

Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

Join Together Atlantic County

January 5, 2023 3:00-4:30pm

Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office
4997 Unami Blvd, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Laurie Smith, Bob Zlotnick (Atlantic Prevention Resources), Sean Kolins (Seabrook), Cptn. Chuck DeFebbo & Jennifer Cugini (Atlantic Cnty Prosecutor's Office), Brian Wilson (Atlantic Cnty Gov.), Lindsey Komar (Hope One & AC LEAD), Gretchen Halfpenny (APR/OFRT), Ken Litwak & Jesse Dariano (JBRC), Jamal Miles (VOA-DV), Doug Mercer (SAS Atlantic Cnty), Scott Gras (AtlantiCare), Josiah Bunting (Bunting Family Pharmacy)

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

Minutes for the November meeting will be sent via email for approval and then uploaded to the JTAC website.

Updates:

Grants: Everything is running smoothly with the grants.

AC LEAD Program: Lindsey reminded the group that this is a diversion program through the prosecutor's office, when someone is arrested with a 3rd degree possession charge, they are diverted to the program. They are placed in treatment and monitored for 6 months and once it's completed, they can get their charges dismissed. Currently, they have 5 participants in the program. The numbers are increasing because the assistant prosecutor is flagging the cases that are eligible for the AC Lead Program. Lindsey added that she would like a directive re-sent to police departments.

Hope One: Lindsey reported that they are still going into the community 2-3 days a week, day and night, and early mornings every other Friday. They are currently short staffed and looking to hire another part time outreach person for nights. They are also responding to the overdoses that law enforcement is called to in the county. When officers respond to calls, they input the information into a database. Lindsey reaches out to the people from the database. She went to two fatal calls within the past couple of weeks. Lindsey also noted that she gives out OFRT brochures when responding to calls. Gretchen shared the idea of collecting stories from the families of overdose victims to remember them by and it will also help the OFRT collect data and information. Lindsey can ask the families if they would be willing to talk to Gretchen and share their stories. Hope one is still providing training and Narcan to the community and encourages that anybody that wants Narcan can just ask for it.

Gretchen asked Lindsey about a prosecutor's program that is set to start in March for municipal level offenses. The program is called Hope and Help run by Rick McKelvey. Only 5 counties throughout the state were awarded the grant.

Narcan Trainings/Deployments: Captain DeFebbo reported that in 2022, there were 376 non-fatal Narcan deployments, resulting in 70 fatalities. It was noted that numbers are not accurate because Captain does not have access to the database for any EMS/Fire deployments, etc.

Lindsey noted that in the past two weeks there have been 59 Narcan trainings within the community. Lindsey noted that when police are responding to overdose calls, they are not leaving Narcan behind.

Gretchen added that if EMS or police respond to an overdose call and the patient chooses not to go to the hospital, they are required to leave Narcan with them.

Brian reported that they are still holding 45-minute-long trainings. They trained about 500 individuals in 2022 and distributed 300 doses of Narcan with plenty on hand. Brian offered to distribute Narcan to police departments as well. Brian added that the training is more in depth on opioid awareness and overview, including signs, symptoms, legality and stigma.

Laurie reported that the Narcan cards will be given out to pharmacies for those who can't afford Narcan with their health insurance. Laurie mentioned that the QR code on the card is linked to JTAC's website which provides 2 videos on what Narcan is and how to use it. Around 500 cards were printed and they will update the cards and print more as needed.

