

Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

Join Together Atlantic County

September 9, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Laurie Smith & Bob Zlotnick, (JTAC/APR), Gretchen Halfpenny & Dorothy Bowker (APR/OFRT), Rachel Campbell (South Jersey AIDS Alliance), Jesse Dariano (All Roads Recovery/JBRC), Scott Gras (AtlantiCare), Chief Bruce DeShields (Atlantic Cnty Prosecutor's Office), Jen Pielhau (Atlantic Cnty Dept. of Substance Abuse Services), Ken Litwak (JBRC), Stacy Samaroo (ACCC/APR Intern).

Lindsey Komar (Hope One and AC LEAD) was unable to attend but emailed Laurie updates.

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

Laurie thanked everyone for attending, we will not be having a JTAC full coalition meeting or November Opioid Task Force meeting because of the JTAC Retreat being held November 9th.

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

Updates:

Grant Updates: Federal Grants-DFC (Drug Free Communities Grant) – completed the year 8 renewal and it was put in August 31st and CARA (opioid prevention) – ending, but we were able to get a no-cost extension to continue to use funding for projects.

Opioid/Athlete Prevention Grant: state grant – Bob state the grant was renewed for 17 counties. Laurie told the group the Partnership for a Drug-Free NJ is partnering with NJSIAA on a program that we will be discussing to have in Atlantic County as part of the Opioid/Athlete prevention grant. After the previous in-person event held several years ago at the Mays Landing Country Club we have continued to provide technical assistance to the schools.

Regional Coalition Grant- state grant- there is additional funding for some new programs. One of the new programs that will be part of this funding is related to over the counter (OTC) medication. Once we have more information we will let everyone know.

Media/Marketing Committee Update: Billboard/Movie Theater PSA- We have 3 billboards up in the county. We currently have a JTAC billboard on the Black Horse Pike specifically regarding medication safety. Movies do seem to be picking up so we may look into doing movie theater ads in January. Lindsey Komar and Laurie will work out using the Hope One phone number for the movie theater ads to help connect people to treatment.

LEAD Program: Laurie read an update from Lindsey who was unable to attend today. No one is in enrolled in the program at this time, but word is getting out there.

Hope One: Laurie also read Lindsey's update for Hope One. The current numbers for Hope One are 710 people into treatment, 582 Narcan trainings year-to-date, for the month of August they had 110 call-ins just to dispatch, and have had 218 DMI responses year-to-date.

Chief DeShields reported they did receive another year of funding for salaries for several employees, because of the grant funding they have been able to run the program almost 5 days a week with day and evening hours. They have gotten 2032 people into treatment since the grants started. There has been an increase in overdoses in the county, so we still need to be continuing this work.

Laurie asked if the overdose numbers have Fentanyl involved and Chief Deshields said yes, just about everything, including cocaine, has been found to contain Fentanyl.

Gretchen asked if Hope One distributes Fentanyl test strips and/or syringes. Chief DeShields said no they are doing Narcan training and passing out the Naloxone.

We know there is an issue with distributing Fentanyl testing strips. Bob stated that strips are legal until they are used and then they have drug residue on them and become illegal. Laurie asked if you are allowed to get a waiver from AG office to distribute them, Chief DeShields said that is something that would have to be researched by legislatures.

Narcan Trainings/Deployments: Hope One – Lindsey and Hope One staff are available to do training, anyone who is interested should reach out.

South Jersey AIDS Alliance – Rachel reported that year-to-date they have dispensed 1,565 Narcan kits and have 457 self-reported saves. They distribute syringes and Fentanyl test strips as part of the Syringe Access Program (SAP), which will end October 12th. They are trying to see if there are any pharmacies that do supply syringes, to send clients elsewhere when the program ends. Scott mentioned he has been told if someone requests them then a pharmacy will give them syringes. Rachel said not every pharmacy has to give them out, they did go to a pharmacy and were told the pharmacy was out of them. They are trying to find locations that will give out syringes that they can send clients to, and Laurie offered a list of the pharmacies for Rachel but she said they have a list already of pharmacies that sell syringes. However, when clients go in to try and get them they are told they can't buy them, she is just trying to find pharmacy that will actually provide them to clients.

