

HOWARD COUNTY
Opioid Crisis Community Council
April 7, 2021
5:15-6:45pm
VIA ZOOM – COVID-19

In Attendance:

Barbara Allen, Robin Bartko, Theresa Collins, Joanie Elder, Beth Harbinson, Sean Hughes, Cindy Johnson, Debbie Nix, Ana Park, Teron Powell, Roe Rodgers-Bonaccorsy, Laura Torres, Joan Webb Scornaienchi, Debbie Santini, Sean Ford, James LeMon, Mark Donovan, Liesele Wood, Kaymisha Knights, Shereen Bentley, Brad Tanner, Yolanda Vazquez.

Barbara Allen called the meeting to order at 5:22 pm. Asked for prayers for John Way who is caring for a mother and an uncle in transition. Thanked Debbie Nix for last meeting minutes and Beth and Laura for taking them as well.

Brad is joining us from Fire and Rescue this evening. Director of Community Rescue and Media Affairs.

Debbie Nix thanked the Mobile Integrated Health Program for coming to their home to give vaccines. Impressed with professionalism and program.

Everyone introduced themselves.

Barbara Allen just sent the minutes of March 3, 2021 out so we will not vote to approve tonight., Please review and send corrections to Barbara.

Drug and Alcohol Family Forum flier sent today. Debbie Santini Mark, Joan, and Trish Todd will host the next forum – it focuses on where to get help if someone you know is using drugs or alcohol. April 15th is the date.

Barbara continues to forward information to the committee and share creative fliers and encouraged others to share.

Announcements

Roe announced:

- Finishing behavioral health summit – Dealing with Unrest – April 21st at noon.
- Starting 3 facilitated discussions on race.
- Working on 3 RFP's related to LEAD.

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 - Dealing with Unrest, Part 2: Helping Families and Children

As we navigate these uncertain times and face the challenges of societal unrest, how do we help families have tough conversations with their children about race and equity? In this session, we will focus on helping families and children build capacity to talk together about tough issues and find support.

REGISTRATION: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/howard-county-behavioral-health-summit-series-tickets-126902794675>

GBRICS – Greater Baltimore Reg Integrated Crisis System partnership – developing committees and work groups to help with this project to spend grant funding across the region. Workgroups include Community Engagement, Mobile Crisis Team, and Comprehensive Call Center. Once standards are created, the bidding process will begin. If anyone is interested, please contact Laura. Barbara also sent the link to these groups.

Liesele discussed the increased use of Xylazine – starting to see more mixed with cocaine and heroin and fentanyl. Toolkit and press release were sent out recently.

- Had a conversation about whether to publicize this or not. It can be purchased at Walmart. Theresa is seeing it in the county in some fatal overdoses. Debbie Nix said that it is not available unless you have some “paperwork.”
- Street terms are whiteout. Trashcan is cocaine fentanyl mix.
- Beth suggested we share this with equestrian facilities in the county, so they lock up their medications. Beth will put together a list of places to contact in this regard.

Barbara asked James for an update re Back to School in person.

- March 1st first phase and then another 5,100 March 15th and more last Monday as well.
- 7,8,11, and 12 come back next Monday – hybrid model. If anyone knows people who want to substitute and teach in the summer, please have them contact HCPSS HR Department.
- 3 feet of distance with masks is new standard established by the CDC.
- Over 5,000 staff have been vaccinated – 99% have at least first shot. About 90 staff members are not eligible yet but when they are, they will be vaccinated.
- No prom in HC. Other activities at the schools for seniors. Planning for the summer. Want to double the number involved in summer school – CARSE Act funding will help and help the kids who fell behind to catch up.

Barbara provided several updates.

- Sheppard Pratt has a new facility opening in June or July in Elkridge and has lots on info about it on their website. Includes 5 crisis beds.
- MD Dept of Health has a department focused on tobacco addiction. This is a program for students and adults that is well funded. Dawn Berkowitz, director, told us there is lots of good information there. Willing to do a 1-hour webinar for those interested. Stay tuned if you are interested.
- On the legislative front, the session ends next Monday at midnight. You can drop into any hearings via video and submit testimony. Lots of information is available.
- Optum is Maryland’s ASO. Providers have had challenges getting paid including problems reconciling accounts. They are being fined \$80,000 a month for poor performance. Bill passed allows penalties to be increased and gives MIA (MD Insurance Administration) authority to do review, conduct audits. This issue affects recovery houses as well.
- Teron said they support anything that gets OPTUM moving. There is rumor that Optum may be bought out by BCBS by the end of 2021.

