

Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force

May 1, 2020, 10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman St., Denver

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Attorney General Weiser, Avani Dilger, Sheriff Jamie FitzSimons, Jenny Corvalan-Wood, Bella Brache, Lindsey Meyers, Liz Hickman, Matthew Baca, Peggy Heil, Stazi Snelling, Wendy Buxton-Andrade, Matt Holtman

Guests: Bethany Pace-Danley, Jade Woodward, José Esquibel, Robert Valuck, Sharon Liu, Libby Stuyt, Eric Pearson

Welcome and Introductions

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

Review and Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections to the February meeting minutes. Unanimous agreement to approve the minutes by all members.

Supporting Rural Providers and Communities During COVID-19

Presented by Doctor Liz Hickman, Executive Director, Centennial Mental Health Center, and Eric Pearson, Executive Director, Region Six Alcohol & Drug Abuse Treatment Services, Southeast Colorado

Dr. Liz Hickman and Eric Pearson began their presentation by discussing how COVID-19 is driving a change in services, particularly related to the transition to telehealth.

The presentation identified key needs in rural communities during this time, including:

- Regional Assessment Centers to serve acute needs—such as detox services
- Flexibility in the use of available funds
- Increased COVID-19 testing
- Student loan repayment program for individuals providing treatment for substance use disorders in rural areas
 - Note: there is a program for loan repayment for SUD treatment professionals working in frontier and rural areas, however, some individuals who applied were deemed ineligible for unknown reasons.

One of the Task Force's main concerns during this time of quarantine is methamphetamine abuse.

Release of Incarcerated People and Impact on MAT

Presented by Sheriff Jamie FitzSimons, Summit County, and Jenny Corvalan-Wood, Director of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Behavioral Health/Colorado Department of Human Services

The Jail Based Behavioral Health Services (JBBS) program, which has been operational since 2011 through the Office of Behavioral Health, is and has been a meaningful innovation to improve access to behavioral health treatment for individuals in jail. The ultimate goal of the program is improved behavioral health outcomes, as well as reducing criminogenic risk and recidivism for individuals with substance use and co-occurring mental health conditions. Other goals of JBBS include:

- Reduction in critical incidents at jails
- Approach should result in shorter jail sentences and stays
- Successful linkage to community-based services

Services included are screening, assessment, treatment, and transitional care management.

As the recognition of the need for behavioral health services for individuals in jail grew, JBBS has grown and expanded significantly, resulting in various legislative mandates/funding streams under the JBBS umbrella. Programs include:

1. JBBS Substance Use Disorder—funded through HB 10-1352, and expanded in 2012 through SB 12-163.
2. Mental Health Expansion—Senate Bill 18-250, which allocated additional funding to the JBBS program to address gaps in services for mental health disorder.
3. Pre-Screening Coordinators.
4. Competency Enhancement—Senate Bill 19-223, which allocates funding to JBBS programs to address the gaps in services within the jail for those with mental health disorders that are awaiting restoration services.
5. Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).
6. Medication Consistency—Senate Bill 17-019 calls for enhanced medication consistency solutions and health information exchange.

The presenters then began discussing how the novel Coronavirus will impact the jail system and inmates, as jails began releasing low-risk inmates early to prevent the spread of the virus. Had there not been a pandemic, these individuals would remain in custody. However, despite early release, these individuals still need help—and fast. JBBS was able to problem solve quickly to get the necessary approvals to do business differently given these unprecedented times.

The JBBS Transformation, Innovation, and Improvement Project (JTIIP), is a collaborative project between JBBS, the University of Colorado, jails, and community partners. Partners shifted the

project based on needs in the times of the pandemic, recognizing that the University could quickly become a resource to jails on a larger scale. JTIP is working to build as much flexibility into the expansion to allow the University to address needs quickly and as they change.

