

# Atlantic County Opioid Task Force

## Join Together Atlantic County

May 6, 2021 3:00 – 4:15pm

Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

**In Attendance:** Chief Bruce DeShields & Cpt. Chuck DeFebbo (Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office), Laurie Smith, Bob Zlotnick, Amber Cutano (JTAC/APR), Gretchen Halfpenny & Dorothy Bowker (OFRT), Virginia "Ginger" Williams (ACCC Intern), Jen Pielhau (Atlantic County Dept. of Substance Abuse Services), Sean Kolins (Seabrook), Dylan Wulderk (AtlantiCare Foundation), Assemb. John Armato (NJ State Leg), Lindsey Komar (HopeOne/AC LEAD), Scott Gras (AtlantiCare), Rachel Campbell (South Jersey AIDS Alliance), Erin McGonigle (All Roads Recovery/JBRC), Jaime Costello (Atlantic County Sheriff's Department), Tonia Ahern (Parent to Parent)

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

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

### **Updates:**

**Grant Updates:** Drug Free Communities Grant we are waiting for our year 8 renewal. CARA grant moving ahead with projects. Opiate and Athlete prevention grant there is nothing new to report.

**Media/Marketing Committee Update/Movie Theater PSA:** We previously were working on movie theater ads which were put on hold due to a sale of the theater and COVID shutdowns. Brian reached out to the theatre and pricing is still the same since before COVID. With lower attendance and less movies being released, we are going to hold off on doing the ads for now.

**AC LEAD Program:** Lindsey Komar reported that the program is continuing. They currently have one participant who is doing extremely well and is due to complete the program in mid-June.

**Hope One:** Lindsey Komar reported that Hope One has been super busy and had 154 referrals last month. They responded to about 100 DMI (state police report) overdoses, this is when they go out and contact individuals who overdosed and provide them with information and Narcan. They recently visited the Hope All Day Recovery Center that just opened in Mays Landing on Route 50 by Frankie's pizza. Even with state cutbacks, Chief DeShields was able to get an additional \$36,000 in funding because of the great work that Lindsey and her team are doing, the funding will allow them to do even more work in the community.

### **Narcan Trainings/Deployments:**

Deployments – From January 1, 2021 through today there have been 156 Narcan deployments in the county with 13 fatalities. Hamilton Township had 3 and Galloway Township had 4 with the rest of the municipalities having one or two. There were 43 deployments in January, 30 in February, 36 in March, 41 in April and 6 so far in May. For the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020, there were 89 Narcan deployments. 33 in October, 34 in November and 22 in December with 5 fatalities.

Hope One – Hope One is available if there are any organizations that would like Narcan training. Please contact Lindsey or Susan Long to set that up. They have a video link where one individual can be trained and then train others (train-the-trainer).

South Jersey Aids Alliance – Rachel Campbell reported that since January, they have given out 775 Narcan kits, with 251 saves that were self-reported.

Atlantic County Municipal Alliance/Dept. of Health - Jen Pielhau reported there wasn't much new information from the last meeting. They are still available to do virtual trainings, so if anyone is interested, please reach out to her. They recently gave out some Narcan that was coming up on expiration.

**Opioid Overdose Recovery Program (OORP) at AtlantiCare:** Dylan Wulderk reported that they are still seeing about 30 overdoses a month in the county emergency rooms. Whenever AtlantiCare EMS respond to an overdose and the patient refuses transport, they are sending out recovery specialists to try to make contact after the fact and they are seeing about 5 patients a month through that. The OORP leadership team has reached out to the team at Shore Medical Center about increasing the number of calls they are receiving and they have seen a little bit of movement but Dylan didn't know much as far as data yet. Scott reported that he did see an increase at Shore Medical Center.

**Opioid Fatality Review Teams (OFRT):** Dorothy Bowker reported that they had their first case review meeting last month and have their next one on Monday. They reviewed two cases last month and will review 3 this month. They had great participation, discussions, comments and feedback from everyone. They are starting to come up with some recommendations but their biggest frustrations are surrounding the confidentiality issues and not being able to always get the information they need. Gretchen Halfpenny reported that even though they are still very early on in the process they are already starting to see some themes which will help them come up with formal recommendations in the future. The cases are chosen by the medical examiner.

