

HOWARD COUNTY
Opioid Crisis Community Council
May 6, 2020
5:15-6:45pm
ZOOM Meeting/COVID-19

In attendance: Barbara Allen, Roe Rodgers-Bonaccorsy, Jack Kavanaugh, Theresa Collins, Laura Torres, Joanie Elder, Beth Harbinson, Jack Matthews, Debbie Nix, Aaron Hall, Jessica Matthews, Teron Powell, Flora Beto, Mark Donovan, Katie Dant, Mimi Matthews, Cindy Johnson, Sean Ford, Robin Bartko, Liesele Wood, John Way, Shereen Cabrera-Bentley, Beth Schmidt, Roger Hoff, Joan Webb-Schornaienchi, Sean Hughes and Rich Gibson.

Barbara called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm. The epidemic within the pandemic has been a big topic. Introductions were made by all.

Minutes March 4, 2020 – drug court graduation date was corrected and April 1, 2020 – minor change in time started. Cindy motioned to approve both minutes and Katie seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Barbara thanked and acknowledged Debbie Nix for being at the council meeting. Debbie's son David passed away last month. Debbie thanked everyone for their good wishes, cards and condolences.

Barbara thanked everyone for the gift of their flowers on the occasion of her induction into the HC Women's Hall of Fame. A donation was also made by the OCCC in Barbara's honor to James' Place. She noted that all donations coming in right now are going right back out in scholarships for recovery housing.

Roe announced that the health department is holding its 8th webinar on COVID and Cultural Competency on May 15th.

Mark – his counseling programs now in-network for outpatient groups covered by Medicaid and Care First. Addiction and mental health group for teens are being facilitated at all of Congruent Counseling's offices.

Aaron announced that EventBrite is sponsoring a support group for people who have had thoughts of suicide. He will send the link to Barbara and she will share. Robin mentioned that this is a huge problem for veterans and kills more people than military accidents.

Joan announced that teen life skills classes online were started. Interesting and engaging. Parenting classes will start up again in June.

Beth Schmidt mentioned that MCF started on-line support groups and Operation Carry Out where carry out restaurants will be including MCF cards in their delivery orders. MCF is distributing these by mail to restaurants. Beth asked people to be in touch with her if they need materials.

Debbie asked if they had considered doing any of these with liquor stores. Beth said some conversations are on-going. They were not very interested. Beth H. will ask Ed at Jason's Liquors if they will allow these cards. Debbie will also ask a contact. Someone else will speak with a smaller pharmacy.

Updates/Announcements

Agency Updates:

HCHD - Roe Rodgers-Bonaccorsy

- May Mental Health Awareness Month – wear green tomorrow and take a pic and forward or tag # [REDACTED] or text to 240-712-8143
- May 11th Prevention of prescription drug abuse – Liesele leading, Detera bags are being distributed by the food bank and other agencies, 200 have been passed out, 2000 within the next two weeks
- Weekly Behavioral Health Webinars since mid-March. Some are open to the public.
- Fentanyl Awareness Campaign – Liesele is contact.
- Mental Health Awareness – Shereen is contact – feedback has been solicited.
- Telehealth Provider List has been developed and is on their website
- BHA.HEALTH.GOV website has additional information and hosts provider meetings
- Lots of COVID-specific information on the county's website and operating phone lines as well
 - 2 Days a week testing at the VEIP site
 - PPE Equipment is also available for providers on their website
- Social Media – increased focus on this method of communication and a consultant has been involved

Roe has also contacted providers to ask about their concerns. Heard back from 12. Many are using Telehealth and accepting intakes. Some recovery houses have a few vacancies. Oxford House has some and Living in Recovery has one male bed open at this time. Residents have single rooms. Howard House is full. Check online at: LIRHOWARDVOUNTY.ORG to apply.

Grassroots – mobile crisis counseling via phone and accepting some limited walk-ins. Crisis Stabilization Center – on site but trying to talk through on the phone first. Harm reduction kits are being handed out. They found one person in withdrawal and gave them BUP; they will start at Silverman tomorrow. Services are operating. Food and toiletries and gift cards are still being given out and donations are being accepted at the door as well. Diapers, cleaning supplies and PPE are in demand. Not accepting clothing currently.

Congruent Counseling has 40 therapists working on telehealth. Only a 5% reduction but many of them are coming back. Outpatient and IOP going well also supported on telehealth. Can go into a separate room and come back when needed. Insurances are covering but when things open back up, we are not sure how that will be handled or when this telehealth benefit will not be covered.

Roe was on a call re this today. At Hogan's press conference, he announced some loosening. But no answers about this yet. The question will continue to be pursued.

Teron (Silverman) mentioned that at the Federal level, everything will stay the same until the emergency declaration is done and he believes that telehealth will continue to be covered until the state order is completely lifted.