- Telehealth bill will also be passed through the parity coalition's efforts. Language from house and senate have been brought together. Ultimately the provider can make the determination of in-person vs. in person or by phone. The consumer can also have an opinion. Note: Large providers are buying out telehealth providers. Mandates a 2-year review process to assess effectiveness.
- Health Equity bill is also expected to pass. Establishes a commission focused on underserved.
- Crisis Services have been increased and expanded.
- Watching a bill focused on decriminalization of possessing of paraphernalia including syringes. Story of a guy who bought syringes for his wife (through her registered provider) and has been in jail for 4 weeks for possession since he had a prior criminal record. Lost his job. Cindy and Eric said this was unlikely. Joanie said someone from their house was held for 4 months because he fell through the cracks and sometimes without resources, these things happen. His name has not been released but Barbara will investigate this further.
- Overdose Prevention Sites bill not going anywhere.
- Budget for the state has been passed. If interested go to General Assembly website. Supplemental areas have more information. Sean mentioned that the conference committee amendments budget has not yet been released. Will be out NEXT Friday.
- One bill withdrawn was to sell alcohol in grocery stores. Alcohol delivery will continue but people delivering must be 21 or older.
- Sean F. mentioned that Eric Ebersole introduced a Law Enforcement Diversion bill that will hopefully be passed. It passed the house. Barbara mentioned the intention is to reduce not eliminate law enforcement.
- Maryland will be receiving \$12M from the Opioid Restitution Fund – no determination about where the funds will be allocated. Behavioral Health Administration and Opioid Crisis Command Center (OCCC) will work to determine.
- OCCC Strategic Plan 2021-22 is close to approval. Barbara will send this to everyone.

Teron – **Enforcement and Adjudication** – will meet soon.

Beth – **Treatment**

Prevention – Liesele is writing a prevention services grant. The group has reviewed strategies. Take Back, Deterra distribution, other campaign things. Other places for permanent drop boxes. Peer Support and Fentanyl campaign are also included, and they will look at how to pass the message.

Joan WS – completed 11th Life Skill class. Great group. Joan will get Barbara fliers tomorrow for upcoming parenting classes. Still low registration. Asked everyone to promote. May 4, 11, June 1 and 8 are the dates.

Anna shared that they held Mental Health First Aid for adults and youth in February. This was successful. Tried doing Guiding Good Choices online but was difficult.

Joan also said that the Teen Advisory Meeting will be held on Monday, April 12th – Debbie and Beth will share at that meeting.

Anna and Joan discussed the difficulty in facilitating training and interactive meetings on Zoom.

Communications Committee – Barbara mentioned they are working on the development of FAQs such as Peer Support Line, 211 Press 1, How to contact MIA to ask questions about insurance denial.

Next steps are passing this on the health department, county government and work with them to distribute, post and share this information.

Question they are struggling with is an initial question about when you are in crisis, where you go to look for help. Network of Care on Health Dept. Crisis information vs research.

Speakers Bureau – not much progress here but the OCCC is committed to this. Where do we post this? How do we use this? Should OCCC join the speakers bureau under LHIC.

Also talked about State Attorney's office going into the schools as well.

Town Hall Meetings – opportunities to bring people together. Perhaps a good time to do these.

Peace by Piece – how to make a peaceful transition from incarceration back into society.

Barbara gets lots of speaker requests and connects people. Debbie asked people to contact the committee with info about speakers who would be good on this list. People do not

Other committees will report out next month. This Business & Community committee needs a chair and members. Some suggested we reach out to the Chamber of Commerce to see who might be willing to chair this committee and/or be on it.

Celebrity – Joan was an honoree with So She Did It award.

Debbie Nix moved to adjourn, Cindy seconded. Adjourned at 6:48 pm'

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Harbinson