

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC)

Meeting Minutes: Thursday November 12, 2020, 7:00- 9:00 pm

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Voting Members Present: Margaret Mattson, Ed “Bunny” Rich, Evelyn Saim-Lobos, Elyse Grossman, Larry Simmons, Dave Sidhu, Cynthia Wright, Laura Mitchell, Anam Khan, Cristina Rabadan, Katrina Busk, Nick Albaugh, Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Kabir Singh

Ex-Officio Members Present: Hardy Bennett, Corey Brandel, Lt. Ruben Rosario, Ingrid Gonzalez, Gabriela Monzon-Reynolds, Robin White, Rose Burnhill, Ben Stevenson II

Guests Present: Courtney Seelhorst of Pyramid Walden, Wright Doss, Elizabeth Leek of Narcotics Anonymous, Anne Ellis of Federation of Families, Dani Paradise of Maryland Public Interest Research Group, Dr. Gerald Marti, Sean Channer of Arise & Flourish

Call to order. Margaret Mattson, Chair, called the Microsoft Teams videoconference meeting to order at 7:05pm. Introductions followed. With 14 voting members, a quorum was present. AODAAC voting members voted and approved drafted October meeting minutes.

Presentation by Ben Stevenson II, Prevention and Harm Reduction Manager, Behavioral Health and Crisis Center, Montgomery County (DHHS):

- Ben discussed the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA)’s Grants, Prevention, and Harm Reduction work.
 - The state provides grants for: 1) Prevention Services, and 2) Opioid Misuse Prevention. Also, there is county funding for a substance use prevention before- and after-school program which is virtual during COVID. The LBHA’s STOP grant funds the Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Program (ASAPP) for at-risk youth. There are media campaigns on nonmedical prescription drug use and underage drinking resulting from needs assessment data, challenging youth’s low perception of risk. Social media via Instagram and Facebook reaches around 18,000 on a monthly basis.
 - The Harm Reduction Grant from the Overdose Intervention Team (OIT) enables Narcan distribution and prevention services.
 - Dare to be You facilitated by Sheppard Pratt works with parents of pre-school age youth on drug use risks and to strengthen family engagement. They continue serving families virtually, but engaging new families/schools is hard during COVID.
 - Ben hoped to get youth prevention clubs in all 26 high schools in the county. They created 2 more pre-COVID for a total of 10 but face barriers during COVID. Now he is working on a youth ambassador program for youth to advocate with peers.

- The state requires a prevention coalition, formerly Many Voices Smart Choices, now call Montgomery County Prevention Alliance which happens before all OIT meetings on the 4th Tuesday monthly.
- They made a KnowtheriskMC PSA on safe drug storage and disposal. This reached 745,000 homes (96% of targeted households) via Comcast.
- They put 2,500 drug deactivation pouches with crisis resources in food distribution bags from April-June this year. Drug Take Back has led to 16,000 lbs. of prescriptions in the county since 2012, and all 6 district police stations now have takeback 24/7.
- Narcan Training continues virtually the 4th Tuesday monthly at 6pm, with mailed Narcan/pickup dates. They are offering a bi-monthly noon Narcan training.
- Narcan Training Registration link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NarcanTraining1>
- They did focus groups on acceptability of a syringe services program to distribute clean syringes. They will use a backpack model without a fixed location to build relationships. They are looking to partner with public health to distribute while also offering STI testing, fentanyl testing strips, and possibly wound care too.
- Ben oversees a contract with The Landing, an adolescent recovery clubhouse.
- He works with Collaboration Council to do 4 community forums per year—the first virtual was on overdoses during COVID; and he is working with OIT on a prescriber education opportunity this spring.
- Lead OIT's Turn the Curve strategic planning process
- One strategy identified is the development of an online digital platform that community members and providers will be able to use to pull up programs in any zip code queried by languages spoken, etc. Ideally it will be updated in real time to know which facilities have open beds. Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) funding is good for 3 years to support the database.
- Go Slow is a fentanyl risk- harm reduction campaign, educating active drug users on using slowly and testing what they purchase due to the risks of fentanyl-laced drugs.
- Ben's collaborators include Erin Fashion, Andy Jillson with the ASAPP program, contractors who help w/ Narcan, a Yvonne Ade community health nurse, and SASCA/The Landing.

Updates/New Business

Invitation to AODAAC to Join County Initiative on Suicide Prevention

- **Ben Stevenson:** The suicide rate in Montgomery County is higher than are the state and national rates. The Suicide Prevention group has had 2 meetings so far with 30-50 attendees from various community organizations. The goal is to expand the County's prevention efforts beyond youth to include the whole lifespan. There is evidence of suicide deaths related to COVID circumstances. The group is working on evidence-based strategies to help combat suicide, depression, and anxiety in the county. The group is also working on

a comprehensive needs assessment related to suicide to guide the work. AODAAC has a role because suicide and substance use go hand in hand.

- **Dr. Marti:** Suicide is increasing overall. Overall survival has not progressed for two years straight, and the plateau is attributed to suicide. Based on his considerable experience with overdose fatality reviews, Dr. Marti says forensic exams are the best way to learn what needs to be done. He asked if the county has a suicide fatality review to examine the full history leading up to suicide cases. Hardy Bennett said this does not currently exist.
- **Laura Mitchell, Anaum Khan, and Bunny Rich** expressed interest in attending the Suicide Prevention meetings on behalf of AODAAC.

