hold due to a sale of the theater and COVID shutdowns so we will be looking at revisiting this project. Laurie is going to reach out to Lindsey and Chief DeShields about adding Hope One's information to add to the ads.

AC LEAD Program: Lindsey Komar reported the program is continuing, they have one participant right now, she is doing extremely well and wanted to stay in treatment longer. Looking to do trainings with the police departments so they can become more informed about the program.

Hope One: Lindsey Komar reported that Hope One has been super busy and helped get 30 people into treatment last week. They are trying to continue providing case management to all of the clients and follow them through the process. They are still offering Narcan trainings and are currently partnering with Ocean Inc. to help provide much needed transportation services to clients. This partnership has

been very helpful. Most of the weeks with higher numbers are coming from the outreach that they are doing in Atlantic City.

Narcan Trainings/Deployments:

Chief DeShields reported that there were 358 law enforcement Naloxone deployments from Jan 1 – Sept 30, 2020 which is up from the previous year. Out of the 358 deployments, 327 were successful and 31 were fatal. They are still waiting on fourth quarter numbers and will have the drug related death information for the next meeting.

Hope One is available for Narcan trainings, if you are interested, contact Lindsey Komar or Susan Long directly. They are currently looking into training Oxford Houses and police departments. Year-to-date they have had 148 Narcan trainings and did a training for Enlightened Farm the other day.

South Jersey Aids Alliance – Rachel Campbell reported that for the month of January they gave out 199 Narcan kits, 195 for February and 22 so far for March. These kits are being given to syringe access program clients.

Atlantic County Municipal Alliance/Dept. of Health - Jen Pielhau reported there wasn't any new information from the last meeting. They are still available to do virtual trainings, so if anyone is interested please reach out to her. Laurie asked if Jen could get a flyer or blurb about the trainings to her and she would send it out with the Thursday email.

Opioid Overdose Recovery Program (OORP) at AtlantiCare: Dylan Wulderk reported that in 2021 they responded to 58 calls at the 4 county emergency department locations, this is about 30 a month. Whenever it is their EMS, they are sending out recovery specialists from OORP or the STAR team to try to make contact after the fact and get the person into treatment or connect with them for services. They have made contact with 9 refusals so far this year. Dylan heard that the state is looking to broaden that type of program at the state level to do something similar.

Opioid Fatality Review Teams (OFRT): Jen Pielhau gave information about the grant that the County applied for and received along with Atlantic City. This grant is for a team to review the overdose decedents information to see if there are any patterns they can come up with in order to provide resources and information on how to handle and make policy changes moving forward. The county contracted with Atlantic Prevention Resources to provide this program. Dorothy was hired as the coordinator and Gretchen was hired as the facilitator, their duties will overlap and they will be working together to build the team.

So far, the team consists of Brooke Mauriello, data manager, Jen Pielhau, Atl, Cnty. Public Health, Dylan Wulderk, AtlantiCare, Christine Bracey, Shore Medical Center, Mike Santillo and Jesse Dariano, John Brooks Recovery Center, Stephanie Davis, Recovery Centers of America, Jaime Costello, Atl. Cty. Sheriff's Office, Cptn. Chuck DeFebbo, Drug Induced Death Unit, Atl. Cnty. Prosecutor's Office, Patricia Hayek, Victims Witness Unit, Atl. Cnty. Prosecutor's Office, Desiree Gomez Story, social worker, Kevin Wilder, Medical Examiner, and an EMS representative. They are looking to bring a couple more people on board from DCP& P and the schools, Rachel Campbell or someone from SJ Aid's Alliance, police departments (contacted Chief Steinman and Chief Higbee), Dorothy also asked Ed Bertino if he would be interested. They need a multi-disciplinary team but do have a really good core team already.

The kick-off meeting is scheduled for Monday from 3 – 5 p.m. and they will be deciding which days and times they will be meeting monthly. They will be going over forms, the entire process and what everybody's role will be. Dorothy said they will continue to report their progress as they go along. Jen suggested reaching out to Atlantic City Health Department who is running the OFRT for that grant and said she will share their contact information because she thinks they should be on each other's teams. Laurie offered a DCP&P contact for Dorothy, Gretchen did already reach out to them but Laurie will still provide the contact to Dorothy.