OORP Program: Scott reported that when someone comes into the hospital for an opioid overdose and are seen by a recovery specialist in the emergency department, they are provided with a Narcan kit. Any client on the caseload can receive Narcan and it is not just for patients that are in the emergency department. The Narcan is provided through a program with Rutgers. It was reported that there are typically 3 to 4 calls per 12-hour shift. It was also reported that Atlanticare is contracted for the overdose program through Shore Medical Center. Scott is attempting to go once a week to visit the E.R to show support. Laurie noted that Shore Medical Cntr reaches out often for JTAC's drug and alcohol treatment guides and distributes them to patients and families. Scott mentioned the bridge clinic for anyone that comes through the ED with an opioid or alcohol use disorder to get started on Suboxone, Naltrexone or Vivitrol shot. The clinic is open 3 days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. At some point, it will be 7 days a week. Individuals can come off the street into the ER and be seen by an ER physician and get started on Suboxone in the ER Patients then are seen by a recovery specialist and given the next available appointment to the Bridge clinic. The clinic has about a success rate of 94% which consists of individuals that have come into the ED, returned to the Bridge clinic for the 14 to 21 days and stabilized on Suboxone and then bridged out to another provider to continue their treatment. A lot of those who have gone to the Bridge clinic attend self-help programs. 6% have returned or relapsed to the Bridge clinic or ED The goal of the Bridge clinic is to keep individuals suffering from alcohol or substance use disorder out of the ER continuously.

It was noted that individuals who go to the ER or the bridge clinic are already in some stage of withdrawal. Doctors will typically give them a heavy dose of Suboxone in the ER patients are given scripts

to maintain until the next morning.

It was also noted that a lot of the methods regarding Methadone dosing are outdated. The hospital begins patients on a 30mg tapered dose of Methadone.

Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT): Gretchen reported that there will be a meeting next Monday to review their 90th case. The executive committee will be getting back on track in February. They are looking to begin motel outreach. VOA, Hope One, and JFS have agreed to assist with the outreach. OFRT is waiting for Joe Berg to schedule a meeting regarding the motel outreach. There are 2 new members joining the team, one person from JFS and one person from Superior Court Municipal Division. Gretchen added that she noticed cases getting remanded back to municipal court instead of getting the benefit of recovery court and they do not get that opportunity.

Recovery Centers: Jesse reported that they are up to 100 groups a month between both locations. They are averaging anywhere from 80 to 100 unduplicated participants. Retention is a main focus and there are a consistent 150 people between locations that are engaging in groups and returning. Some clients were asking for a 12-step program and they are looking to get started on that. John Brooks is expanding their evening hours to include recovery support. Atlantic City has had success with recovery support in the evening. They are hoping to add staff to the Pleasantville location to start advertising to have morning and night opportunities for recovery coaches, groups, etc. The ultimate goal for John Brooks is to expand their hours. Moving forward, they are going to try to start events and outreach events back up.

Lindsey asked how many recovery coaches there are at John Brooks. Jesse responded that there are 8 and that they are still looking to hire another evening coach.

Recovery coaches will transport people to the Pleasantville location and back. Services end at 10:30pm.

Mobile outreach is going well and they have plans to start going to hotspots like hotels. The van is similar to Hope One's van and is clearly marked. The clinician on the van is bilingual and it will run 40 hours a week.

Prescription Drop Boxes, Detera, Locking Medicine Cabinets: Laurie reported that we have begun reaching out to police departments to find out how many pounds they collected for 2022. 6 departments responded and they had a total of 1,406.4 lbs. Galloway had the highest total of 722 lbs, which is included in the total of 1,400. Linwood had 227 lbs. Laurie reported that Galloway had an issue twice with the part on the drop box where you pull down to put the medication in. Someone wrenched it down and pushed it too far and jammed it. They need a new box. Laurie reached out to a welder and was estimated \$800 to repair it. Laurie asked if anybody knows of a welder to assist.

Brian mentioned that Hammonton has a box that is not in use and that Laurie should reach out to Chief Kevin Friel.

Laurie reported that Deterra is still being given out. The larger packets are being given to hospice agencies and the smaller ones just to give out to organizations or anybody that needs them. Locking medicine cabinets are going quickly and there were 500 delivered on November 28th and will most likely be gone by the end of January or February. The new boxes are not as good as the old ones. The keys have been jamming. Laurie reported that she reached out for a quote to the old lockbox supplier to see if they could be ordered instead when the other ones run out.

