

# Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

## Join Together Atlantic County

January 6, 2022

Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

**In Attendance:** Laurie Smith, Bob Zlotnick, Stacy Samaroo, Bria Ravello (JTAC/APR), Gretchen Halfpenny & Dorothy Bowker (APR/OFRT), Jesse Dariano (All Roads Recovery/JBRC), Scott Gras (AtlantiCare), Chief Bruce DeShields (Atlantic Cnty Prosecutor's Office), Brian Wilson (Atlantic Cnty Municipal Alliance), Ptlm. Ed Bertino (EHT Police), Tonia Ahern (Mental Health Assoc of NJ, NCAAR), Dr Kifle Mihrete (Atlantic City Dept. of Health, OFRT), Lindsey Komar (Hope One & AC LEAD).

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

Minutes from the September meeting were approved via email and will be posted on the JTACNJ.org website. We did not have an Opioid Task Force meeting in November because the JTAC Retreat was held and OTF members were invited to participate.

### **Updates:**

**Grant Updates:** DFC (Drug Free Communities) federal Grant, Opioid/Athlete Prevention Grant state grant and Regional Coalition Grant state grant with Cape Assist, there are no specific internal updates. We will discuss interventions for these grants later on in the meeting.

**Media/Marketing Committee Update:** Billboard/Movie Theater PSA- The opioid billboard on the Black Horse Pike was still up last time Laurie checked, we paid for 3 months, but it will stay up until another company takes over that advertising space. We had been holding off on the movie theater ad, however, Stacy and Bria will be working on this in the near future. Bria will be editing the Glory Days ad in the coming months.

**LEAD Program:** Currently no one is in the program and they are outreaching to the police departments to make sure they have information on the program. 4 individuals completed the program, Lindsey has spoken to two of them and both are doing very well personally and professionally.

**Hope One:** Lindsey also gave the update for Hope One. The current numbers for Hope One for 2021, were 1,133 people linked into treatment for a total of 2,455. Someone is always available on call including Friday nights and over the weekend. There were 886 Narcan trainings last year and 343 DMI responses. For those who don't know, Hope One helps link people with a substance use disorder and/or mental health disorder to treatment.

**Narcan Trainings/Deployments:** Brian reported that Atlantic County Substance Abuse Services is doing multiple trainings throughout the county, and have an ongoing plan with All Roads Recovery Center to do training there once a month. He will also be going out with Hope One. Brian is currently working on training security officers at Caesars Casino. Please contact Brian if you know of any

businesses or individuals who may be interested in Narcan training. Laurie posted the flier on the screen for the Atlantic County program and will email it out to the group in the Thursday email later today.

Laurie reported that Urban Treatment Associates, who previously conducted one in-person training a month, at Stockton University's ETTC building is now doing the training virtually. Participants will be mailed a Narcan kit after they complete the training. Laurie will provide information in the Thursday email.

Chief DeShields reported from DMI, overdoses in Atlantic County have increased, from December 1-Jan 5, 103 reported overdoses in Atlantic County. He does not have any breakdown of Narcan saves and can provide that later.

Lindsey asked Chief DeShields, if juveniles are accepted into the AC LEAD program. Chief DeShields will check, he mentioned juvenile cases are adjudicated very quickly and a plan would have to be in place ahead of time.

**Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT):** Dorothy reported for the Atlantic County OFRT. Dorothy provided slides about the first year of the program and the slides will be shared with the opioid task force members after the meeting.

Lindsey asked if Fentanyl test strips can be distributed? Dorothy said it has been a gray area, in NJ the test strips are deemed as drug paraphernalia one they have been used and the strip has drug residue on it. They are trying to find out more info to clarify the issue, and also looking into getting the law changed to either make them legal or figure out ways an organization can distribute them legally. Tonia commented they have been looking into that as part of the legislation for the needle exchange program, adding testing strips into the legislation. Laurie asked if there is an attorney general waiver that an organization can apply for to be allowed to distribute the test strips? Dorothy said she is not sure if that is allowed and more research needs to be done.

Lindsey asked about Sober Living Housing that Dorothy mentioned in her presentation. Dorothy said some issues need to be clarified such as how clients will be able to continue to pay for the housing. Tonia said Oxford Houses are federal and are ran differently than the ones that are state certified. There are stipulations for the housing and inspections. All houses are supposed to be licensed, some that are currently not licensed are working on licensing.

