

Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force

February 7, 2020 | 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman Street, Denver

Meeting Minutes

Present: Attorney General Phil Weiser, Matthew Baca, Bella Brache, Heidi Williams, Liz Hickman, Annmarie Braun, Kacy Crawford, Sharon Lui, Kent McClennan, Gina Olberding, Deanne Reuter, Julia Roguski, Kathryn Wells, Matt Holtman, José Esquibel, Avani Dilger, Sheriff Jamie FitzSimmons, Peggy Heil, Stazi Snelling, Jenny Wood, Jamie Feld, Diane Carlson, Wendy Buxton-Andrade, Cindy Carter, Rob Valuck, Melissa Gallardo, Jade Woodward, Alex Wolff, Jack Reed, Bethany Pace-Danley, Katie Ziggler, Denise Vincioni, Radhika Nath, Jenny Wood

Welcome and Introductions

Attorney General Weiser provided a welcome and members of the Task Force and guests introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of November 2019 Meeting Minutes

There was one amendment to the minutes in which Dr. Liz Hickman corrected “northwestern,” to “northeastern,” on the first page, last paragraph. A motion was then made to approve the minutes with a first by Dr. Liz Hickman and seconded by Dr. Kathryn Wells. Unanimous agreement to approve the minutes by all members followed.

Legislative Updates

Matt Baca gave a legislative update to the Task Force, noting that the legislative session is now on day 31. Matt then explained the five bills currently in play that the Task Force is monitoring or involved with:

- SB20-007: Treatment Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders
 - Introduced January 8, 2020
 - Summary: concerning treatment for substance use disorders
- HB20-1015: Prevention of Substance Use Disorders
 - Introduced January 10, 2020
 - Summary: concerning the prevention of substance use disorders.
- HB20-1017: Substance Use Disorder Treatment in Criminal Justice System
 - Introduced January 8, 2020
 - Summary: concerning treatment of individuals with substance use disorders who come into contact with the criminal justice system, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation

- SB20-028: Substance Use Disorder Recovery
 - Introduced: January 8, 2020
 - Summary: concerning measures to assist an individual’s recovery from a substance use disorder
- HB20-1065: Harm Reduction Substance Use Disorders
 - Introduced: January 8, 2020
 - Summary: concerning measures to reduce the harm caused by substance use disorders

The Task Force was made aware that funding is the main challenge facing the passage of the bills. Once funding levels are set (in April), the five bills will have to compete for very limited available dollars. This poses an obstacle and an opportunity for the Task Force to demonstrate the importance of these bills.

Dr. Rob Valuck updated the Task Force on the hearing for the treatment bill (SB20-007: Treatment Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders) and the recovery bill (SB20-028: Substance Use Disorder Recovery), which was held on January 30, 2020.

José Esquibel provided additional details on current legislation, including an amendment to HB20-1065 and the circulation of a pre-amendment to HB20-1017.

José Esquibel notified the Task Force that the Colorado Consortium is tracking bills via their Twitter account and was asked to announce the username by AG Weiser, who also plugged the COAG Instagram. Follow [@corxconsortium](https://twitter.com/corxconsortium) on Twitter and [@coag_philweiser](https://www.instagram.com/coag_philweiser) on Instagram.

Douglas County Teen Drug Summit

Presented by Deanne Reuter, Special Agent in Charge, DEA Denver, Field Division

Deanne Reuter announced that the [Douglas County Teen Drug Summit](#) will be held on April 17, 2020. The summit is for 8th graders in the Douglas County school district, and allows students to hear from experts, participate in empowering activities, and establish open communication about substance use.

This is the first summit of its kind in Colorado. Special Agent Reuter has attended a Teen Drug Summit in St. Louis and wants to expand the idea nationally. Colorado’s first will include a resource fair, mindfulness activities, breakout sessions about vaping and THC, and other support for teens and their parents surrounding substance use. Rise Above Colorado is participating.

