



## Join Together Atlantic County

Virtual Zoom Meeting – January 11, 2022

11:00am – 12:00pm

Attendance/Sectors & Agencies Represented:

Youth:

Parents:

Law Enforcement: Lindsey Komar (HopeOne/AC LEAD, Atl. Cnty Sheriff's Depart), Ptlm Ed Bertino (EHT PD) Sgt. Jen Cugini (Atl. Cnty Prosecutor's Office)

Govt Agency: Jen Pielhau (Atl. Cnty. Substance Abuse Services), Angelo Ragonesi (NJ DMHAS), Sofia Noncent-Johnson (NJ DCF), Brian Wilson (Atl. Cnty. Municipal Alliance)

School:

Youth Service Org: Kathryn Saxton-Granato (Atl. County CIACC), John Roy (Cape Atlantic INK), Jay Tunnicliffe (EHT HS Teen Cntr), Erika Gardner (Oceanside II FSC, Acenda Health)

Healthcare: Scott Gras & Vinnie Kirkland (AtlantiCare), Katie Mannino (Southern NJ Perinatal Cooperative)

Religious/Fraternal Org.:

Business: Mike Devaney (Calico Enterprises), Victoria Foley (Helping Hand Behavioral Health)

Media:

Civic/Volunteer:

Other Org.: Jesse Dariano (All Roads Recovery Center, JBRC), Dorothy Bowker (Overdose Fatality Review Team), Ken Litwak (JBRC), Natalia Leusner & Kim Erichsen (Cape Assist), Lisa Petrone (NJPN), Michael Garcia (Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ), Tonia Ahern (Mental Health Assoc of NJ, NCAAR)

Staff: Laurie Smith, Stacy Samaroo, Bria Rivello, Bob Zlotnick (JTAC/APR)

Guest/Other: Beth Weiss (Acenda Health), Kristina Bloodgood (New Hope IBHC), Katie Moore-McMillan (Unity Place of AC) Dawn Geraci (Recovery Centers of America), Michelle DeBellis & Deila Burgess (Maryville)

**Introductions/Minutes:**

Ken opened the meeting, welcomed the attendees and introductions were made. Minutes from the September meeting were approved via email and will be posted on our website [jtacnj.org](http://jtacnj.org).

**Internal Coalition Business/Grant Updates:**

Grants: Drug Free Communities (DFC), Partnership for Success (PFS) & Cape Atlantic Bridge (CAB) - There are not any new internal updates regarding these grants. Everything is running smoothly and we will talk about individual interventions under those grants throughout the meeting. As for the regional coalition grant, there is some additional funding coming, we are just waiting to hear back regarding the requirements. There will be some additional funding for marijuana prevention, along with some other add-ons to our existing grant such as a prevention hub for the county and a prevention warm-line. When we receive further information, we will update everyone.

Staffing/Employment Opportunities- Atlantic Prevention Resources has hired two new coalition staff, Astacia "Stacy" Samaroo and Bria Rivello. Please add their email addresses to your email list because they will be taking over specific projects, [ssamaroo@atlprev.org](mailto:ssamaroo@atlprev.org) and [brivello@atlprev.org](mailto:brivello@atlprev.org). This is also our last meeting with Ken Litwak as our chairperson. A chairperson serves for one year. Sean has been second-in-command this past year and is therefore able to be elected as a chairperson. However, any long-standing coalition member is eligible to be elected as well. If interested, contact Laurie via email.

Marketing/Media Committee- We currently have three billboards up around the county. The last time Laurie checked, there was one on the Black Horse Pike, one on the White Horse Pike, and one on Somers Point-Mays Landing Road. It is not definite whether they are still up. Funding for them is completed. However, they should remain up until that billboard space is bought by another organization.

The Opioid Task Force has been planning on doing movie theater ads. However, those plans were pushed back because of pricing and the pandemic causing movie theater closures and only a small number of new movies to be released. We will revisit these plans in the spring.

Our advertisement in *The Glory Days* athlete magazine will be updated by Bria in the coming weeks.

Communications- In the coming weeks, the Thursday JTAC Updates/Member News email will start coming from Bria's email address ([brivello@atlprev.org](mailto:brivello@atlprev.org)), as she will be taking it over. It will still have "JTAC Updates/Member News" in the subject line. Membership will be updated on the website. There have also been some other updates to the website such as two new CIACC presentations were added.