Laurie asked if the executive committee for recommendations is just for the Atlantic County OFRT or is the committee statewide? Dorothy said it is for the Atlantic County team, and that each OFRT is supposed to have its own executive committee.

Dr. Mihrete reported for the Atlantic City OFRT. They have reviewed 26 cases so far from Atlantic City, and an annual report has been shared with members and with the state. Most substances are being reported, with the highest reported being alcohol and Fentanyl.

**Recovery Centers:** Laurie has added the recovery centers as an ongoing agenda item. Jesse reported, 662 1-on-1, throughout the entire John Brooks recovery coaches. 374 new interactions with people, not including those they maintained engagement with. He will send group schedules to keep the members updated.

**Permanent Prescription Drop Boxes/Deterra/Locking Medicine Cabinets:** Laurie reached out to the police departments that have the JTAC permanent prescription drop boxes to get their total pounds collected for 2021. So far, she has heard back from 7 of the departments and the total pounds of medication collected in 2021 is 1,367 lbs. A final total will be available at the March meeting. Galloway PD called because something was jammed in their box and it is now defected, we do have an extra box and are just waiting on a callback to setup a time to deliver it.

We still have a lot of Deterra that we are giving out when it is requested. We will need to order more locking medicine cabinets in the future. The price of the locking medicine cabinet has gone up, it used to be between \$30-\$40 each, now it will cost us \$100 each. Stacy did come up with a list of alternate cabinets, which we will go through and decide which ones we can order. We have about 300 still in storage to give out, but when we order more it may look different.

**School/Community Resiliency Training:** We held a 2-day resiliency training October 14-15th, and had 50-57 people in attendance each day. It was available for community organizations in Atlantic County, in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department, the Sheriff's Foundation and Stockton University. The Safe Community Coalition wanted to do one specifically with faith-based organizations, on May 2nd or May 9th. It will be a two-hour evening presentation for faith-based organizations. In the summer they would like to have a longer training in-person, having a longer training in-person will depend on COVID. Laurie will share that information once it becomes available.

**Faith Based Outreach:** Stacy and Bria will begin an outreach to the faith-based organizations again once they get situated.

**Opioid Resources for Website:** Brian had started this page, it is on hold at this time, Bria will be working on this in the next couple of weeks. It will be a list of resources specifically for opioid prevention, treatment and recovery services.

**Stigma Campaign Fall:** A group of Stockton students worked on an ending stigma campaign this past semester, we were planning on doing a presentation to the Commissioners at the end of the semester regarding an Atlantic County Stigma-Free Toolkit, and an Atlantic County Stigma-Free Campaign. We found out there was a resolution previously done regarding stigma and Hope One's initiation, and a toolkit was created by Kathleen Quish, but it only included information on mental health stigma. We met with a lot of different organizations and had 2 meetings discussing what local organizations have been doing regarding stigma. One of the Stockton students, Laurie, Brian Wilson, and Kathleen Quish did go before one of the commissioner's committees and informed them of the collaboration that was taking place and the current plans for the project. The next meeting is being scheduled to include a representative from Bergen County to present on their project and how they focused on the different sectors. An invitation to the meeting will be sent to all coalition members.

**Pharmacy, Veterinarian, Hospice Outreach:** The pharmacy outreach was completed and Laurie recently dropped off more Deterra for Dylan for their pharmacies at AtlantiCare. The Hospice Outreach will be a mailing in the next couple months. The Veterinarian Outreach is in person, so waiting until warmer weather. Bria and Stacy will be working on these projects that still need to be completed.

**Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day October 6th:** Stacy reported, we emailed 22 towns and received 15 proclamations. We emailed the faith-based toolkit and other resources to 90 faith-based organizations. We emailed 17 athletic directors and coaches the information for athletic events. Information was also

emailed to 192 people including JTAC members and other community organizations. This was in addition to the 2000 physical doorknockers that were placed on student residential rooms at Stockton which was previously reported at the September meeting. Laurie reminded everyone that the project was moved to a more virtual format due to COVID, the materials sent to the schools included announcements to be aired during games. Laurie thanked Stacy for doing such a great job on outreaching to all the different sectors.

