

# Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment June 17, 2020

**Attendees:** Robert Hansen, Gary Krushansky, Dora Radford, Deborah Koester, Nick Stuchell, Tom Plymale, Luke Yingling, Brian Gallagher, Marcus Hopkins, Betsy Jividen, Rachel Thaxton, Craig Boisvert, Heather McDaniel, Christina Mullins, Secretary Sandy, Secretary Crouch, Dr. KilKenny, Matt Boggs, Jessica Smith, Toni Young, Kim Tieman, Justin Smith, Melanie Purkey and Dr. Becker.

## Opening:

The regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment was called to order at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 by Chairperson Gallagher. The meeting was conducted by Zoom conference.

## Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as amended to include Secretary Crouch under the list of meeting attendees as moved by Dr. Boisvert and seconded by Secretary Crouch.

## Agenda Items

### Subpoenas

The Council heard an update from General Counsel for Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) regarding the status of multiple subpoena responses. Counsel asked Council members to email requests for copies of subpoenas to either him or Dora Radford of ODCP.

### SUD Treatment

The Council next heard and update on the current state of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic from Robert (Bob) Hansen, director of ODCP. Telehealth has been a good tool during this time and providers have done an incredible job keeping their programs open. Overdoses have (unofficially) increased. Naloxone distribution has been increased as one strategy to help address this. The new regulations passed this past session have eased this process. A Naloxone distribution day is being planned for early fall. Another factor in the increased rate of overdoses is social isolation during the pandemic. Wood County, Beckley, Logan and Huntington communities are now the subject of focus groups to address the higher rates of overdose in these geographic regions.

### Current status of Plan

Director Hansen also reported on the current state of the West Virginia 2020-2022 Substance Use Response Plan (Plan). As year one of the Plan nears completion, Director Hansen suggested this Council begin drafting revisions in October based on what has been learned from the implementation process. The final revised plan should be reviewed during the Council's November meeting.

### Costing the Plan

Luke Yingling of ODCP gave the Council an update on the current status of costing the Plan. Most funding streams have been identified for year One. A draft report should be ready for review at

the August Council meeting. Secretary Crouch reported that they are waiting on a determination of what can be done with CARES funds.

#### Agency updates

Secretary Crouch gave an update for Bureau for Public Health (BPH). BPH's focus is COVID-19. Investigations have increased and so have contact tracers. There have been outbreaks from Churches. Secretary Crouch didn't not feel the epidemic would relent any time soon. He noted that there have been amazing efforts by public health and expressed appreciation to all the people who are working on COVID. BPH is working on a vaping report as well.

Commissioner Mullins reported that Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH) had been working on obtaining a no-cost extension for SOR funds that they expect to be approved. They have converted to using Zoom and reported a positive transition. Five new Announcements of Funding Availability (AFAs) will be approved soon. These include AFAs for START, QRTs, PEERs in youth and Teen Intervene. FDA's tobacco inspections are on hold.

Dr. Becker updated the Council on current activities at Bureau for Medical Services (BMS). Ohio State University provided BMS with a white paper addressing issues of extended hospitalizations of SUD related infections due to lack of post inpatient care supports such as home health. (Home health will not visit IV drug users with related infections) Dr. Becker requested that the Council review the OSU white paper and comment on how its program might work for West Virginia. BMS is using funds from the Material Opiate Misuse (MOMs) grant to expand the Drug Free Moms and Babies program. Dr. Becker suggested the Council invite Cynthia Parsons to give a detailed update on implementation of the 1115 SUD waiver

Secretary Sandy of DMAPS reported that all State Police are now being trained on Naloxone administration and that all State Police academy cadets are receiving this training as well.

Director Hansen gave an overview of the activities of the Implementation, Stigma/Public Education and Prevention subcommittees. Implementation was working hard to meet its goals. Director Hansen offered to share minutes of their meetings with the Council upon request. Stigma/Public Education was making steady progress developing a statewide approach and have been meeting monthly but will need to meet more frequently. Prevention has been very enthusiastic but has been somewhat limited by the situation with schools due to COVID-19.

Melanie Purkey, the new designee to the Council from Department of Education, gave an update on relevant activities in DOE. Newly appointed superintendent, Clayton Burch, created the Office of Student Support and Well Being to link resources including funding under one umbrella. It recently sent out applications to counties for block grant funds. Plans are in development for return to school activities.

Director Hansen began a follow-up discussion on Dr. Mace's presentation at the last meeting re: SUD lawsuit settlement funds. Completing the costing of the Plan becomes important for this discussion to identify areas that have funding gaps.

#### Methadone clinic moratorium

The Council next discussed need and climate for expansion of methadone treatment. Toni Young was present to discuss comments and concerns. Some identified barriers to expansion include

multiple levels of stigma and legislator concern over potential diversion. An additional barrier to expansion is the potential push back from the company that owns most of the methadone clinics in West Virginia. They may fight any initiatives in order to maintain their market hold. Barriers to accessing methadone treatment are travel/transportation and need for daily reports to clinic. The consensus of the Council was that methadone is a cheap and proven treatment for SUD and that some change to the current legislation would be a worthwhile pursuit.

The Council discussed several potential ways to amend the current law, including but not limited to allowing mobile services and allowing current suboxone and naltrexone providers to also prescribe methadone.

If requested by the Council, Secretary Crouch would include these issues on its list of proposed legislative pursuits for approval by the Governor. A formal motion by the Council would be necessary to move forward with this.

Counsel for ODCP will send a copy of the current Methadone moratorium to the Council members and a copy of his Memorandum on the same to Secretary Crouch.

Kim Tieman moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Secretary Crouch seconded the same. The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.