Proposed Partnership with MD Public Interest Research Group Tobacco Initiative

- **Dani Paradise:** The Maryland Public Interest Research Group's Faith and Community Against Flavored Tobacco is focused on anti-vaping legislation. There is a misconception that e-cigarettes are not as harmful since they do not have tar like cigarettes do, but there are still serious impacts—especially for youth—on mood, brain function/ development, and heart and lung disease risk which is alarming during COVID. E-cigarettes also prime young brains for increased risk of addiction to other substances. People who would not have picked up cigarettes otherwise are 4x more likely to start if they use an e-cigarette. The group has a public media campaign in a few days, then days of action to bring attention and write letters to legislators' offices, followed by a December Town Hall.
- **If AODAAC agrees to sponsor their December Town Hall and sign on to their one-pager:** AODAAC would not have any financial commitments, but would be asked to help host and recruit attendees for the event. AODAAC's name and logo would also be attached to promotional materials. Corey will need to get approval from the county if the AODAAC voting members vote to sponsor.
- **Elyse Grossman** asked if surrounding states have passed anti-vaping laws and what the odds are that the legislation will pass in Maryland. Dani said other states have passed such legislation, but only a few states like California and Massachusetts have passed comprehensive restrictions. It has been a tough fight because the tobacco industry is invested, so talking with legislators is important.
- **Laura Mitchell** discussed Parents Against Vaping and E-cigarettes (PAVE). Dani said PAVE is one of their coalition members, and almost 50 groups have signed on to PAVE's engagement campaign.

Committee Reports

Legislative

- **The Legislative Committee needs help to plan and organize the annual legislative retreat** in early 2021. The committee only has 2 members, so AODAAC volunteers are needed.

Treatment & Recovery

- **The Committee is planning 3-4 interactive videos** 1.5 hours long each, hopefully on a live platform like Zoom. The events will not be huge, but will give a good introduction to drugs, alcohol, mental health, and co-occurring disorders. They hope to show one per week in April.

Prevention

- **Prevention re-elected Margaret and Laura as co-chairs.** They discussed the two new initiatives addressed earlier this meeting. Laura gave an update on the PTA's project on keeping homes safe for youth during COVID. It focuses on 4-5 risk factors that youth are more susceptible to now that many are at home all day doing online school. Also, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are planning for their virtual vaping symposium and invited Laura to participate. Their meetings start the first of next month. Coordinating with them can increase our outreach.

Website Development

- **At the second meeting, they discussed website subtabs and how to present crisis and educational materials** in that format. This discussion will continue in December. All are welcome to give feedback. They also discussed individual biographies for all voting and ex-officio members to show the group's diverse skills and backgrounds. Evelyn said hopefully the videos can be added to the website. Upcoming events will be listed on the site's homepage.

County and State Reports

Health and Human Services (DHHS)

- **Hardy Bennett-** Dr. Rolando Santiago, the new Chief of Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, will be attending AODAAC's December 10 meeting along with Dr. Raymond Crowel. The Avery Road Treatment Center rebuild continues toward completion. County Executive Elrich still has a small reopening scheduled for December 3, but due to the current COVID surge the grander public ribbon cutting will likely be in the Spring. Remote drug court graduation will be Wednesday 11/18 at 4pm. Lastly, per a recent Washington Post article, if the country continues on the current path, overdoses this year will far outpace the 2018 and 2019 rates.

Boards, Committees, and Commissions (BCC's)

- **Corey Brandel-** The DHHS Priorities Meeting for all BCC's will be held Wednesday 11/18 and Thursday 11/19. Margaret will present AODAAC's Fiscal Year Priorities on 11/19. Corey will forward the finalized priorities, as well as a flyer from Sean Channer of Arise & Flourish to recruit student volunteers for a cycle of addiction video project. Findings from the Fall Forum Feedback Survey showed that Microsoft Teams led to access barriers, so Zoom should be used for future events. Respondents provided topics are interested in learning more on, which Corey will forward to Treatment & Prevention for their interactive video series. Lastly, Corey will send an e-mail to all AODAAC voting members to vote on whether to hold the next Forum in the spring or the fall.

Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA)

- **Rose Burnhill-** The LBHA is resuming provider council meetings, to call in and discuss trends. There is some funding for a buprenorphine initiative to cover Sublocade for the uninsured, and to reimburse provider training. They are also putting buprenorphine info in food bank bags.

Police Department

- **Lt. Ruben Rosario-** Fatal overdoses are up 34% this year: to date, there are 65 confirmed and 14 pending. 95% of the fatal overdoses involve fentanyl. 356 lbs. of prescription drugs have been picked up from drug takeback boxes at police departments since being placed on September 6.

Alcohol Beverage Services

- **Gabriella Monzon-Reynolds-** They are doing alcohol training sessions and alcohol awareness online. They have a webinar series on topics including regulation education, how to obtain an alcohol license or one-day license in the county, and alcohol inspections for license holders.

Correction and Rehabilitation

- **Robin White-** There is one patient who came into the jail COVID-positive, and 4 employees. There are 8 pending tests for a COVID-like illness, but it is hard to tease out symptoms of COVID vs. the flu. The jails immediately do rapid flu tests. For every COVID-positive employee there could be up to 40 coworkers with exposure who then need to quarantine; they do contact tracing to determine exposure. This leads to fatigue for remaining staff who absorb their responsibilities. On the positive, there is an all-time high of medication assisted treatment (MAT) participation: 8 patients with a 9th starting tomorrow. 3 take methadone and 5 take suboxone. The jails continue only to do continuations rather than initiating new MAT patients.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm