

## **Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee April 11, 2023, Approved**

### **Attendees:**

Ayne Amjad, Stephanie Bond, Brian Gallagher (partial attendance), Sam Hess, Medina Prue, Judge James Rowe, Stephanie Thornton (co-chair)

### **Opening:**

Stephanie Thornton (co-chair) provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee. The meeting was called to order at on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve February and March meeting minutes. Judge Rowe made the motion to approve the minutes and Stephanie seconded the motion. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce guest speakers, Dr. Ayne Amjad and Medina Prue, from the West Virginia Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

### **Agenda Items:**

#### **Guest Speakers:**

- Dr. Ayne Amjad and Medina Prue (WV Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation)
  - They are currently working towards increasing the availability of substance use disorder treatments in correctional facilities, as well as determining who is in need of treatment.
  - Dr. Amjad remarks that there is a diversion of Suboxone medication to Sublocade or Vivitrol. They currently administer 300 doses per month. She also states that many of the inmates would like to enroll into detox clinics, especially since the majority did not have the ability to before due to provider shortages, lack of motivation, and lack of transportation.
  - Dr. Amjad notes that while the Suboxone pills work towards expediting treatment, it still takes staff members for transport and other various factors that are barriers to treatment.

- Medina states that the work release facilities have access to Medicaid funding, but most other correctional facilities do not.
- The GOALS program is an addiction recovery program for West Virginia inmates that WV DCR oversees. It aims to enroll inmates into treatment programs, as well as maintain continuity after release. It has now expanded to 8 sites across the state, based off a wait list. The requirements to enroll are individuals with SUD, who are non-violent offenders.
- At the end of the month, many will have completed the program and new spots will open to those on the wait list.
- All are offered Vivitrol and Sublocade while on the units and half of the program participants have agreed to this treatment.
- Staff are also being educated on the different forms of MAT. There is one substance abuse therapist per unit (12 enrollees/unit). They must fulfill state training requirements (degrees in the field), and additional training is provided by WV DCR. Rachel Thaxton is soon to be a presenter for anti-stigma training for staff. Narcan training will be held on April 24.
- The program is not court ordered; the judge puts in the order as a recommendation. The program is a minimum of 6 months. Progress is tracked by workbooks that participants are expected to complete, as well as assessments throughout treatment. After program completion, the judge is notified and grants the individual another hearing, which often ends in diversion to probation.
- Substance abuse therapists help streamline referrals for individuals on probation to programs or housing upon release, but once they are released there is a gap due to funding and scarce resources.
- Stephanie Bond suggested contacting Brad Douglas to gain access to pre-sentence investigation reports that would aid in program entrance information for GOALS participants.
- Medina noted that a graduate of the GOALS program has recently been hired as a full-time peer mentor for DCR.
- Dr. Amjad noted that there is a gap for individuals who are brought in for booking, as they have to self-request detox treatment, which often leaves individuals going through withdrawal for 2-3 weeks and heightening the chance of overdose. She reports that there is misinformation about MAT education for providers and inmates.
- Psychologists and psychiatrists are available for co-occurring disorder treatment, but there is a provider shortage. Dr. Amjad reports that for inmates who have not refilled their prescriptions in the past month are marked as “non-compliant” and are potentially withheld access.
- Follow-up for GOALS program graduates occurs five times: one, three, six, nine, and twelve months after release. All treatment after release is self-report. Most graduates have responded to these follow-up calls. She notes that there has

been talks about staffing probation offices with GOALS program staff to achieve better follow-up.

- After release, GOALS program graduates ideally are linked with community providers for treatment follow-up. Family engagement and local community organization involvement is also highly encouraged. Stephanie suggested the use of a task force to follow-up with graduates who do not respond to follow-up calls.
- Dr. Amjad states that the subcommittee could be of use to the GOALS program by establishing continuity of care for program graduates on probation following release.
- Sam and Judge Rowe note that presenting to the Judicial Conference about the GOALS program may benefit judges and help to refer more inmates to the program.

### **Adjournment:**

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. Judge Rowe made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Sam seconded the motion. The subcommittee will meet again in May.