

## **Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Courts and Justice-Involved Populations Subcommittee October 10, 2023, Approved**

### **Attendees:**

Amber Blankenship, Stephanie Bond, Gary Krushansky, Tom Plymale, Justin Smith, 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, October 10, 2023 and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve September meeting minutes. Amber made the motion to approve the minutes and Tom seconded the motion. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Quarter 3 progress and identify priority areas for 2024 planning for the Courts and Justice Involved Populations section of the State Plan.

### **Agenda Items:**

#### **2023 Implementation Planning / Quarter 3 Progress**

##### Goal 1

- Strategy 1, KPI 1: Marked as 50% completed. In the September meeting, the discussion centered around the creation of a policy paper aimed at cataloging and documenting a gap analysis. Justin mentioned that ODCP has developed a page listing MAT providers but expressed uncertainty about who is responsible for its maintenance. He also noted that, during an upcoming corrections meeting, he will inquire about the prevalence of MAT programs in jails and prisons. Justin mentioned a potential naloxone distribution initiative upon release for individuals undergoing SUD screening, along with linkage to treatment through case managers and will provide an update on its operationality post-corrections meeting. Stephanie agreed to initiate drafting based on previous meeting minutes, with plans to circulate it for review.
- Strategy 1, KPI 2: Marked as 25% completed. Justin will gather details regarding substance use case managers, which will inform progress tracking. There's mention of linkage from Wexford

using telehealth for individuals in the community. This may tie into the same white paper related to KPI 1.

- Strategy 2, KPI 1: Marked as 0% completed. Last time, there was a discussion about modifying the language, but it was suggested that such changes be considered for next year's plan. The focus is on ensuring a comprehensive list of treatment services is available for review by courts and justice systems to inform alternative sentencing decisions—an area of emphasis for the upcoming year. The current wording is deemed too challenging to measure. Stephanie mentioned WVARR having lists of approved sober living homes and treatment courts and day report centers. Consideration of mapping programming statewide will help identify gaps that need addressing. Carly will assist in generating this map.
- Strategy 2, KPI 2: Marked as 0% completed. This KPI pertains to the legal mechanism for enabling alternative sentencing. The same map discussed in KPI 1 could apply here. Justin noted that ODCP has treatment resources available on the website, although they are challenging to locate—highlighting a significant gap.
- Strategy 2, KPI 3: Marked as 75% completed. Last month's Yellow Line Project Call provided ideas for diversion opportunities that promote treatment. Alternatives to incarceration have been explored during CBHCs meetings and discussions on jail bills. Identifying the need for funding and support for the expansion of LEAD is a priority for the upcoming year. Stephanie plans to reach out to Gary for updates on the expansion. Additionally, Bradley will be invited next month to provide data and statistics on jail bill outcomes.

## Goal 2

- Strategy 1, KPI 1: Marked as 25% completed. Amber highlighted a significant challenge where individuals with convictions in two different circuits aren't eligible for expungement, even when going through Jobs & Hope. This renders them unable to file for expungement in either circuit. Stephanie will reach out to Marie Bechtel regarding this issue. Potential avenues to address this challenge include legislative actions, with Amber noting discussions of clean slate issues but emphasizing the need for an entirely new bill.
- Strategy 1, KPI 2: Marked as 100% completed.
- Strategy 2, KPI 1: Marked as 100% completed.
- Strategy 2, KPI 2: Marked as 85% completed. Speed hiring events are ongoing and continuing to take place.
- Strategy 2, KPI 3: Marked as 100% completed. Flyers highlighting incentives are distributed to employers at speed hiring events. Jobs & Hope also provides a packet with this information and offers reimbursement for hiring. Employers who hire individuals with a criminal justice background are well-informed about these incentives.

## Town Hall Meetings / 2024 Planning

- Stephanie emphasized the importance of addressing gaps identified through gap analyses conducted in this year's plan.

- Stephanie highlighted a significant concern regarding the lack of dedicated resources for juveniles struggling with addiction in the state. Additionally, existing juvenile programming is often tailored to specific charges. Sharing information about juvenile drug court programs during the Youth Town Hall Meeting proved to be valuable.
- There is a need to tap into the experiences of PRSSs at various levels. Stephanie acknowledged the challenge in finding PRSSs but mentioned that efforts to promote this position have been widespread, including through Jobs & Hope and word of mouth. Part of the issue may be the limited nature of the role, with a 32-hour workweek at \$18/hr, which does not allow for health insurance coverage. Stephanie also noted a collaboration with the licensing board of PRSSs, WVCBAPP, which maintains a list of certified PRSSs. Certification requirements include having two years in recovery and accumulating 500 hours, which could be a timing issue in expanding this workforce. Amber highlighted the challenge of accumulating 500 hours, particularly since PRSSs are now required to be employed rather than volunteering.
- West Virginia CARES is running the Get Paid to Pay It Forward campaign, which involves individuals in recovery driving others to treatment programs. Background checks are conducted by CARES, and if any issues are triggered, the variance window is opened.
- The Town Hall Meeting Report denoted a push to expand family treatment courts and juvenile drug courts.
- In child abuse and neglect civil proceedings, it was noted that the journey of substance use and recovery is not always linear. Some individuals may experience relapses just before completing their program, leading to the termination of parental rights. Efforts are being made to view recovery as a supportive process rather than a finality resulting in the termination of parental rights. The aim is to ensure that individuals have access to referral resources once they have a case plan in place to work toward the process of reunification.

#### **Additional Discussion**

- Stephanie highlighted the efforts made in New England states to reduce stigma among court personnel and individuals with lived experience. More information can be found at this link: <https://news.ncsc.org/7L57-8KQP-4VVWXU-7V93Y-1/c.aspx>. The focus is on enhancing education within the court systems.
- Carly mentioned that the Youth Town Hall Meeting Report will be ready for review by next week.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Stephanie will distribute an initial draft of a policy paper related to the gap analysis within Goal 1, Strategy 1, KPI 1 and share it with the subcommittee for review.
- Carly will compile a map as a step forward in achieving Goal 1, Strategy 2, KPI 1.
- Stephanie will contact Bradley McCoy to invite him to the upcoming subcommittee meeting, where he can provide updates on the jail bill.

#### **Adjournment:**

Stephanne closed the meeting by thanking all subcommittee members for their attendance and participation. Stephanie made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Amber seconded the motion. The subcommittee will meet again on November 14th at 10 am.