

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

**Meeting Minutes: Thursday September 10, 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, Kabir Singh, Anaum Khan, Cristina Rabadan, Katrina Busk, Nick Albaugh

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

**Guests Present:** Betty Djawadan (Arise & Flourish), Courtney Seelhorst (Pyramid Walden), Bryna Clark-Braverman (MADD), Elizabeth Leek (Narcotics Anonymous), LaTonia Rich (Tree of Hope)

**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.** Margaret Mattson, Chair, called the Microsoft Teams videoconference meeting to order at 7:04pm. Introductions followed, including those of three new voting members: Cristina Rabadan, Pharmacist; Katrina Busk, Clergy; and Nick Albaugh, Member of the Public . With 13 voting members, a quorum was present. AODAAC voting members voted and approved drafted July meeting minutes and motioned to defer approving June meeting minutes until the October meeting.

### **Updates**

#### **Virtual Forum**

The Virtual Fall Forum: Many Pathways to Family Recovery, will be on Thursday October 1 from 6-8PM on Microsoft Teams. Corey will send out an e-mail message with the flyer so everyone can spread the word. There will still be an October AODAAC meeting, on Thursday October 9.

#### **Reminders: Committee Membership Choices; Two County-Required Trainings**

All AODAAC voting members are required to complete the Parliamentary Procedures and Open Meetings Act trainings one time, and to send Corey the completion certificates. If any voting members have not completed the trainings, contact Corey. All AODAAC members are also required to join an AODAAC subcommittee. The 3 standing subcommittees are Legislative, Prevention and Treatment & Recovery Margaret introduced a potential fourth subcommittee tasked with increasing the AODAAC website’s reach and resources similar to the what the Commission on

Women has done. All voting members selected one of the 3 standing subcommittees which will be held on AODAAC general meeting dates at 6pm starting with the October meeting. Several voting members expressed additional interest in the Website Subcommittee, which will meet at a different time that they will choose together.

### **Proposed Commitment Based on County's Equity/Inclusion Resolution**

Laura drafted a commitment to affirm that AODAAC will take dedicated actions to promote equity and inclusion, and to make sure decisions are not disadvantaging any group. Cristina noted that ethnicity is not explicitly named in the commitment. Laura expressed that AODAAC needs to be careful not to diverge from the language that the county used in its resolution, and that the language they used implies that ethnicity is included. Larry mentioned that AODAAC has always been mindful of racial injustices, homeless individuals, and other considerations. Margaret said even if it is in our hearts and minds, having an AODAAC commitment statement will codify a formal stance, which will go on the website and be reinforced with both new and existing members. Evelyn motioned to adopt the commitment and all voting members approved it.

### **Discussion of Proposed Priorities for 2020-21**

#### **School Prevention Education Program: Laura and Guest Bryna from MADD**

Laura discussed how during COVID, risks for young people increase due to social isolation with parents going back to work, limited contact with friends and teachers, clubs cancelled, etc. Their responses can include anger and intent to self-harm in some cases. Parents may not think to lock up their prescription drugs, alcohol, and/or firearms to keep youth safe. Laura put together a slideshow presentation called Keep Your Family Safe with a broad list of risk factors, aimed at parents. The slideshow will link to extended resources, as part of a prevention program in collaboration with Mothers Against Drunk Driving. The program will also discuss online security and mental health, and will include open-ended questions for parents to start conversations with their children.

Bryna is the Program Specialist at MADD, and can bring in Power of Youth and Power of Parents programs on obtaining alcohol and the dangers, as well as victims and offenders of drunk driving who share how it impacted their lives and the lives of others, either virtually or in person. MADD has other community partners like Maryland Safe Highway to discuss risky driving behavior. MADD will put together resources and a presentation for students if Laura/AODAAC clarifies what they want the focus to be (e.g., underage drinking, drunk driving, etc.). Betty from Arise & Flourish also offered to help however they can: currently Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is not permitting videos of outside speakers to be included in lessons, but parents and students can reach out to Arise & Flourish to talk with the speakers and ask them questions.