Atlantic County Department of Substance Abuse Services- Jen said they are still able to provide Narcan and training. They have setup a monthly community-based training with Jesse and All Roads Recovery. Jen will be contacting Jesse about additional training. They are looking to expand their program, they are expecting to receive a large amount of Narcan in the next couple months, due to some additional funding. Laurie asked if there is a flier for the training at All Roads Recovery, they are working on a flier with the new dates. Jesse said they also post on social media and created a Facebook event. Some people are not registering and just showing up. Jen said they want to get the training out and will even offer the training if there are not many registered.

Laurie asked Jen if she knows if Urban Treatment Assoc. is still offering training once a month at the Stockton ETTC. Jen is not sure, the employee who was setting them up left the agency.

OORP: Scott reported the annual Narcan Distribution Day was held on Aug 31st, he does not have a total count of distribution but he knows that he did 40 Narcan trainings to AtlantiCare employees. Scott also reported an increase of overdoses in the county on a daily basis.

Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT): Dorothy reported for the Atlantic County OFRT. Monday will be the last meeting of the grant period, but they are expecting continued funding for a second year. They have done 17 cases, there was an additional case but it is still under investigation. They are working on an end-of-year report for the grant and the 4th quarter report. They have had great participation from the members of the team. They are looking into expanding, getting the CMO involved and hopefully a Chief of Police, which may be difficult. Laurie asked when will the recommendations be available or published for the group to view. After the meeting on Monday, they will have another meeting to address that on Tuesday. The end-of-year report will include recommendations. They are meeting with Staff Sgt. Williams from the Army National Guard, regarding a database the National Guard has to input collected deidentified data. Jen thinks there will probably be a state-wide report that will be shared.

Permanent Prescription Drop Boxes/Deterra/Locking Medicine Cabinets: Bob and Laurie have been delivering locking medicine cabinets to different organizations and we are still getting calls for Deterra. We did plan on ordering more locking medicine cabinets but the cost, even for our bulk order, has now doubled to \$70 each. We are waiting to see if the price can be adjusted before more are ordered. We still have 400-500 left in stock. We have several organizations throughout the county that are now “depositories” for the cabinets. We deliver 15-20 at a time to one location and they are then storing them and distributing to clients and families as needed.

School/Community Resiliency Training: We held the 3-day school training over the summer at Cape May Regional HS. Currently, we are co-sponsoring, 4 Wednesday trainings, for staff working with grades Pre-K to Elementary. We have already held two of the trainings and have had around 30 teachers at each. The trainings are held virtually from 3-4pm on Wednesdays. Anyone can go on the training who works with Pre-K to Elementary youth, and if you are unable to attend live you can still register and have the recordings emailed to you.

We held a virtual one-day community resiliency training in August, it was going to be hybrid, but with the increase in COVID cases we moved the training to a completely virtual format. On October 14th and 15th, we will be co-sponsoring a 2-day, virtual, free training from 9am-3pm each day. A save the date was sent and a brochure is forthcoming. The training is for any community organizations in Atlantic County and it will be focusing on adult resiliency as well as youth resiliency. We increased our Zoom account to accommodate up to 500 people, so there is more than enough room.

Faith Based Outreach: At the July faith-based meeting, the faith-based organizations were invited to present on different programs, events and resources they have pertaining to substance misuse. The organizations offer a lot of resources, including alternative activities for youth like basketball programs open to the whole community. The information will be added to the faith-based resource page on the JTAC website. There are spiritual recovery programs offered by John Brooks Recovery Center and RCA already listed.

Opioid Resources for Website: A webpage has already been created, listing opioid resources. We are working on adding more information and making it live, it will be available in the next couple months.

Stigma Campaign Fall: Laurie, Jen, Dylan Wulderk and Sean Kolins, previously met and discussed continuing a stigma-free campaign into the fall. Counties, such as Bergen and Monmouth, who have been working on a campaign have created a toolkit. A copy was shared with the coalition and an intern has been working on adapting it to be for Atlantic County. One of the Stockton Service Learning class groups, will be working on a campaign on campus and in the community this semester. The summer intern also put together a list of national resources for us to review. One of the first tasks the Stockton students would be working on is getting a resolution completed by the commissioners in support of a stigma free county.

