

# Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

## Join Together Atlantic County

March 2, 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), Sgt. Jennifer Cugini (Atlantic Cnty Prosecutor's Office), Lindsey Komar (Hope One & AC LEAD), Scott Gras (AtlantiCare), Josiah Bunting (Bunting Family Pharmacy)

Laurie opened the meeting, welcoming the attendees and introductions were made. Minutes for the January meeting will be sent via email for approval and then uploaded to the JTAC website.

#### **Updates:**

**Grants:** Everything is running smoothly with the grants. We are finalizing a grant specifically for underage drinking that is due tomorrow. We will be doing the renewal for Year 10 of our Drug Free Communities grant next week.

**AC LEAD Program:** Lindsey said the program is picking up. They currently have seven people participating. Legalization of marijuana is becoming an issue with participants. Lindsey asked the group if outpatient treatment centers test for marijuana and/or alcohol. A discussion followed regarding treatment centers, recovery court and also if a client has a medical cannabis card.

Fentanyl being found in marijuana was also discussed, recently in a meeting it was said that nothing has been shown that it occurred on purpose and may be related to cross contamination. (Fentanyl on the table when other drugs are being cut, not being put in marijuana on purpose) There have been many overdose victims who wake up in the hospital and say they were just smoking weed, they have no idea what happened.

Recently in the news, was a story of a store that was selling packaged CBD gummies and Fentanyl was found mixed in the package. Laurie mentioned the cannabis workgroup that is newly formed and has been meeting. Issues regarding Delta 8 and other CBD products have been discussed. These products are allowed to be sold, to those over 21 because of the 2018 Farm Bill which allows hemp products. Youth are accessing these products as well as cannabis and are overdosing.

Discussion continued on allowing clients to smoke marijuana as a form of harm reduction (better than using heroin) as long as it is purchased from a dispensary, not off the street. There are an increasing number of parents allowing youth to use cannabis to self-medicate. There will be changes as to how cannabis use pertains to treatment issues and

further discussions will take place.

**Hope One:** Lindsey reported they have two new full-time employees and two part time employees. They are still doing the DMI overdose outreach. They have been attending the At Risk Initiative (ARI) meetings with ACPD and the court system. The group has been discussing how people continuously get tickets for being a nuisance and how they can be helped.

**South Jersey AIDS Alliance:** Laurie reported, Rachel did a harm reduction presentation at the Cape Atlantic Bridge Coalition Meeting in February.

**Narcan Trainings/Deployments:** Joe Bunting, of Bunting Family Pharmacy, discussed the new program for participating pharmacies to provide naloxone to those over 14 who request the medication. Prescription is anonymous (ie. Jane Doe) and will not have refills listed. A person can acquire more naloxone on a separate visit. There is a specific Medicaid insurance plan setup covering the medication. If the patient can get naloxone through their own insurance plan they can still utilize the new free Naloxone Distribution Plan. High co-pays are sometimes a reason patients do not have naloxone filled through their own insurance.

Narcan Resource Card: We can add “participating pharmacies” to the card and on the website list the participating pharmacies if we can get a list from the state. On the resource card there is a QR code that links to the website page with the resources.

Sgt Cugini discussed the Narcan deployment numbers are inaccurate since they do not include ACPD and other overdoses in hospitals and individual Narcan deployment etc. The group agreed it is still good to have an idea of some of the numbers that are being seen by police departments. Sgt. Cugini has access to the info and will provide it at future meetings. Previously we had overdose numbers and Narcan deployments county-wide and broken down by town.

Lindsey went to 30 overdose outreach visits so far this year. Hope One distributed 22 kits this past week, 330 so far this year and 4352 since they started distributing naloxone.

Bunting Family Pharmacy has distributed around 100 already. They also give a patient instructional leaflet and one of the pharmacists will explain how to utilize it. Referrals are not done because of anonymity and no questions asked. A Hope One flier and the treatment resource guide could be posted on their bulletin board. Lindsey could drop off some fliers to the pharmacy about their services.