**Cape Atlantic Bridge Coalition (CAB):** The next Cape Atlantic Bridge Coalition meeting is planned for February 22<sup>nd</sup>. We normally schedule a presentation during the meeting, this time Rutgers students will be giving a presentation on opioid trends and how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced these trends *immediately* after the meeting. This presentation will be about 45 minutes to 1 hour long; therefore, the regular meeting will be shortened from an hour and a half to just one hour. The regular meeting will take place virtually 10:00 to 11am, and the presentation will take place virtually 11-12pm. There will be two separate Zoom links and a flier will be shared shortly.

**Partnership for Success (PFS):** As part of the Partnership for Success grant we are working with the Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (CIACC). In December, we submitted the first three columns of a logic model to NJPN for advice and approval. There were a couple of edits with the

language about one of our root causes. The subcommittee is currently working on the final two columns, interventions and evaluation. The group selected the use of marijuana by adolescents as our problem statement.

Kathi Saxton-Granato reported the CIACC and some of our community partners would be traditionally giving presentations to school personnel; however, due to the pandemic, they are not going out to the schools to give in-person presentations. Therefore, we are breaking down those presentations into smaller virtual sessions that are being recorded and posted on the JTAC website. Just last week, there was a presentation on the five family success centers. This was an important presentation because they are “hidden gems” in our community because of the amount of support that they provide families through programs, resources, and assistance. Two videos have been recently edited and uploaded to the JTAC website about the Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Program (Session 5) and Psychiatric Intervention Program/PIP (Session 4).

**Stand Up and Rebel (SUAR):** SUAR is our youth substance use prevention school groups.

School groups are active at Buena Regional, Oakcrest, and EHTHS. Currently in talks with Absegami and Mainland HS for SUAR to begin. Atlantic City just approved to have SUAR at their school at December BOE meeting, and we will be meeting with them to discuss implementation.

They are always accepting new members. They are always accepting new members and if a high school student does not have a group in their school there is a county-wide group. Visit our Instagram@Incorruptible.Atlantic for our Linktree. From there you can follow us and access our new member registration form.

Jay Tunnicliffe, from EHT HS added since COVID began this is the first year that the program is being held in-person again. One of the previous highlights was when the students attended the youth summit at Stockton and Amanda their SUAR advisor worked with them to educate other high school students.

Laurie explained that every April, prior to COVID, the coalition holds a Youth Summit at Stockton University. In 2020, it was held virtually and it was unable to be held last year. We are working on reserving dates for April this year. Whether or not it will be held in-person will be determined closer to the date.

#### **Opioid Task Force:**

Urban Treatment Associates are hosting virtual Naloxone trainings on Wednesdays at 5pm and Thursdays at 11am. This information can be found in the Thursday email.

Brian reported the county is currently holding free Narcan trainings where every participant receives a free kit. There are now a couple different versions of the presentation. The longer presentation includes opioids, addiction, signs and symptoms, history of the opioid epidemic, how to administer Naloxone, and the legalities of Naloxone. The shortened condensed program is about 15-20 minutes long and is for treatment professionals that strictly focuses on the administration of Naloxone. They are also partnering with Hope One, as their schedule allows, to provide training for those who are on the street. Email Brian Wilson for more information, he provided a link in the chatbox, Wilson\_Brian@aclink.org.

Hope One - Lindsey reported those who are interested in Hope One’s Narcan trainings can come to any outreach location for information. The February schedule will be emailed to Laurie to be sent out. Each

person will receive a kit that has two Narcans in them. Last year, there was a total of 886 trainings (total 1,895) and 1,155 client linkages to treatment in 2021 (2,477 total).

Atlantic County Law Enforcement Advance Diversion (ACLEAD) is a diversion program from the prosecutor's office for people who arrested for third degree possession charges to get into treatment, go to meetings, and get drug screenings for six months in order to get their charges expunged. There is currently no one in the program, so they are trying to reach out to individual police departments to have police offers offer it to individuals upon arrest.

Atlantic County Overdose Fatality Response Team (OFRT)- Dorothy reported they are in their second-year. Their first year they had reviewed 17 cases. An end-of-year report was submitted to the state, and they have given 12 recommendations. A subcommittee/ executive has been formed to oversee activities and implement recommendations. They are doing training for EMS personnel.

AtlantiCare OORP- Scott reported there has been an increase in overdoses over the last few weeks. Exact numbers were not available. Vinnie added individuals who have overdosed in the community are being started on Suboxone. There is a possibility of plans to have EMTs get individuals, who refuse to go to the hospital, started on suboxone.

Opioid Resource Page- Laurie updated the group that the website is in the process of being updated. We are in the process of collecting information on opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery resources. This will be a specific page on the website that will go live in the coming months. Laurie will send out an email when the page does go live, and if your organization is not listed and you would like it to be, email her.