Dorothy asked if stigma is being addressed with clients by treatment providers. Ken responded that he is always addressing stigma with all of the work he does whether it is with clients, or treatment staff. Working in admissions, he does see people using stigmatizing words when referring to themselves and when talking about how others see them. He said he tries to use non-stigmatizing words and cannot guarantee all clinicians do that, but that he always tries to be positive and use words that are not stigmatizing. Dorothy said it is something that she hears a lot in regards to people who are suffering from the disease of addiction. They do not know what services are available to them and they get stuck by stigma and end up not seeking treatment and she is wondering how we can improve that. Ken said it should be part of treatment.

Pharmacy, Veterinarian, Hospice Outreach: Of the 57 pharmacies in Atlantic County, outreach was completed to 50 of them. Staff distributed Deterra, as well as, medication disposal and safety information. Once hired, new staff will work on outreach to the veterinarians. A letter will be sent to the hospice organizations instead of calling or visiting them in-person. The hospice orgs. consistently call us when they run out of materials, this past week two hospice orgs reached out for more Deterra and it was delivered.

NJPN Peer Recovery Summit: Dorothy reported every case worked on had Fentanyl, and at the Peer Recovery Training by NJPN, it was stated that heroin takes time to process and fentanyl is synthesized and it's a quicker process, and it's being put in everything. Laurie mentioned the online workshops will be available for several months. Even if you had not participated you could still register and watch the workshops, the conference was free and had excellent presentations.

Ken commented that the half-life for fentanyl is longer than heroin, and when people begin using Suboxone they sometimes have Fentanyl in their system and go into precipitated withdrawal. They get sick immediately due to the Fentanyl still in their system and this issue is making people shy away from using Suboxone.

New Business:

Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day, October 6th: Stacy, our ACCC intern is working on that project, getting the proclamation samples sent out to the municipalities. It will be mostly virtual due to COVID, we are doing outreach to the athletic directors, faith-based organizations, and information will be mailed to physicians. They are sending a packet to every private pharmacy. Even though we aren't doing the doorknockers this year, 2000 of them were dropped off to Stockton, they will be putting them on the students' residential doors. If you need any information, you can reach out to Stacy, she is using the intern@atprev.org email address. An email will be sent to all coalition members regarding the project.

Stockton StoryCorps Project: In past semesters, students would interview people affected by a substance use disorder (someone who is in recovery or someone who lost a family member). The interviews are then posted to the Library of Congress, on the StoryCorps website. On our website under Interventions, you can hear some of the recordings previously done by former students. This semester four students are working on the project, but they won't be conducting these interviews for at least a month. Laurie will be reaching out to the group if we need volunteers to be interviewed. Each student must interview two people.

Announcements:

JTAC full coalition meeting, Tuesday, September 14th, 11:00am. A reminder and agenda will be sent on Monday.

The coalition is hiring, if anyone knows someone who is looking for employment, please reach out to Bob.

APR is having their 13th Annual Meg Linzner Memorial Bocce Tournament fundraiser on October 9th, all ages are welcome. Breakfast and lunch will be provided and there will also be a raffle. It will be at Beacon Church in Galloway, masks will be required. The event is \$50 per person or \$200 for a team of four. Sponsors, volunteers and raffle donations are welcomed.

Ken shared that John Brooks Recovery Center has expanded their hours of admission and methadone dosing from 5pm-10:30pm, and admissions until 11PM.

Jesse on October 2nd at 10am, there is a BBQ Beach Bash, called The Recovery Month After Party, this for anyone in recovery or anyone in the recovery field. Those who are interested can set up a table and network, cornhole, football, and things of that nature will be played. It is a fundraiser and donations are welcomed. The donations would go towards events and activities for the clients. Jen asked if they could setup Narcan trainings that day, Jesse said yes and Jen will reach out to him.

Next Meeting:

Coalition Retreat November 9th, location and time TBD.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: 1st Dorothy, 2nd Chief DeShields, Meeting Adjourned