

Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force

May 23, 2014

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Colorado Municipal League

1144 Sherman St, Denver, CO

FINAL

FINAL

Chair – Attorney General John Suthers

Vice –Chairs:

- *Treatment* – Marc Condojani, Director, Community Treatment & Recovery Programs, Office of Behavioral Health, Colorado Dept. of Human Services
- *Prevention* – José Esquibel, Director, Interagency Prevention Systems for Children and Youth, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Colorado Dept. of Human Services
- *Law Enforcement* – Lori Moriarty, Retired Commander, Thornton Police Department, North Metro Drug Task Force; Vice President, National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (National DEC)

Attendees: John Suthers, José Esquibel, Marc Condojani, Lori Moriarty, Jade Woodward, Julia Roguski, Elizabeth Hickman, Melissa Gallardo, Michael F. Root, Colleen Brisnehan, Shannon Breitzman, Val Kalnins, Jack Storti, Stan Paprocki, Cliff Riedel, Kathy Wells, Rachel Allen, Zach Pierce, and Terri Connell.

Guests: Jim Gerhardt, Jason Thomas, Judith Miller, Robert Valuck, Jonathan Judge, Aaron Miller, Lisa Noble, Peggy Heil, Lorendia Schmidt, Kathy McCorkle, Cindy Vigil, Julie Madden, Stuart Radio, Amy Kingery, and Becky Helfand.

Introductions: Attorney General Suthers called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and attendees introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the February 7, 2014 meeting were approved by motion as submitted.

Announcements from Task Force Members:

Jose Esquibel announced on behalf of Helen Kaupang that the National Prescription Drug Take Back event on Saturday, April 26, 2014, involved 106 law enforcement agencies, 140 drop off locations, and 21,100 lbs. of drugs were collected. That brings the total in Colorado to more than 40 tons in the four years the Drug Enforcement Administration has been conducting the take backs.

Legislative Update:

Val Kalnins reported that the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program legislation passed this session. It requires physicians to register, but they are not mandated to check prescriptions for medications against the system.

Deputy Attorney General David Blake reported that a new task force was formed to study and make recommendations on packaging and labeling of marijuana edibles, to make recommendations for labeling requirements that will go into effect in 2016. Child proof packaging will be required for edibles, noting that more children were checked into hospital

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emergency rooms so far this year, 9 children, than all of last year. One-time allocations of revenues from the sale of recreational marijuana will go into training for law enforcement and drug resource officers, for jail-based treatment (\$2 million), and for substance abuse treatment and detox line (\$1.5 million). The Office of Behavioral Health will have additional funds for treatment of inmates in county jails and their continuity of care, additional treatment for pregnant women and adolescents, and public awareness education through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Zach Pierce reported that the Governor's Office's public awareness campaign to address the prevention of underage use of marijuana is scheduled to launch July 1, 2014, and the management of the public messaging campaign will be transitioned to CDPHE, which will be the coordinating authority for state awareness education campaigns and will have a Website to aid in the dissemination of information.

There are additional dollars allocated to the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing for additional prevention efforts through the Behavioral Health Organizations, to CDPHE for support of the biennial Healthy Kids Colorado Survey of youth behaviors, and to the University of Colorado and Colorado State University for research on measurement and concentrations of THC in various strains of marijuana, as well as DUID statistics compilation.

A bill was passed that codifies in statute the take back of non-controlled drugs. Although there was a request for \$50,000 to help support the take back sites, only \$5,000 was allocated.

CDPHE will have additional funding for non-controlled substance medication take back.

A bill was passed that levies \$500,000 criminal fine for synthetic cannabinoids distribution under the Consumer Protection Act in the Attorney General's Office. Additionally, through civil action out of the Attorney General's office there is now a fine of \$2,000 per package of synthetic cannabinoids seized from those who distribute. The fines are intended to make it too costly for retailers to continue selling synthetic cannabinoids.

Rachel Allen noted that a table showing the status of ordinances related to marijuana and related laws in local towns is available on the Website of the Colorado Municipal League, which has been cited nationally.

The bill defining a drug endangered child failed to pass, even after the legislature tasked the Substance Abuse Task Force to formulate a definition for them. The subcommittee made every effort to be inclusive of all views, but there were objections from the public, apparently from the marijuana lobby. Task Force members discussed next steps to try to pass a definition next legislative session. It was agreed to reconvene the ad hoc committee of stakeholders to determine next steps.

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Substance Abuse Data and Trends:

Dr. Becky Helfand, Evaluation Manager with the Office of Behavior Health, presented information the Dept. of Human Services has gathered on drug trends in Colorado (see attached).

Formation of a data subcommittee of the Task Force was suggested to bring together data from various sources, including the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, County data, and national sources. Participants discussed methods for educating the public about this data, what the causes for shifts in drug preference may be, and how to determine the next trend.

Substance Exposed Newborns Subcommittee:

Jade Woodard reviewed the latest convening in Craig on issues related to substance use and pregnant women. There may be a convening in Logan County and possibly in Greeley. The focus issues are differing hospital policies regarding screening and drug testing of pregnant women, and reaching out to pediatric doctors and hospital associations. Dr. Kathryn Wells pointed out that more education is needed about the dangers of alcohol, including among the medical community, midwives, and health-related blogs.

The SEN Sub-Committee gave input to staff of CDPHE on research questions regarding substance use and pregnant women.

Dr. Wells is featured in an interview on Colorado Public Radio that airs on June 2nd regarding the issues of pregnant women and substance use to spread the word about the legislation that passed in Colorado that women will receive help if they are using drugs while pregnant and not face criminal charges.

The SEN Sub-committee is also exploring ideas for public service messages that it is not okay to use alcohol and drugs while pregnant in coordination with the Office of Behavioral Health's campaign about pregnant women and the treatment helpline.

Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Committee/Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention:

Rob Valuck noted that the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention distributed their Quarterly Report. There are 237 active participants in the Consortium, a committee of the Task Force. They are reviewing a new public awareness campaign with funding from the Attorney General's Office. There are various work groups of the Consortium and members of the Task Force are invited to participate. The Work Groups are:

- Data and Research
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program
- Provider Education
- Public Awareness
- Safe Disposal
- Treatment

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Contact Rob for more information about the work groups and to be connected with the co-chairs of any one of the work groups: Robert.Valuck@ucdenver.edu.

Rise Above Colorado:

Jonathan Judge reported that The Colorado Meth Project has transitioned into Rise Above Colorado (see attached). Although Rise Above Colorado has a broader focus on preventing youth drug abuse, The Colorado Meth Project will continue as a part of the work of Rise Above Colorado.

Rise Above Colorado will primarily use social media to reach adolescents and engage them in conversation about drug abuse. People can read about and follow Rise Above Colorado on Facebook and Twitter (#Rise Above)

Their teen council has 25 members and they are focusing on an art campaign which emphasizes healthy, positive alternatives to drugs. They are working with Boys & Girls Clubs and the teen-focused marijuana campaign through the Governor's Office.

There is a staff person dedicated to teen and school outreach and working with the Boys & Girls Clubs and another staff person dedicated to community outreach.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Friday, August 1, 2014, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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