**Permanent Prescription Drop Boxes:** The newest location opened in the beginning of April and is located inside of the Bellevue Drug Company located at 254 Bellevue Ave in Hammonton. This drop box also allows for disposal of liquid medications which most of the police department drop boxes do not allow. It is available to the public during normal business hours which is Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The pharmacist, Jigar Patel, expressed his gratitude to the coalition for reaching out and providing the drop box. A press release was done announcing the new location and stating that over 13,000 lbs of medications has been collected in our drop boxes since 2016.

**Deterra/Locking Medicine Cabinets:** We have plenty of Deterra and locking medicine cabinets available for anyone that is interested. These can be picked up in our office in Absecon by contacting Brian. If any organization would like to help distribute the locking medicine cabinets or Deterra we can arrange a drop off.

**School Resiliency Training:** We are scheduling another 3-day school resiliency training this summer, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> with a follow up training for all of the school teams from previous trainings on July 16<sup>th</sup>. We are working on doing a report with Cape Assist to get information from the schools about their teams. We also co-sponsored the School Administrator's Academy that was for just administrators once

a month during lunch. A superintendent from one of the biggest districts in Atlantic County that doesn't already have a school resiliency team participated in the admin academy and reached out to Laurie about sending teams to attend the July trainings. We started doing community resiliency trainings virtually last December and from that first training we made contact with Connie Price with the JJC. We were able to work with the Cape-Atlantic Vicinage, the JJC and Judge Maven, to offer a community resiliency training on March 10<sup>th</sup>. There were 140 people registered and about 120 were in attendance virtually between the two counties. We will continue moving forward to offer these types of trainings to community organizations.

**Faith Based Outreach:** Amber reported that on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> from 10-11 a.m. her and Brian will be having the bi-monthly JTAC faith-based meeting. Rev. Paul Ascutto, Jr. from Seabrook will be presenting on the connections between faith and addiction recovery, the 12-step process with spiritual and biblical comparisons, personal experiences working in the recovery field as a spiritual leader and the different spiritual and Christian based recovery programs offered at Seabrook. If anyone needs the registration link or the flyer, please reach out to Amber. She put her email address [acutano@atlprev.org](mailto:acutano@atlprev.org) in the chat box.

**Stigma Event/Opioid Resource Fair:** This will be a two-part virtual event. The first session will be held on Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm and will focus on the stigma of addiction. Current confirmed speakers are Gloria Seel, Sr. Dir. Of Addictions with AtlantiCare who will be discussing language and stigma in general utilizing info from Robert Ashford who is a national speaker on stigma. Gloria has trained several hundred AtlantiCare employees. The other speaker is Dr. Ranieri from Seabrook who will be speaking about Medication Assisted Recovery and the stigma associated with it. We are also working on confirming another speaker. The second session will be a virtual opioid resource fair highlighting different services throughout our area and will be scheduled shortly. A flyer for the event will be finalized and sent out. If anyone knows of any groups that should be included in the resource event, please let Laurie know.

**Legislation Update:** Assemblyman Armato reported that he didn't have many legislative updates because they are in budget mode right now but he believes there will be a lot of clean up bills coming out relating to other bills that have previously been passed. He talked about cannabis legislation and the confusion between the different municipalities.

**Involuntary Transport/Commitment Laws:** Laurie shared information that intern Virginia "Ginger" Williams found relating to voluntary transport and commitment laws. Ginger didn't find much relating to transport laws but found that there are already some organizations that track this information state by state. This is very helpful and Laurie will send the information to Assemblyman Armato and also share it with the group. There are still a lot of questions relating to these types of laws and Assemblyman Armato believes there will be a lot of push back in New Jersey. Tonia Ahern believed this would be a difficult thing because this is already an issue with mental health patients. She suggested focusing on fentanyl, peer support and protocols to get people the help that they need. Laurie asked Tonia to email her with some information so we can do research relating to these issues. JBRC has seen the same issues that Tonia mentioned relating to fentanyl and medical protocols.

**Translations services** – We recently had all of our JTAC materials such as the rack cards, posters, treatment resources guides, Deterra and lockbox poster etc. translated into Spanish. Brian contacted all seven local Hispanic organizations in the county. He is waiting to hear back from two of them but was

able to supply the five others with the materials and gave out Detera to two locations and lockboxes to three locations. The organizations were pleased to see us making a connection within the Hispanic community. Laurie shared that the price to have these materials translated was not expensive. If anyone is interested in the translation company information, please reach out to Brian.