Permanent Prescription Drop Boxes: Finalized totals for 2020 is 2,562 pounds for police departments which is really good considering the circumstances surrounding COVID. That brings us to roughly 13,000 pounds from our boxes since 2016. Bob suggested us to do a press release about this amount. JTAC placed 13 boxes, Somers Point suspended the program but Hamilton Township Police Dept. had theirs installed at the end of January.

Brian is currently working with Bellevue Pharmacy in Hammonton. They are very interested and most likely will reach out to Brian in the next week or so with the green light. After he hears from them we will order the box from MedSafe (Sharps Compliance). Their biggest concern was the cost of the liners after the ones we purchase are used. Back in January Brian approached Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals to see if they had any sponsorship programs to assist the smaller independent pharmacies with the cost of the liners for the drop box. Unfortunately, they said they don't have any such programs at this time but they did have an abundance of Deterra available which they ended up donating 5,000 bags to us, this will help offset the cost for getting more liners for the smaller pharmacies.

Deterra: Since we were able to receive the donation from Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, we have plenty of Deterra on hand.

Locking Medicine Cabinets: We restocked and have plenty of locking medicine cabinets available. If anyone is interested in either the Deterra or the medicine lock boxes just reach out to Brian, bwilson@atlprev.org.

School Resiliency Training: They started meeting once a month with school administrators, February meeting had 179 administrators in attendance and the meeting last week had 125. This is done in partnership with Cape Assist so it is offered for both Atlantic and Cape May counties and they did have a couple participants from other counties as well. Some schools who do not already have resiliency teams did have administrators attend, hopefully this will increase the number of schools who attend the 3-day resiliency team trainings that we will be offering over the summer. These teams work on strategies to work with youth who have experienced trauma and changing how the schools work with youth and how discipline is handled. These trainings help the teams be more aware of the trauma our youth are facing. We are partnering with the Atlantic-Cape Vicinage to host a forum to work with juvenile court and focusing on the resiliency and how to work with youth.

Faith Based Outreach: Brian reported that the first JTAC faith-based meeting was held in November and was an overview of the coalition and the different resources we have to offer. The next meeting in January was a Narcan training and the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17 from 10-11 a.m., Carlo Favretto, will be presenting on vaping and the Atlantic Quit Center. We sent a physical mailing and an email to over 130 different faith-based organizations. We will be following up with phone calls and are working hard to build up a core group to come to the meetings.

Stigma/Opioid Resource Fair: Laurie mentioned this at the last meeting and is looking to start a planning committee for this project. We are looking to do a two-part event a couple of weeks apart advertised on the same flyer. The first event will be on stigma as it relates to drug and alcohol misuse as well as Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). The second will be an opioid resource fair like we have done in the past in-person. This will be for any organization in Atlantic County doing anything as it relates to opioid prevention, treatment or recovery and they will have chance to come on to the virtual platform and talk about what they are doing and offer their resources to the community. We usually hold these types of events in the evening to get a bigger turnout but with it being virtual we are still unsure how that will work this time around. Doing this as a virtual event also allows us to record the presentation and share it on our website with anyone who could not attend or even may just not be comfortable attending so we are hoping it will reach more people this way. If anyone is interested in being on the planning committee for these two events, please reach out to Laurie.

Legislation Update: Assemblyman Armato reported that the body brokering bill that he sponsored was passed and signed by the Governor this week. This is a great bill to help weed out the bad players and Assemblyman Armato and Chief DeShields have been talking about different agencies in the county who are bad actors and this bill will help end this practice. There is another bill coming up in committee over the next week or two that will permit medical responders to dispense opioid antidotes without legal ramifications. Assemblyman Armato read the bill for everyone. There is another bill that Assemblyman Armato co-sponsored A-798 that goes to committee next week, it will establish local drug overdose fatality review teams in each county in the state to get a better handle on what is happening in each county. Assemblyman Armato was on a meeting this morning with the governor's conference and they reviewed last year's numbers. Last year there were 3,046 overdose deaths in the state which is roughly about 8 per day and was 25 more deaths than the prior year. We are at 541 overdose deaths so far for 2021 so there is still a lot of work to be done and there are several bills coming up to address this. We would love to look into implementing involuntary transport/commitment laws and Assemblyman Armato has them on his radar but he thinks it is a big task that will be fought against but knows it will save a lot of lives. Laurie shared information about this and JTAC will be working on this internally as a research project to see how this is being done in other states and how we could possibly implement it in New Jersey. Chief DeShields pointed out that another issue with these types of laws is the cost for transport and who will be responsible for it.