**StoryCorps Project:** This past semester we once again had Stockton students interview people who were affected by substance use for the StoryCorps website. Each student had to conduct 2 interviews, they all knew people that had been affected and that they could use for their interviews. There was an issue with getting everything uploaded to the StoryCorps Library of Congress website, however, Laurie has the interviews, and we will be working to get the interviews uploaded.

**Not Even Once Program:** Ptlm. Ed Bertino reported the EHT High School Not Even Once Program will begin again on January 31<sup>st</sup> and will be held every Monday of a full week of school until April 11<sup>th</sup>. The program is now being presented to juniors instead of seniors. The program was developed by the Manchester Township Police Dept and it is taught by police officers similar to the DARE program. It is based on 6 lessons, sharing personal experiences, and Jeremiah Simmons story.

Most of the people involved are from EHT, so it's relatable to the students, the 5 police instructors are all graduates of EHTS. Other schools and departments are not doing the program and the EHT officers can't go into other schools to do it. Scott asked if there is any way for other members to get involved in the program, Ptlm. Bertino provided his information in the chat.

#### **New Business:**

**Physician Outreach:** A mailing to physicians will be done in the coming months. The mailing includes information on opioids, underage drinking and other substance use disorders. The project previously was done in person but due to COVID and the outreach being to healthcare systems we will continue to do a mailing for the time being.

**Fentanyl Vaping:** A conversation regarding Fentanyl vaping was brought up in the previous meeting. Laurie found a September 2020 DEA posting about Fentanyl being found in vape pens in California. One of the members reported seeing data of it happening in Connecticut, members haven't come across it locally as of yet. Chief DeShields will check with his narcotics team and get back to the group. It is important for schools and other institutions who may handle confiscation of vape pens to be aware of this possible issue and to have Narcan accessible.

**RIOT Presentation:** Addressing the Opioid Epidemic, Tuesday, February 22nd, 11am- 12pm. We are cosponsoring this presentation as part of the regional coalition grant that we share with Cape Assist. The presentation is done by Rutgers graduate students, and it will be open to the public not just the coalition members. It will be held virtually, right after the Cape Atlantic Bridge regional coalition meeting that will be held the same day at 10:00am. There will be separate Zoom registration links for the meeting and the presentation. Once the flier is ready, it will be sent to the members and can be shared with all contacts.

**Ray Lucas Athlete Event:** The Partnership for a Drug Free NJ (PDFNJ), contacted Laurie regarding co-sponsoring a presentation regarding opioids and athletes. The PDFNJ will be doing 10 of these presentations across the state, from 2022-2023. Ray Lucas, former NFL athlete will be presenting about his career. Laurie will be contacting Greater Egg Harbor Regional about the presentation since it will be done virtually that could reach 3 high schools at once. The other high schools in the county will be notified of the date when it becomes available. Some media will be done before the event, Laurie will work on having Ray Lucas on the APR radio with Bob, in the spring. When the date is available Laurie will email the members and let everyone know.

**March 24, PDFNJ KOOAD Series, Medication Disposal:** Laurie will be a presenter on the disposal project, discussing medication disposal projects for local communities and coalitions. There will also be someone presenting regarding disposal statewide and a presenter discussing disposal on the federal level. The series is held once a month and each event is an hour long. They are also recorded and provided on the website.

**Announcements:**

JTAC full coalition meeting January 11th, 11:00AM

PDFNJ KOOAD Series, An hour with Sam Quinones Author of “Dreamland: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic” January 27th, 11:00am. “The Opioid Epidemic and the Impact on NJ Families” will be held February 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am. “Dosing Your Part: Safe Disposal and Opioids” will be held March 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am.

Cape Atlantic Bridge Regional Coalition Meeting is being held February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Jesse shared that John Brooks Recovery Center has expanded their hours of admission and methadone dosing on Monday-Saturday from 5pm and admissions until 11PM. There is also transportation for morning and evening and for detox in the morning.

Tonia shared that the Mental Health Association, NJ Connect for Recovery is doing a Harm Reduction Training for families only. Dr. Zerbo out of the Northern Center for Excellence on January 20th, a flyer will be sent to everyone.

**Next Meeting:**

March 3, 2022 In-person or virtual format to be determined.