ACCC recently had a Narcan training in one of their classes but would not allow the trainer to distribute Narcan to the students in attendance. Laurie was told there possibly is proposed legislation to require Narcan on higher education campuses.

Another discussion took place regarding possible liability for restaurants if they have Narcan in their establishments but do not use it. At the upcoming We Check for 21 Conference in Cape May County there will be a Narcan training for servers. Any individual could take the training personally not as

part of restaurant. Some restaurant owners that have had a family member with a substance use disorder may voluntarily have Narcan available in their establishment.

Another discussion took place regarding a local agency that has a grant to supply Narcan in a mounted wall box at local hotspots such as restaurants, convenience stores, community areas, etc.

**OORP Program:** Scott reported the program is having 4-5 calls per 12-hour emergency room shift. He also had 5-7 calls on average in a 24-hour shift on Friday.

Discussion followed regarding things do not seem to be slowing down. Other drugs have entered the opioid scene (Xylazine and Fentanyl). The opioid epidemic is still bad. Laurie asked from a prevention standpoint has age range changed, are there young people overdosing? There are overdoses of all ages but a lot recently among older adults (senior population). Some of them are long time pain management patients, not having surgeries due to surgery being a higher risk with age. They may also be cut off from long term pain meds, yet they are addicted. Their doctors may have changed and the new doctor ended the pain meds. Pain meds are prescribed more to older patients in lieu of surgery.

**Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT):** Next meeting is Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2:30pm. They will be reviewing cases 99-103. In the past two and a half years they have reviewed almost 100 cases, these are all Atlantic County overdoses. They have collected a lot of good information and have produced a report that could be shared, if anyone is interested reach out to Bob or Gretchen.

Laurie mentioned at the last Atlantic City OFRT meeting every case had stimulants mixed with opioids. Discussion followed regarding people using opioids and stimulants together. There is currently a nationwide pharmaceutical shortage of specific stimulant medications.

**Prescription Drop Boxes, Detera, Locking Medicine Cabinets:** The permanent drop box that was not being used at Hammonton PD was delivered to Galloway PD to replace their broken one. The coalition has Detera and locking medicine cabinets for distribution. Some organizations and schools are encouraging parents to use the cabinets to lock up their medicinal or recreational cannabis products.

**JTAC Conference/Event:** The coalition is planning to have a conference in June, and will set up a planning meeting. Laurie needs to check with Stockton for a date before the schools let out for summer break.

**Senior Presentations:** Coalition staff have done three senior center medication safety and disposal presentations in Northfield, Atlantic City and Egg Harbor City. Three more are scheduled in Hammonton, Galloway and Ventnor.

**Stranger Project:** Laurie informed the group this project is when 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. We will be looking for another library to begin the project. The goal is to have the display located at a different library each month.

**Ray Lucas Athlete Event:** Laurie reported the event will possibly take place at Oakcrest on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The

date is being confirmed with the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ as well as Ray Lucas.

**Parent Presentations:** The Cannabis Workgroup is going to put together a series of videos that will be linked through school websites, the coalition plans to include other videos besides cannabis which could include refusal skills, medication safety and disposal, and other topics for parents.

**New Business:**

**New Interventions/Outreach:** If anyone thinks of any new ideas, let Laurie know.

**Athlete Outreach:** Besides the Ray Lucas event the coalition and the prosecutor's office are going to plan some other activities regarding opioid use and athletes.

**Announcements:**

JTAC full coalition meeting is March 14, 2023, at the Stockton SRI & ETTC building on Jimmie Leeds Rd.

NJPN Conference May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> virtual and free, next year the conference will be back in-person at the AC Convention Center.

Bob mentioned the APR fundraiser on Friday, March 31st, 6:00-10:00pm.

**Next Meeting:** May 4th, 2023

Sgt. Cugini mentioned changing the meetings to 2:00-4:00pm instead of 3:00-5:00pm. Laurie will email active members to see if the change works for their schedules.

**Meeting Adjourned**