Knock Out Opioid Awareness Day (KOOAD)- Stacy reported we emailed 22 towns and received 15 proclamations for the awareness day and emailed faith-based toolkits and other information to 90 faith-based organizations. We emailed information to 17 athletic directors and coaches, this information included information to be used at athletic events. We also emailed information to 192 people which included JTAC members, and other community organizations and placed 2,000 physical door knockers on the doors of students' rooms at Stockton University, as reported in September.

### **Interventions/Updates:**

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 8 of the departments and the total pounds of medication collected in 2021 is 1,459 lbs of medication. A final total will be available at the March meeting. The Deterra disposal bags are being distributed throughout the county. We have a couple hundred locking medicine cabinets left if you need them. They used to be \$30 each when we ordered them in bulk, however the price has increased to \$100 each. Stacy has done research to find different ones. Once we run out of the ones we have, we will be ordering something similar but a little different that is more cost-effective if the price remains \$100 per cabinet.

We did not have a formal coalition meeting in November because the JTAC Retreat was held, some of these updates do go back and include October.

Community Resiliency- In October, we held a 2-day community resiliency training. We had between 50-57 people participate each day. We are planning a resiliency presentation for faith-based organizations.

The Sheriff's Department, Sheriff's Foundation and Stockton University will be cosponsors. Michael McKnight will be the presenter for the workshop and a date for that will be available in the near future.

Veterinarian/Hospice Outreach- The veterinarian outreach will take place in the coming weeks. Bria sent out a mailing to all of the hospice organizations on Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. If they respond in need of materials, we will be delivering Detera bags to them, information on locking medicine cabinets, and information on proper disposal and permanent drop boxes.

Stockton University Service Learning Class- The class finished this past December. We had a great group of students this semester, as usual. The group worked on managing the Above the Influence social media posts, and three students interviewed two people each who were affected by a substance use disorder. They will be uploaded to the Story Corp website. Story Corp was highlighted on *60 Minutes* this Sunday. We also had a group of students who worked on a marijuana prevention project. Individuals under 21 can obviously not have cannabis products, but individuals over the age of 21 still cannot have cannabis products on campus due to federal funding that Stockton University receives. They are working on a campaign to inform people of this information. The last group worked on a stigma campaign.

Stigma Campaign- A group of Stockton students worked on an ending stigma campaign this past semester. A toolkit was created by Kathleen Quish, the mental health coordinator for Atlantic County, 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, did present at 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.

**Legislation Updates:** Tonia updated the group that there were two bills passed in New Jersey. The first one was the Syringe Access Bill, which decriminalizes having syringes without a prescription. This solves the issue of people having Narcan kits with syringes. The second one allows any non-profit or health care center to open a harm reduction center, not just a municipality. This solves the issue of allowing Oasis to stay open in Atlantic City.

Laurie shared an article that was released says research from the CDC says that people who have access to syringe access programs are less likely to die of a fatal overdose, 5X more likely to start a drug treatment program, 3X more likely to stop chaotic drug use altogether, and 50% less likely to acquire HIV and Hepatitis C than people without access. The article will be included in the Thursday email.

As for Cannabis, there have been no stores opened in the county yet. This is due to a lot of the legalities that come with it. For example, if a town in Atlantic County authorized only 2 stores to open and if 5 applied to the state for a license, the municipality has to decide which 2 of the 5 would be allowed. No arrests are being made because it would be expunged anyway if the individual is over 21 and has less than 6 ounces. Once recreational stores open, there will be an increase in marijuana use in the youth, so we will have to be prepared for it.

**Tobacco Updates:** Great American Smokeout November 18th-Saw a huge bump in engagement on TFHNJ website and social media.

Tobacco Free Tuesday Webinar, January 18th, "Communicating with Stakeholders about the Point-of-Sale" Description: NJ has been very successful in changing the landscape of tobacco point of sale with Tobacco 21 and the flavor restrictions but there is still work to do. Tobacco Point of Sale is a key opportunity to prevent underage access to tobacco products.

Working Well Tobacco Free - Assisting all types of business including behavioral health facilities in the area. Smoke Free AC coalition meets with national partners on a weekly basis. American Nonsmokers Rights (ANR) has hired a campaign manager to lead efforts over the coming months. The Casino Employee group CEASE is working with ANR and other partners to have meetings with legislators.

Smoke Free Housing- Tabled at the Pleasantville Housing Authority-Vaccine Booster event, gave out Quit Center materials and encouraged residents to sign the Smoke Free Housing Pledge. All public housing is supposed to be smoke-free. Over 20 multi-unit housing places received Great American Smokeout materials in November.