Laura would like to share the prevention program through listservs, PTA/AODAAC/MADD websites and social media, etc. There is money in the Parent Teacher Association budget to buy ads through Facebook and on apps to further the program's reach. Evelyn suggested moving Laura's Facebook

and Instagram outreach to Wednesdays to reach more students, when MCPS has no classes. Larry motioned in support of the new virtual prevention program, and voting members approved it.

### **Vaping and Marijuana Forum**

Evelyn expressed that since the annual Spring Forum has now become the Fall Forum, spring may be a good time to hold the Marijuana Forum again, this time in combination with vaping. Last year's Marijuana Forum had great speakers and received good reviews, but attendance was low in part due to the weather. Hopefully holding it virtually will increase attendance. Laura mentioned that the public schools' vaping forum was ready to go this spring and got cancelled, so AODAAC's event could work with them—especially since public school event announcements reach so many families. Other possible collaborations named included Arise & Flourish, The Landing/RAP-Recovery and Academic Programs, and the National Marijuana Initiative which sends speakers to talk for free. Ben said he will provide the name of his contact with the National Marijuana Initiative. Evelyn proposed having the Vaping and Marijuana Forum as a priority that the Treatment & Recovery Committee takes the lead on planning. Laura motioned in favor, and voting members approved the motion.

### **Advocacy and Testimony for Pending Legislation**

Elyse discussed that in past years AODAAC has tracked relevant legislation and given testimony for relevant bills. She believes this should continue to be a priority for AODAAC. For the past 2 years AODAAC has held a legislative retreat in the winter, where members review the bills, select a few bills of interest, and write testimony as an important way to advocate and have AODAAC be heard. Elyse provides training on giving oral and written testimony for those who are new to it. Margaret motioned to keep legislative advocacy a priority for AODAAC, and voting members approved it.

### **Other Proposals from Members**

Larry motioned to postpone discussion of additional proposals until the next meeting to give new members the chance to acclimate and think of ideas; voting members approved his motion.

## **County Reports**

Rose (Local Behavioral Health Authority LBHA): The LBHA received another shipment of personal protective equipment (PPE) and distributed it to substance abuse providers. The LBHA continues to work with providers and Optum, the pharmacy benefit management group for the county.

Hardy (Health and Human Services DHHS) shared the following:

- DHHS is still in the midst of recruiting a new chief for Behavioral Health and Crisis Services—hopefully one will be announced by the next AODAAC meeting.
- COVID has led DHHS to do telehealth and teletherapy. They have approval to explore using Zoom Health, which is more accessible for clients who use phones rather than computers.
- The Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) collaboration between DHHS and jails continues. Federal funding for MAT has been continued through September 30, 2021.

- Avery Road Treatment Center renovation (which AODAAC had successfully advocated for) is close to completion, probably in October. There may be a virtual ribbon cutting.
- Today was the Annual Tuerk Conference, where LaTonia received the Unsung Hero Award.

Ben (Health and Human Services) shared the following:

- For prevention and harm reduction in the county, the first Narcan training of the fiscal year will be held virtually on September 22 at 6pm. He will share a registration link. After the training, attendees can have Narcan kits mailed from the state or pick them up during specific distribution times.
- On August 31 in partnership with Surviving Our Ultimate Loss (SOUL), a vigil display was put up in Rockville in memory of overdose decedents that will be up throughout September. The DHHS public relations person took pictures for a press release and Facebook/Twitter outreach. September is Suicide Awareness Month and Recovery month: DHHS has been recognizing both. The state health department has given funds for a risk reduction campaign to educate on the dangers of fentanyl. Ben will provide more details soon.