All clients in maintenance mode right now. Actually doing “inside the building” telemedicine for methadone clients. PPE being used for up front personnel. Their clients 45 and older love to stay on the phone. Folks that were evasive before are evasive now. Still accepting intakes. They offered to take care of the medication piece and encouraged providers who needed support in this regard to contact him. Pharmacies are delivering. Vivitrol and BUP injections are continuing. 50 – 60 patients a day down from 200 a day. Uptick of people going to the hospital – Teron is confirming their prescriptions by phone when this is the case.

Detention Center – Jack Kavanagh

Lowest population since he has been there – under 200. At a high, it was 400. Still doing treatment. Looking into virtual programming to pump in information to each unit to improve spacing. Mental health staff are doing unit by unit meetings. Twice a week sending staff into units to keep people up to date. Staff has anxiety too, but they get to go home at the end of the day.

Deputy Director has been creative and people in the yards with Hula Hoops and held BINGO. Has been interesting.

Part time nurse has tested positive for COVID but no cases in the population yet and it has been 15 days since that incident. She was wearing PPE while she was in the facility.

HCPD – Theresa Collins

Seen a decline in overdoses. Non-fatals are down 27.6%. 8 last year. 3 this year. Not sure if Narcan is being administered at home and then it is not being reported to the police.

Drug supply chain is supposedly down but they are replacing with other items.

Fatals are up by 28% - 9 in 2020, 7 in 2019 YTD. Note: while the % appears high, the number increase is two.

Not seeing a big uptick but not a huge decrease either.

Barbara said that around the state folks are reporting an uptick. Theresa said that she has heard things are fairly stable. Barbara’s concern is that word of mouth matters and people in recovery are hearing this. HIDTA is looking to see where this info is coming from – what are the facts versus rumor. Anne Arundel reportedly has had an uptick.

Beth S. said that some info has come directly from families. She knows 5 within the past 6 weeks and another 2 within the last 24 hours. Medical Examiners are telling families directly even though they are being told there is a 90 day wait for reports. 7 Frederick County, 1 Howard County, 1 Carroll County.

Debbie mentioned that David will be reported in Frederick County as a possible overdose even though he was from Howard County.

Human Trafficking is down because massage parlors are closed but private parties are being held.

HoCo reports calls they respond to.

HCGH – Laura Torres

Hospital is status quo. Telehealth is operational. Keeping non-essential personnel at home so they can reserve PPE. Peers are working remotely as are the navigators. Set up to have access to medical records so they can monitor patient list and reach out via the nurses to engage patients or calling them directly on cell phones. Sometimes contacts are being made later since they are coming in extremely sick in some instances. Fewer mental health and SUD patients because people are not coming in.

Aaron Hall (peer at hospital) has been doing a lot of work following up with patients on the phone. He shared that there are 3 peers on the team. Aaron is doing follow up and they are learning a lot of things during this crisis about electronic health records. Some people are not aware of all the recovery resources there are in the community. Out of 68 people, only 2 people who said they need no help. People are accepting the call backs as well.

Screening has been a little more challenging to get all the questions in because of all the COVID questions. Numbers seem to be highest with marijuana. Alcohol is second.

Narcan is available but some patients are hesitant to fill prescriptions.

Debbie said HUGE difference to what we heard 4 years ago.

Peers – Jack Matthew

Wears many hats and will report out from those perspectives. Discussed preparing for a major increase in returning to use OR to getting into recovery. Stimulus checks are adding to this problem.

Howard House – work interrupted for most and all are in the house. They have reached out to 12 Step programs to provide literature and log on to Zoom meetings regularly. On telehealth with local clinics. No one has left or used. Reinforcing that they are in a safe place. Watching the news to get some perspective.

Jack has continued to update the program guide and refamiliarize himself with all of these resources and educate all of the Peers.

Barbara works with recovery houses in other states. When she has asked VA and WV about stimulus checks, they report that people are paying their rent with this money and not returning to use.

Letter to Governor Hogan asking for an exception for people in recovery to meet in person honoring social distancing and wearing masks because isolation for some can be a problem. Question she is being asked is, “what happens when more people show up and cannot get in?”

Collectively we (OCCC and its members) are learning a lot. These meetings help guide our decisions and we are all learning something.

Cindy announced that Drug Court Graduation (13 graduates) will happen this Friday. Thanks everyone for making a real difference in the lives of these graduates.

In closing, Barbara shared she has been speaking with lots of people in recovery. Some of them know very little about all the work people in this group (and others) are doing. When it comes to stigma, it is a

great group to make aware of the many things that are happening in this community as well as at the state level. Debbie reiterated that we could promote the wider view that people are fighting for them. When providing scholarships, Barbara gives people copies of the check written on their behalf to show someone respects them. Not only do they have proof their expenses have been paid for, it can serve as a reminder that they matter.

Meeting adjourned at 6:51

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Harbinson

APPROVED