

Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Attendees:

Amy Saunders, Christina Mullins, Dr. Boisvert, Bob Hansen, Dream Mace, Brian Gallagher, Gary Krushansky, Matt Boggs, Jim Becker, Jessica Smith, Thomas Plymale, Nick Stuchell, Dr. Kilkenny, Rachel Thaxton, Diana Whitlock, Dr. Berry, Heather McDaniel, Dr. Petrany, Betsy Jividen, Secretary Crouch (Secretary Crouch's participation was limited due to technical difficulties) and Dora Radford.

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment was called to order at 3:05 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, by Chairperson Gallagher. The meeting was held via Zoom conference.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed upon the motion of Dr. Craig Boisvert.

Agenda Items:

Status of SUD treatment., recovery and prevention during the COVID19 pandemic

The Council heard an update from Robert Hansen, Director of West Virginia's Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) on Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A couple of Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU) are not operating but are working to reopen. Residential treatment facilities are reducing bed capacity to accommodate social distancing. Outpatient care has moved to use of telehealth. Residential programs are worried about the effects COVID will have on their programs but so far have been able to maintain all services despite many challenges.

ODCP has overdose data through the end of March showing that overdoses are slightly down as compared to this time last year. At the same time, Wood, Wyoming, and Jefferson counties showed a spike in overdoses. The spike(s) did not continue to become an upward trend.

Discussion about future settlement funding

The Council heard an update from Dr. Mace of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) on the plans for use of settlement funds and abatement resulting from opioid litigation. WVSOM will rely on the assistance of the experts on this Council as plans are developed and implemented.

The goal of WVSOM is to use abatement funds to support the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in the Strategic Plan.

Council members were concerned about relying on Oklahoma's abatement plan as a model for West Virginia. In the Oklahoma's plan, the largest portion of the funds are to be donated to universities for research and development. Council members did not feel universities should be included in that way. The needs of different geographic locations in West Virginia must be considered. Council members felt Ohio's abatement plan would better align with West Virginia's needs but that any plan for West Virginia must be based on our specific and unique needs.

Another area of concern was that communities may be at different stages of readiness and some rural communities already have HRSA grants for needs assessment so duplication of effort must be monitored closely.

Chairperson Gallagher said there should be a needs assessment to identify how different communities would do different things which would allow for a plan tailored to individual community needs. He also felt that assessment should begin as soon as possible.

Strategic Plan Quarterly Report

The Council heard an overview of the 1st Quarter Report on the Strategic Plan by Deborah Koester. The Council may want to hear a presentation on the findings of the public education group.

Chairperson Gallagher felt that in the future we need to make sure all agencies know what they are responsible for under the Strategic Plan and that this meeting may morph into being solely for implementation of the Strategic Plan.

A group has been working on costing out the Strategic Plan to track funds for each of the KPIs.

Legislative updates

The Council next heard an overview of SUD legislation from the Legislative Session by Chairperson Gallagher.

Agency Updates

Christina Mullins, Commissioner for Bureau for Behavioral (BBH) Health gave the Council an update on recent BBH activities including but not limited to grant applications and statements of work. Kim Tieman requested that she be kept apprised of grants that might be available to the public and communities; of interest are grants that include telehealth.

Next, Dr. Becker provided an update from Bureau for Medical Services on the availability of pharmacy products including MAT, working with rational drug therapy and work on the MOMs grant. Medicaid has a useful web link that connects to all COVID-related policies including those that related to SUD. Dr. Becker will send the link for distribution to the Council.

Betsy Jividen, Commissioner for West Virginia Division of Correction and Rehabilitation, reported that all the GOALS units are still up and running and participants were beginning to complete the program.

Department of Education had received a prevention grant. They are having issues with providing training due to COVID-19 restrictions to in-person training. This funding must be expended by September 31. They are working BBH, WVU and Marshall to write a grant that will be able to enlarge the Expanded School Mental Health program among other activities.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair. The next general meeting will be at 3:00 p.m. on June 17, 2020.