Realtors and Funeral Home Outreach: Laurie reported that the outreach is ready to go. The cards for the businesses will be printed professionally. Laurie reported that several funeral homes and realtors have already agreed to participate. A realtor office also reached out to Laurie to present to their 40+ agents.

Naloxone Resource Card: Laurie previously reported the cards are done and available.

Alcohol & Drug Treatment Guide: Laurie reported that 1-800-GAMBLER has been added to the alcohol and drug treatment guide. A Narcan resource section has been added and “recovery centers” has been changed to “recovery community centers.” The guides are at the printers and are available in Spanish as well.

Opioid Settlement Funding: Bob reported that a large portion of it went to expanding the Bridge Clinic. Brian added that the balance went to Hope One for transportation. Bob mentioned that the group still meets because it is ongoing and there is a smaller group that meets at John Brooks once a month or every other month to talk about moving forward. The next meeting is next Wednesday at 10am.

Brian noted that the funding was for the last calendar year and it ended in December. Now that we are in 2023, there will be another \$300,000 coming to the county which will be reallocated.

It was noted that the clinic is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The clinic is looking to hire in-house APN's solely for the clinic and RN's.

Stockton Fentanyl Posters: Laurie reported that 100 of each poster was printed for Stockton's housing units. There was an incident that was reported at another university involving Fentanyl. Gretchen shared information from Camden County's campaign and permission was obtained to use them for the posters. The posters were completed in the beginning of December, and they are being hung up around the Stockton campus and in the housing halls on the Galloway and A.C. campus. There is also a phone number on the posters to call the Wellness Center if there is an issue.

Laurie added that more could be made for community organizations to use. One of the posters is like the billboard which included the number to call Hope One if somebody has a substance use disorder. It is specifically regarding Fentanyl because the school that had an issue sent out a notice to all the other colleges.

Jen inquired about the ACCC campus and if posters could be provided to them. Laurie responded that the posters were made at Stockton's request, and they could be edited and printed to include ACCC's information.

Doug added that he is a teacher at ACCC and would take some posters to a meeting at the campus on Monday. Laurie will email Doug the posters so he can show them to ACCC.

Laurie also asked if ACCC security is trained in administering Narcan and if Doug could inquire. Brian also recommended reaching out to Rutgers since they are also on the campus. Laurie will also reach out to Joe Berg regarding legislation to require all colleges and universities to have Narcan on campus. There is a law already in place requiring all public schools to have Narcan in their buildings.

Bob added that over the holidays he noticed that restaurants have AED's and asked several places if they would like Narcan to keep with their AED's. The restaurants responded that they don't want it because it looks bad. Laurie added that libraries also have started to keep Narcan because people often choose to overdose in library bathrooms or parking lots so that they would be found.

Jesse asked if an establishment has Narcan and someone overdoses and they don't administer Narcan, does that make them liable? A discussion ensued regarding this topic and looking into it further.

Brian responded that there is AED and CPR training, but there is no official certification or governing body over Narcan training.

Pharmacy Outreach: Laurie reported that they were waiting on the Narcan resource cards to distribute them to the pharmacies as part of their outreach. Staff will begin the outreach in the spring.

JTAC Conference/Event: Laurie reported that it was previously discussed to hold a one-day JTAC conference or event. There are different requirements for multiple grants to have something for underage drinking, something on marijuana, or an opioid or prescription drug event. Laurie mentioned that instead of having different workshops throughout the year for each topic, there could be a one day to cover them all. Laurie added that the date will be the opposite time of the NJPN conference. Laurie mentioned that continental breakfast and lunch could be included and if any organizations want to partner to let her know. A workgroup will be held to discuss details and begin planning.

Gretchen asked how many people are anticipated. Laurie responded that in the past there were about 100 to 200 attendees. Laurie added that since COVID things have been different.

New Business

Senior Presentations: Laurie reported that there are multiple presentations coming up to present to seniors about medication safety and disposal.