Don't Get Vaped In presentations have been given to all Galloway Twp Elementary Schools and the Middle School. Presentations continue to be requested for other schools in the county. Please contact Carlo Favretto Jr. for any DGVI requests.

The Quit Center is still working entirely virtually - offering individual & group counseling and up to 12 weeks of free OTC Nicotine Replacement Therapy. The number is 609.804.QUIT. Our ongoing groups are: Weds. at noon and a night open community group at 6:30, Monday afternoon closed community group, & 3 groups between 2 residential recovery centers, John Brooks and RCA. A huge outreach was done for the Great American Smokeout. We currently have active individual clients as well & are always accepting new clients.

#### **New Business:**

Tips Training for bartenders was held at Gregory's in Somers Point on Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We will have a few more scheduled as we get closer to warmer weather.

New Jersey Prevention Network offers toolkits on their website. They have a really good one called *Effective Prevention in New Jersey* that explains prevention. Lisa mentioned it is a really good tool and very comprehensive. We will be getting hardcopies of the toolkits to be distributed in the community to explain prevention to them.

The physician outreach will be happening in the coming months. It will be done via mail because of COVID. It will include information about underage drinking, marijuana use among adolescents, and information on proper medication disposal.

Every year before Superbowl, we do a Sticker Shock program, where we take our high school students from Stand Up and Rebel to go into liquor stores and put stickers on cases of alcohol that state the consequences for those who provide alcohol to underage individuals. Because of COVID, last year, we have provided brown paper bags with the stickers to the liquor stores. Mainland High School has expressed their desire to have students take part in it. Whether or not it will be done where the students are physically going in-person to the liquor stores will be determined in the near future.

Fentanyl vaping is an issue that has been given some attention. Information from the DEA says it was originally found in California and some on the east coast. No cases in Atlantic County have been reported so far. Vape pens are often confiscated in schools. Therefore, if they contain fentanyl, an overdose can happen just from touching it. This is another reason why it is important to have Narcan on hand and be trained using it.

The Ray Lucas Athlete Event for the athlete grant is being set up. A Partnership for a Drug Free NJ (PDFNJ) plans on doing 10 presentations over the next year and a half with the former NJ-native NFL Quarterback Ray Lucas about his experience with opioid addiction.

As stated in the Thursday email, the next PDFNJ webinar will be with Sam Quinones, the author of *Dreamland*, a book about opioid use in America. Laurie will be one of the presenters at the one in March, where they will be highlighting our coalition's efforts about proper medication disposal.

A Marijuana Toolkit is being created and there are some other upcoming projects happening specific to marijuana. We know when cannabis begins to be sold there will most likely be an increase in adolescent use due to availability. We will be planning more interventions and working on projects in regard to this issue. We do have marijuana use among youth as part of our problem statements with both the DFC and CAB regional coalition grants.

#### **Upcoming Events/Announcements/Information:**

Ken's role at John Brooks Recovery Center is related to the new gambling program but also includes community outreach, relations, and education. This is similar to his previous role where he reached out to the community to educate them about gambling. Therefore, you can still reach out to him about those matters.

The Mental Health Association in New Jersey is doing a Family Education series on January 20<sup>th</sup> on harm reduction. Tonia will send out a flyer to Laurie.

The OFRT has done training for EMS in Galloway. They are working on doing more in Pleasantville, Somers Point, Atlantic City, etc. The training is called "Helping Hand" but is called other names depending on the location, the training includes education about addiction, trauma, and ACEs. Dorothy will share information with Laurie to send to the group.

Michael Garcia is working on The Council of Compulsive Gambling. They are seeing a significant rise in multiple levels of gambling. They offer a 30-hour course that is free to NJ residents. Email him to get a coupon to access it for free or to create any initiatives related to compulsive gambling prevention [michael@800gambler.org](mailto:michael@800gambler.org).

Recovery Centers of America (RCA) at Lighthouse in Mays Landing, NJ is piloting a program with a real-time translation device to accommodate individuals who speak foreign language, different dialects, and American Sign Language (ASL). For more information contact Dawn [dtoscanogeraci@recoverycoa.com](mailto:dtoscanogeraci@recoverycoa.com).

Healing Hearts and Minds is completing their first year of servicing Atlantic, Cape May, and Ocean County. They provide in-home therapy for families affected by substance use disorders. They also offer a

peer specialist service. They have serviced 38 families in their first year. Contact Beth Weiss for any further questions, information, or to include that program in any initiatives [bweiss@acendahealth.org](mailto:bweiss@acendahealth.org).

**Next meeting:** March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, In-person or virtual format to be determined.

Motion to adjourn meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Wilson, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Roy, Meeting Adjourned.