AG Weiser asked Special Agent Reuter what the Colorado Office of the Attorney General (COAG) could do to help. Special Agent Reuter described a need for more partners to attend the event and support in expanding these kinds of events in the future. Task Force members then offered their support and assistance in the summit, with AG Weiser recommending we add Safe2Tell as a partner. Avani Dilger, Diane Carlson, and Wendy Buxton-Andrade all expressed interest in supporting the Douglas County Teen Drug Prevention Summit, whether via directly supporting through their organizations or connecting Special Agent Reuter with potential partners, like Rocky Mountain Crisis Services.

AG Weiser asked Special Agent Reuter how other parts of the state could use the blueprint of the summit and expand on it. Special Agent Reuter explained that she learned from attending a past summit and encouraged others to attend out-of-state summits to learn and bring back best practices. She believes that this plan can easily be tweaked for every county or situation.

Matt Baca asked Special Agent Reuter for more details on the tactics behind the summit: what exactly are we promoting? Special Agent Reuter and local K-12 professionals have determined that scare tactics *don't* work on teens, and rather than telling stories of drug abuse or misuse, to focus on supporting teens making healthy decisions.

AG Weiser asked Special Agent Reuter to report back with a more specific and detailed blueprint to streamline other adaptations of the summit across the state. Dr. Liz Hickman asked what outcomes the summit is expecting and how they plan to measure success. Deane agreed that measuring changing attitudes can be challenging and how to measure success is one component of the summit that has not been finalized.

Annmarie Braun added that Douglas County was chosen specifically because the 8th graders attending went through a similar program in 6th grade. Eighth graders have been determined as the target audience with the goal to empower teens by educating them about substance use right before they attend high school.

José Esquibel and Kent McClennan confirmed that summits like this are happening around the state and the Douglas County Teen Drug Summit is not acting in isolation.

José Esquibel then asked Special Agent Reuter about funding for the summit, which she acknowledged was a challenge as federal agencies cannot solicit donations. While some funding has already been secured, including partial funds for opioid prevention content, additional is needed.

Committee Updates

Substance-Exposed Newborns Steering Committee (SEN)

Dr. Kathryn Wells began the update for the committee with an overview of recent workgroup meetings. Matt Holtman announced an upcoming [Plans of Safe Care Kickoff](#) event on March 3, 2020 where some Task Force partners are presenting. The event, which takes place in Aurora, will introduce and discuss Colorado's collaborative approach to engaging families of substance exposed newborns.

Jade Woodward shared that SEN's new Family Advisory Board has met three times now and worked diligently on the vision and mission of the board, ensuring it was aligned with those of the committee. Jade added that the Colorado Hospital SEN (CHoSEN) Collaborative (chosencollaborative.org) is now working with 22 hospitals, including four outside of Colorado, with the goal to continue expanding to reach rural parts of the state.

SEN's Data and Research Workgroup will be working in collaboration with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab and the Colorado Consortium to examine data and trends of Fetal Alcohol Effective Disorder. The Policy Workgroup updated the Task Force about small changes to the proposed recovery bill (SB20- 028), which contains some updated language related to the definition of substance-exposed newborns as related to child welfare reporting. The Provider Education Workgroup promoted their Colorado Perinatal Substance Use Provider Toolkit, which can be viewed [here](#). More highlights can be found in the [SEN 2019 Annual Report](#).

Dr. Kathryn Wells and Matt Holtman announced upcoming panel discussions, including a round table with the Surgeon General on marijuana use during pregnancy.

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

There is a lot of activity occurring through the Consortium work groups and activities in support of the work of local coalitions and organizations that are responding to the opioid crisis across the state.

The [Consortium's 2019 Annual Report](#) is available online. The Consortium partnered with the Colorado Health Institute, the Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Counties, Inc., and the AG's Office on the [Colorado Opioid Crisis Response Blueprint: A Guide for Opioid Settlement Investments](#), which serves as a guide for local and state government decision makers in preparing for use of potential settlement funds from the national multidistrict prescription opiate litigations with opiate manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies.

The Consortium hired the fourth External relations Strategies to serve the northeastern quadrant of the state.

The Consortium's Public Awareness Work Group is focus on expanding public awareness activities with funds from the Colorado General Assembly.

Data Committee: The Colorado State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW)

Sharon Liu from SEOW shared two opportunities: a leadership position as a chair or co-chair of SEOW and a project coordinator. The coordinator position has been posted through The Evaluation Center at the University of Colorado Denver and can be viewed [here](#).

The Data Committee is hoping to share a data brief on co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health disorders before next month and are open to assistance in the best way to share their findings.

The next SEOW meeting will take place March 19, 2020, at CDPHE and focus on both prescription and non-prescription stimulants. Ideas for panelists or presenters are always welcome.

José Esquibel asked Sharon Liu about available state resources surrounding police shootings and methamphetamines and was interested to learn more about the data from the law enforcement side. Task Members agreed that this data is important to discuss, and Annmarie Braun added that the DEA has comprehensive information on the topic to dig into and noted that SEOW has those contacts in play. Sharon closed the update by reiterating the importance of telling the story behind the data—filling the gaps—not just presenting numbers.

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Advisory Council Update

Bethany Pace-Danley gave the SBIRT Advisory Council update, starting with the council's two workgroups:

- The Adolescent SBIRT Workgroup is focused on assessing awareness levels and the practice of SBIRT in Colorado to identify needs and gaps in health care settings—especially pediatric settings—across the state. The group is currently in the process of defining a scope of need for and creating a tool for further assessment.
- The SBIRT Training and Education Workgroup is drafting a proposal intended for the Colorado Community College System. The proposal outlines the need for screening and brief intervention in collegiate communities and articulates the capacity necessary to train professionals in specific settings.

Peer Assistance Services, Inc., has facilitated 98 trainings since 2017, serving over 1,000 healthcare professionals across the state. There is also an online training available, which averages about 500 users per year.

In terms of implementation, Bethany Pace-Danley reported that there are now 17 clinics in northeast and southeast Colorado implementing SBIRT and have screened over 7,000 patients since July 2019. The council hired a SBIRT Facilitator for Larimer County and is aiming to implement SBIRT practices at 3 clinics per year.

The Task Force was made aware of a Colorado-based public awareness campaign: [One Degree, Shift the Influence](#), which focuses on helping Coloradans have positive, open conversations about substance use. Bethany shared more about the campaign and highlighted the importance of adult substance awareness and discussion, and asked Special Agent Reuter if she had considered inviting parents to the Douglas County Teen Drug Prevention Summit. Special Agent Reuter said they had discussed including parents, but they will most likely not be part of this occurrence.

Avani Dilger stressed the importance of getting parents involved and straightening out the mixed messages at play, and there was agreement throughout that adult stigma and conversations are important and can be a convincing factor when it comes to youth. The Task Force shifted to focus on marijuana as AG Weiser asked if the reason we weren't having open conversations about marijuana was the stigma or lack of awareness. The high-concentrated method of smoking, dabbing, was brought up at this point, when Cindy Carter reported that many parents are unaware of what dabbing even is. Cindy Carter said that while they've seen increased awareness among parents in Colorado Springs, there are still parents and adults out there who don't know the dangers of the high concentrated method.

AG Weiser then called on Kent McClennan and asked if they had developed any materials for parents. Kent said that Rise Above Colorado was mainly focused on resources for youth, but there are components that reeducate both the parents and kids about social norms and the perception of drugs. Kacy Crawford added that CDPHE's marijuana public health campaign includes a section of talking points for parents, which can be found [here](#).

The SBIRT Council update concluded with Dr. Kathryn Wells asking if SBIRT is a billable code for providers, because if it's not billable, providers will be less inclined to make the time. Bethany Pace-Danley confirmed that yes, SBIRT has a billable code for youth, but she is unsure about billing for adult screening at this time.

The MAT Expansion Project, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Presented by Gina Olberding and Tanya Sorrell

The Consortium is partnering with the UC College of Nursing on the implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion Programs. Gina Olberding began the presentation by sharing the SB19-001 MAT Expansion Program goals:

1. Increase the number of X-waivered providers in Routt and Pueblo Counties, the San Luis Valley, and two other counties of need.
2. Increase access to MAT and other evidence-based treatment/behavioral health therapies for individuals with OUD in the awarded program areas.
3. Assist MAT expansion grantees in achieving sustainability in delivering MAT service through reimbursements from private insurance, Medicaid and Medicare, and other revenue sources.