Ordinance Packet: Ordinance packet is pretty much ready to go and includes ordinances relating to underage drinking, marijuana prevention, opioid prevention, etc. but due to marijuana legislation, we may have to remove some of the ordinances (private property). We are going to hold off on this for now and may just pull out the ordinances that we can still send but are still waiting for some guidance so we do not send out anything with misinformation.

Spanish Translation Materials/Distribution: We had most of our materials (JTAC brochure, rack cards and posters with medication disposal info, etc.) translated into Spanish and will be distributing them into the Spanish community. These materials are available for distribution, if anyone is interested please contact Laurie or Brian.

Company Newsletters: Brian put together a brief newsletter article that companies can distribute to their staff about proper drug disposal, securing medications and free Detera and locking medicine cabinets. He reached out to some bigger companies like ACUA, Shore Local, Local 54, JFS and Atlantic

County Chamber of Commerce. Brian got some contacts at the casinos and has reached out to them as well (Borgata, Ocean, Golden Nugget, Resorts, Caesar's Entertainment) and hopefully they will put it in their newsletter as well.

New Business:

Anytown Youth Event: The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey and Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield have a theater group who does a play about opioid misuse for high school students. This has been turned into a virtual presentation this year and is available for high schools to watch pre-recorded or as a live event. Laurie showed the promotional video. We will have access to the video version that can be shared with the schools directly, there is a virtual post-play discussion that the actor's breakdown some of the most important facts about opioid misuse, there will be access to four additional learning modules that dig deeper into the show's content and an opportunity for students to schedule a live virtual conversation with the actors. Laurie will be putting this out to the high schools locally and wanted to share it with everyone. Ed mentioned that Angela, the girl who narrates it, is actually the recovery coach who Manchester Police Department uses for the Not Even Once opioid prevention program so Ed has met her and said she does a great job. Laurie is going to move forward with this and will leave it up to the schools on how they would like to offer it to their district. Laurie will share any further information she gets about it with the group.

Announcements:

JTAC Meeting: JTAC full coalition meeting is Tuesday, March 9th, 11:00am

JTAC Thursday Email – Laurie will be sending it out this week but moving forward it will come from Brian bwilson@atlprev.org.

Jewish Family Services (JFS) Program – Pathways to Recovery - Amber reported what Chris Barone had shared at the last JTAC meeting which was: Chris Barone presented about the Pathways to Recovery program. This program is headed by JFS and they have partnered with Atlantic County Workforce Development Board, John Brooks Recovery Center, AtlantiCare, and the Mental Health Association (MHA). The program offers individual and family support for those who have been impacted by opioids. The goal is to identify employment barriers and facilitate community resource connections by providing individual case management to people who are unemployed and/or under employed. Some benefits of the program include license restoration, resume writing, bus pass purchases, interview preparation and money towards professional attire. New to this year's grant is aid to those looking to focus on recovery and guide them in obtaining their Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) certification. In partnership with Enlightened Solutions and John Brooks Recovery Center (JBRC), individuals are assisted with employment with these two organizations once the certification is obtained. Criteria for the program is individual must be 18 or over, an Atlantic County resident, and directly or indirectly (family members) impacted by opioid epidemic. The program has had great success so far. Laurie has Chris' contact information if anyone needs it.

Acenda – Laurie was on a Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (CIACC)/Student Assistant Counselor (SAC) meeting and they discussed Acenda which took over Robin's Nest. They have programs through the Children's System of Care (CSOC) and Division of Children's Protection & Permanency

(DCP&P) and recently received a grant for working with families who have school-aged children who have someone in the family with an opioid use disorder.

Assemblyman Armato – Candidacy information will be in the paper tomorrow and both Caren Fitzpatrick and Assemblyman Armato discuss losing their sons to overdoses in their statements. He just wanted to share how important it is to get the information out there that no matter who you are, this can happen to you and your family and your life.

South Jersey Aid's Alliance – Rachel Campbell shared that the New Jersey Aid's Walk will be held on May 2nd. This event will be held virtually with a small walk on the Atlantic City boardwalk as well. Rachel will share any further information and the flyer with Laurie to share in the Thursday email.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, May 6th at 3:00pm, virtual.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Ed Bertino 1st, Bruce DeShields 2nd, Meeting Adjourned