

# ***Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC)***

**Meeting Minutes: Thursday June 11, 2020, 7:00- 8:00 pm**

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Voting Members Present:** Elyse Grossman, Larry Simmons, Margaret Mattson, Ed “Bunny” Rich, Dawinder “Dave” Sidhu, Cynthia Wright, Laura Mitchell, Kabir Singh, Anam Khan, Dr. Ghulam Abbas

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Hardy Bennett, Caryn “Corey” Brandel, Yasmeen Mabry, Ruben Rosario

**Guests Present:** Betty Djawadan (Arise & Flourish)

**Overview:** The goal of the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC) is to express the views of the community in the formulation and administration of alcohol and other drug abuse prevention and treatment services in Montgomery County. Members of the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council serve as community representatives, who provide guidance to the County Executive and the County Council in identifying prevention and treatment needs and reviewing the county’s efforts in addressing those needs. The Advisory Council will make recommendations in support of, or to improve, current prevention and treatment efforts. The AODAAC also serves as the local drug and alcohol abuse council and submits a bi-annual strategic plan to the State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration.

**Call to order.** Elyse Grossman, Chair, called the Microsoft Teams videoconference meeting to order at 7:02pm. Introductions followed. With 10 voting members, a quorum was present. AODAAC voting members voted and approved drafted May meeting minutes.

## **Updates**

### **Committee Reports**

The Legislative, Prevention, and Treatment & Recovery committees did not meet. Since this was the final meeting of fiscal year 2020, the meeting focused immediately upcoming items such as AODAAC elections.

### **Spring Forum**

Margaret provided an update that the Spring Forum Planning Committee plans to hold a virtual forum in October. Diane and Corey are looking into the mechanics of different virtual platforms to host a large-group event. Corey added that others in the county have recommended using Microsoft Teams, which was recently used to host a successful 150+ attendee town hall. Corey and Diane are meeting with the county’s Microsoft Teams expert John Frey on Monday to learn more about the platform.

### **AODAAC Elections and Open Positions**

Elyse requested volunteers for the Nominating Committee who will not be running for executive board positions. Dave, Larry, and Cynthia volunteered. Elyse reminded the group that elections will

be held in July and that any voting member can throw his or her own name in for nomination. Only voting members need to attend the meeting in July. Corey shared that 4 AODAAC candidates were present for their interviews for open positions, and she will be submitting a recommendation memo shortly now that interviews have concluded.

### **County Reports**

#### **Health and Human Services (DHHS) report:**

Hardy shared the following:

- There is a 3-phase plan for reopening the county. We are in Phase 1, and throughout June, certain employees are making a staggered return to the workplace. County officials expect a larger return to the workplace from September to December, but many factors make predictions difficult (e.g., potential surges from social distancing lapses during protests).
- Telehealth and teletherapy continue to work well for the majority of clients. Many prefer the virtual platform, but a small number have challenges with virtual accessibility.
- The completion date for the Avery Road Treatment Center renovation has been pushed back into the Fall, because receipt an elevator purchased from China is delayed.
- Ex-officio AODAAC member Tony Sturgess will be retiring on July 1.

Ruben shared the following:

- The year-to-date overdoses are 72 nonfatal and 22 fatal. Nonfatal overdoses are up 22% from last year. Fatal overdoses are down 10% from last year, but a few other cases are pending toxicology. The police receive reports of 4-5 overdoses per week, which does not suggest a surge in overdoses that many people have expected.
- There have been 14 fatal collisions so far this year, with alcohol involvement in 5 of them. Since COVID there have been 3 fatal collisions, but alcohol was not a factor in any of them. Additionally, DUIs are down for several reasons, including that less drivers are on the road.
- The Community Opioid Prevention Education (COPE) trailer has been paused due to COVID, but the community engagement division still has several locations lined up for the future.

Yasmeen shared the following:

- With help from the Maryland Health Department, on Monday the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) received a shipment of personal protective equipment (PPE) including cloth and K95 face masks and gloves. The LBHA distributed PPE to 36 health providers this week. Yasmeen has been personally in charge of distribution to providers at the office.
- Rebecca Garcia continues to communicate with the state to ensure that providers are being paid from the Optum administrative services organization (ASO), as there continue to be learning pains from the transition to Optum that occurred on January 1.

### **Additional AODAAC Member Comments**

- **Laura-** Guidance counselors and teachers often see and report domestic violence, which is harder since students are not in school due to COVID. Children with adverse childhood

events and without care often abuse substances later. Laura encourages the police to continue distributing reports to MCPS when a child is present at a domestic violence scene.

- **Evelyn**- The Landing's WRAP programs are holding weekly support groups for parents of children who are currently using or in recovery. The meetings are virtual via Zoom, Tuesdays at 6pm, 1st and 3rd weeks of the month in English, 2nd and 4th weeks in Spanish.
- **Bunny**- His wife LaTonia will receive the Unsung Hero Award at the rescheduled Tuerk Conference in September, for the work she does in Montgomery County with Tree of Hope, STEER, etc. other organizations. Also, the Tree of Hope Association got approval to lead its recovery coach trainings online with an adapted curriculum that has been approved for CEUs and certifications. See upcoming trainings at: <https://www.treeofhopeassn.com/>
- **Elyse**- She is conducting research with UMBC on alcohol consumption during COVID, via a 10-15 minute survey. They need it widely distributed beyond white upper-middle class. The focus during COVID so far seems to be on financial harm to stores/restaurants and not on public health: she wonders if there is a way to go back now that there is alcohol delivery. Elyse also shared that there is a webinar on Monday led by police on alcohol and COVID.
- **Betty**- Since schools closed, Arise & Flourish had to cancel 20 addiction education events. They are having speakers video record their stories and the cycle of addiction. Teachers were thrilled to show the videos online during health class. They created a Google sheet for feedback from students, and hope teachers can have students complete it for credit.
- **Larry**- During a webinar, a speaker shared that trust is the public's biggest concern with the government and those who work with it. Larry hopes AODAAC can address mistrust issues.
- **Dave**- Anecdotally he sees increased substance use during COVID and wonders what AODAAC can do to advocate for the community, e.g., propose to the County Council more treatment resources, more telehealth, etc.

**The meeting was adjourned** at 8:37 PM.