**Company Newsletters:** We have a blurb for companies to include in their newsletters about proper drug disposal, securing medications and free Detera and locking medicine cabinets. If anyone knows of any companies that would be interested, please contact Brian.

**Anytown Youth Event:** Laurie shared that we decided to put this event on hold for now because of the uncertainty with schools. Some schools are going back to in-person and some are remaining virtual after spring break so it seemed best to wait.

**Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit:** Several JTAC members attended this event virtually and it was made available for 60 days. Laurie was happy to see that a lot of the work we are doing is the same as what is happening nationally. Many of the workshops dealt with resiliency and youth which is the main focus of our school resiliency teams. It seems like the same things we are having a tough time with are the same things that coalitions and organizations are struggling with across the country.

#### **New Business:**

**Opioid Resources Guide:** Laurie is thinking that after we do the opioid resource fair, we could come up with a guide similar to our treatment resource guide relating specifically to opioids. She said we could even just do a link on our website relating to opioid services in the county. Many members agreed that this would be a great idea and suggested getting a website for just these types of programs. Laurie shared the JTAC website to show how we share our resources and where we would put this type of link. The focus has been and will continue to be getting everyone to these resources. Laurie also said we could give organizations the link to share on their websites. Bob suggested maybe paying for search engine optimization to increase awareness of the website but he would have to look into the cost..

**Stigma Campaign:** Laurie will be talking more with Jen Pielhau, Dylan Wulderk and Sean Kolins about this campaign after the opioid and stigma events. One of our groups in the Stockton Service Learning class works on a stigma presentation each semester. They work with the fraternities and sororities to educate them and have them sign pledges. Laurie would like to start doing this for each municipality in the county so we could get towns to commit to being stigma free. If anyone is interested in being involved in this, please contact Laurie.

#### **Announcements:**

Tonia Ahern shared that the Clinton Foundation donated injectable Narcan to six states and New Jersey was one of them. They are trying to target recovery houses so that all houses have Narcan available. They offer training and give the houses Narcan. Discovery is a partner on this, so if anyone is interested or knows of a house that needs it, Tonia will share the contact information with Laurie for her to share with the Thursday email.

Tonia has been working on the Mainstream Addiction Act which is to remove the x-waiver for Buprenorphine. Currently, when a doctor prescribes Suboxone, they have to have a special license to do so but this act will help remove that requirement on a federal level. This has already happened in some

areas and the hope is that this will remove stigma. Under this act, family doctors would be able to prescribe the medication as needed. New Jersey is a strong lead in this legislation so we should be seeing more on this throughout the state.

Assemblyman Armato reported that he is on the Atlantic County Restart Task Force and one of the subcommittees he is on is for homelessness and the disease of addiction in Atlantic City. Dr. Washington heads the committee and Dylan is one of the directors. They are working on getting Narcan put into defib boxes within the City of Atlantic City in public places such as the bus station. Assemblyman Armato thanked Jen Pielhau for getting him the labels to put on them and he will be getting them over to Dylan soon.

Assemblyman Armato shared that he was asked to do an article with the Press of Atlantic City on the disease of addiction and specifically his son. He agreed to do this after speaking with his family because they want to help remove the stigma surrounding the disease. Michelle Post did the interview and the article should be in the paper either Saturday or Sunday. His only hesitation is how the article is going to be written but he communicated to Michelle that he did not want it to be political or for sympathy. He instead wanted it to be a direct article about what his family went through and how they tried to deal with it throughout the years. The main message he wants to spread is how it can happen to anyone. He wanted to share what his family did wrong and what they did right with the hope of helping others. Assemblyman Armato would love feedback from anyone who reads the article.

Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT) – Dorothy shared that the goal of the OFRT is to prevent overdose deaths in the future. She views the members of the Opioid Task Force as Ad Hoc members of the OFRT. She encouraged anyone to reach out to her, Jen Pielhau or Gretchen Halfpenny with any questions, comments, ideas and/or thoughts.

**Next Meeting:**

Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm, \*Tentative

**Motion to adjourn the meeting:** Dorothy Bowker 1<sup>st</sup>, Erin McGonigle 2<sup>nd</sup>, Meeting Adjourned