Stranger Project: Laurie reported that this is where a display of people's thoughts and opinions on substance use is set up in the libraries along with information. The project begins at Stockton and that information is taken for the display. The first display was set to be at Atlantic City library, but over the holidays there was a water main break, so the project was put on hold.

Ray Lucas Athlete Event: Laurie reported that the event was planned previously to be virtual with a high school, but the athletic director was retiring. There is another school that is interested. The event will most likely be in-person at either the end of April or beginning of May.

Parent Presentations: Laurie reported that she has a presentation coming up at Atlantic Cape Family Support Organization. They are back to being in-person, so if anybody knows of a parent group that is interested to mention it. The presentation focuses on cannabis and locking it up. Schools are having a big issue with teenagers consuming edibles. Laurie added that veterinarians are having issues with dogs eating gummies.

New Interventions/Outreach: Laurie mentioned that JTAC does outreach for numerous topics including veterinarians, funeral homes, and realtors. If anybody thinks of anything else to work on in the upcoming year, please reach out to Laurie. The grant is for early prevention and JTAC cannot give out Narcan, but they have done billboards, radio PSA's, signage, posters, and presentations.

National Stimulant Conference: Laurie mentioned a workshop at the virtual National Stimulant Conference. A group that does research based on social media mentioned that they are seeing a lot of people purposely taking stimulants when taking an opioid to help counteract an overdose and making social media posts about it.

Announcements:

JTAC full coalition meeting is January 10, 2023, at the Stockton SRI & ETTC building on Jimmie Leeds Road.

Bob mentioned \$5000 funding for COVID. They created a 5-minute questionnaire specifically regarding COVID and are asking people to complete it. The information is anonymous and gets submitted. Laurie noted that she will send the survey out to members to complete.

Laurie added that for the cannabis campaign, because of an increase in youth using gummies, cannabis should be treated like underage drinking since it is allowed for those over 21 and there should be training on checking ID's. There will be a virtual workgroup between Cape May and Atlantic Counties. One of the big things to target is parents and locking up their cannabis. Schools are researching where the kids are getting the cannabis.

Laurie added that there is a regional coalition with Cape May County that meets twice a year and there will be a meeting on February 14. The meeting will have a presentation on harm reduction. An email will be sent out.

Gretchen asked where the senior presentations are being held. Laurie responded that they are at senior centers. Gretchen asked if Fentanyl is discussed because there is an increase in age in those seen at OFRT and there have been some seniors. Laurie added that previously the presentations are solely around medication safety and disposal and for another grant we must now include over the counter medication safety and disposal. It is not about current drug trends, but from doing one out in Buena, seniors were asking questions about different topics so Fentanyl may come up in questions after the presentation is done.

Ken added that on Thursdays he does 3 groups at the residential treatment facility on psychoeducation on gambling, and he covered the relationship between opioids and gambling. He showed a 15 minute interview on 3 gentlemen from Maryland who had opioid use disorder and gambling use disorder, which is something we often don't think about co-occurring.

Sgt. Jennifer Cugini will be the new point of contact for the prosecutor's office. Laurie added that she wanted to discuss athlete and opioid presentations with Sgt. Cugini for local high schools. They are looking forward to getting the athlete and opioid project started back up.

Doug encourages the utilization of the provider network throughout Atlantic County to reduce the barriers to access to treatment as much as possible, so that people can reach out to providers directly without going to the office to get approval. Referrals can come from a doctor, a family member, or the individuals themselves to get help.

Bob asked if parents are asked to lock up alcohol. Laurie responded that it has been done before and DCPD is talking to parents about using the locking medicine cabinets not just for medication but for cannabis as well.

Bob mentioned the APR "Recovery is Possible" fundraiser on March 31st, a Friday night, from 6 to 10pm. Tickets will be sold and an event page will be on the website and social media. All money goes directly to outpatient treatment.

Next Meeting: March 2, 2023.

Motion to Adjourn: 1st-Brian Wilson, 2nd-Jesse, Meeting Adjourned.