Ruben (Police) shared the following:

- Compared to last year to date, nonfatal overdoses reported to police increased 28% (114 vs. 89) and fatal overdoses by 13% (52 with 5 pending toxicology vs. 46). Fentanyl is involved in 96% of deaths. The traffic division has seen gradually more DUIs as motorists return to the roads. They have partnered with Maryland State Police to intercept drivers.
- Police are trying to get the Community Opioid Prevention Education (COPE) trailer back out but they can't do physical tours until the next phase of the COVID plan. They are working with Dave McBain of police on a virtual tour of the trailer: Ruben will get back to Laura about measures being taken to keep youth under age 18 from viewing the virtual tour.
- Hardy and Ben helped get a press release out that prescription drug drop boxes are permanently available at every county police station as of August 27.

Gabriela (Alcoholic Beverage Services ABS) shared the following:

- COVID has led to lots of alcohol changes. They are going out to educate licensees on social distancing and IDing requirements for responsible alcohol service, visiting 223 so far. They also enforce along with DHHS when there are complaints about businesses not social distancing (several in Silver Spring). Live performances are now permitted, but crowding in the streets is not. They are closing businesses that do not comply. There are only a few people in ABS so they're focusing largely on 'streateries'
- Alcohol-To-Go: Parents have been ordering alcohol and sending minors into restaurants to pick it up. They are working to enforce that only the person who pays can pick up alcohol, and they are secretly sending minors to see if businesses give them alcohol. Also, at this point there is no regulation on how much alcohol is too much to sell to one customer, so they ask businesses to use common sense on this.

- Alcohol awareness trainings for licensees in English and Spanish have been online since April. Hearings are also online.

Elizabeth Rathbone (Montgomery County Public Schools) shared the following:

- Montgomery County Schools (MCPS) are working on a virtual mental health fair—she'll share more information in a month or so. They are implementing Signs of Suicide in middle schools and just released a virtual version. Students receive daily social-emotional lessons.
- Ben Stevenson II has linked MCPS to a consultant for a student and parent/guardian curriculum for students caught with substances, in partnership with Everymind and Children's National Hospital. They are doing several video series with help from substance use experts: for primary school, for secondary school, and in Spanish. They are about to start filming Wellbeing Matters focused on staff members. Others will focus on students, parents, community members, and loved ones whose child/parent/spouse use substances.

Robin (Corrections) shared the following:

- She has taken over for her predecessor Tony Sturgess who retired. The jails are doing all in their power to keep inmates and staff safe from COVID in a vulnerable environment. They have implemented screening protocols for all who enter the system, and group people with similar risk factors. COVID cases have been low and they have identified and isolated them quickly to avoid outbreaks.
- The jails continue to grow the medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program per House Bill 116 in collaboration with DHHS. Currently they are continuing inmates who were in MAT before entering the jail, and as staffing grows they will move to the initiation phase: identifying candidates who were not in MAT prior who can start MAT while incarcerated.

### **Additional Comments**

Elyse:

- The park services have introduced restaurant delivery to 9 parks and they are looking to now open it up to alcohol with food orders, possibly permitting bring-your-own alcohol too which breweries have been advocating for. The planning board is not accepting testimony at their meeting next Thursday 9/17, but Elyse is going to testify and will draft a letter from AODAAC if the group is interested. Alcohol sales benefit restaurants during COVID, but issues include: who will monitor excessive and underage consumption, whether park patrol/police are equipped for these possible added demands, etc.
- Gabriela clarified that park alcohol delivery can only last as long as Alcohol-to-Go lasts, which is intended to be time-limited during COVID. Larry countered that once the floodgates are opened it will be harder to return the parks to being strictly alcohol-free.
- Per a question from Laura, Corey will check whether AODAAC needs DHHS permission to submit testimony to a local agency. Elyse will draft the letter and sign as citizens if needed.

LaTonia:

- Tree of Hope will be holding a town hall event, including raffles, on October 9 for recovery month describing four different recovery pathways. Corey will reshare the flyer.
- Tree of Hope has a streamlined listserv of providers which helps get people into treatment beds quicker, but due to COVID fears, people are less willing to go and prefer outpatient.

**The meeting was adjourned** at 8:56 PM.