Gina Olberding then reported on the funded programs and program locations throughout the state.

Service were launched in January in 16 counties at 36 clinics. This a major expansion of a pilot project that had its beginnings in a recommendation from the Task Force to the legislature in 2017.

Tanya Sorrell presented on the clinical aspects of MAT, focusing on the expansion implementation using a community engagement model. She shared the hub and spoke framework applied, listed services provided, and demonstrated resources for training, evaluation, support, and data collection.

The Task Force can contribute to the program's success through promotional networking and encouraging collaboration. José and Gina believe that if MAT services are offered, it will be well received.

AG Weiser asked about the MAT program in jails, to which Gina Olberding reported that OBH is funding 16 jails for MAT, but only have 8 current contracts. Dr. Liz Hickman added that MAT is an option in jails, but most have yet to use the program. AG Weiser noted the confusion here and said that it sounded like while many have access, a much smaller number is actually provided with the program, to which Denise Vincioni agreed. The AG then asked for more data surrounding the program and requested a follow-up presentation.

Priorities for 2020

After discussion among Task force members and guests, the following four priorities of the Task Force for 2020 were identified:

1. Opioid Crisis Response Strategy and Engagement: planning for potential opioid settlement funds
2. Teen Vaping Public Awareness: The AG's office is investigating Juul, makers of vaping devises. There is work occurring between the Office of Behavioral Health and the Colorado Film Office on youth mental health and teens talking with parents. Perhaps something like this could be considered with the subject of vaping.
3. Regulating THC concentrates: High potency THC is an emerging concern, especially among youth where it is having severe psychiatric concerns. Peggy Heil mentioned that

here is a white paper that has been drafted on the subject as part of the Data Sharing Committee that is working on recommendations for the Mental Health Disorders in the Criminal Justice System (MHDCJS) Task Force. Peggy Heil invited interested members and guests to participate in an upcoming meeting of the MHDCJS Data Sharing Committee. The following individuals expressed an interest: Avani Dilger, Diane Carlson, José Esquibel, Kent McLennan, Deane Reuter.

4. The Effects of Binge Drinking: Alcohol continues to be the number one drug of abuse. Also, according to a study by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, half of individuals who report using marijuana also engaged in binge drinking.

AG Weiser welcomed the new Opioid Task Force Director, Heidi Williams. Heidi Williams is excited to be part of the Task Force and would love to collaborate on ideas in the opioid space as she puts together a framework moving forward. Connect with Heidi via email at Heidi.Williams@coag.gov.

Closing Comments

Matt Baca opened the room up for announcements.

José Esquibel asked who in the room is planning to attend the 2020 Opioid Safety Summit, to which Heidi Williams noted she was attending.

Sherriff Jamie FitzSimons responded with a comment on the MAT presentation. Sherriff FitzSimons mentioned that he saw skewed numbers in terms of participation of jails in the MAT program funded by the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), as only 16 of the 51 jails in Colorado are implementing in jail-based MAT. When asked about the gap, Sherriff FitzSimons attributed it to the administrative burden rather than a lack of enthusiasm to incorporate these programs. He said that he works with multiple OBH programs currently in his jail, but each program has its own reporting requirements that need specialized staff to meet those requirements, such as grant writers or managers. Rural counties especially don't have the staff, or budget to bring on additional staff, to comply with so many different requirements. Sherriff FitzSimons reported that OBH is aware of this problem and working to streamline the processes.

Denise Vincioni mentioned that she's seen more resistance to helping substance abuse prisoners versus budgetary or administrative restraints. Dr. Liz Hickman asked if there was a lack of understanding of the benefit of MAT, to which Denise responded that she's seen most jails blame prisoners for their withdrawals and don't believe it's their responsibility to help.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm. Next meeting: May 1, 2020, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman St.