Problems with High Potency THC Marijuana from the Perspective of an Addiction Psychiatrist

Presented by Dr. Libby Stuyt, MD, Addiction Psychiatrist, Pueblo

Concerns surrounding the impacts of high potency THC was brought to the attention of the Task Force by Vice Chair Avani Dilger in February 2020. At the same meeting, it was learned that Mental Health Disorders in the Criminal Justice System (MHDCJS) Task Force has a committee working with Dr. Stuyt on a paper describing issues and research findings related to high potency THC.

Dr. Stuyt has worked in the field of addiction for the past 30 years and served as director of the Circle Program in Pueblo. In her practice, she has seen increasing problems with high potency marijuana. Her presentation identified serious issues in THC potency and developing recommendations to present to policy makers.

THC content and potency are not like it used to be. With the expansion of medical marijuana dispensaries and the advent of recreational marijuana in Colorado, average THC potency of marijuana flowers/bud is now at 17.1% compared to <2% in 1980. The average potency for marijuana concentrates is 62.1%.

There is no difference in marijuana products available in medical versus recreational dispensaries in Colorado, despite a lack of research supporting use of high THC concentrates. An important study regarding the benefits of marijuana for medicinal purpose is [Whiting PF, Wolf RF, Deshpande S et al, Cannabinoids for medical use a systematic review of and meta-analysis. JAMA 2015; 13:2456-2473.](#)

It is a challenge to find low potency THC marijuana products in Colorado, according to research results by [Cash MC, Cunnane K, Fan C, Romero-Sandoval EA. Mapping cannabis potency in medical and recreational programs in the United States, PLOS ONE 2020.](#)

Based on Colorado data, we know many children/adolescents are using marijuana products, which is a major concern for the developing brain, and in some cases, leads to symptoms of psychosis in adolescents. Studies indicate that high potency marijuana is associated with a triple risk for psychosis.

Dr. Stuyt then shared the following draft recommendations for consideration to address high potency THC:

1. Limit potency of THC to under 10% in medical cannabis and eliminate the concentrates such as wax, shatter, and dab from medical marijuana dispensaries since there is no research on these products for any medical condition.
2. Improve data collection on high potency THC by mandating agencies in criminal justice and health care to collect information on cannabis use. This would include questions about the THC potency, type of products, delivery system (smoke/vape/edibles/oil/concentrates) and including THC when drug testing.
3. Develop provider education on known impacts of cannabis use on physical and mental health and require that people selling cannabis products have some type of license or certificate that indicates they have been educated about the potential impacts and can warn consumers about them, similar to what we require of pharmacists.
4. Develop Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to educate the public regarding cannabis use risk—like what we have for alcohol/tobacco.
5. Limit advertising of cannabis products that appear to be directed to adolescents/young adults.
6. Put Medical Marijuana recommendations on the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) in Colorado. If Colorado is legitimately supporting the use of medical marijuana in people with mental illness in the criminal and juvenile justice system, then there needs to be monitoring.

The committee of the MHDCJS Task Force will continue to refine the recommendation to present to the MHDCJS Task Force for review and approval. If approved, the MHDCJS Task Force will ask for review and endorsement by the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force for inclusion in the annual report of the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force.

Closing Comments and Adjournment

Matthew Baca noted that committee updates will be available on the Task Force webpage and asked for any final announcements.

There were no major announcements. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: August 7, 2020, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.—via Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/99007117891>

Colorado Substance Exposed Newborns Steering Committee

May 2020

The Steering Committee

The Colorado SEN Steering Committee seeks to identify and implement strategies for reducing the number of families impacted by substance use during pregnancy and for improving outcomes for families across the lifespan. With the generous support of the Attorney General's Office, the committee has continued to advance its priorities.

Progress to Date:

- While 2019 was dedicated to the development of evaluation plans for the SEN Steering Committee and six work groups, 2020 has focused on implementation of these evaluation strategies.
 - Dating back to January 2019, data from each work group and the Steering Committee were compiled into 2019 Data Summaries.
 - Data tracking processes have been enhanced to enable continuous monitoring of key process evaluation metrics to support real-time learning and quality improvement.
 - An evaluation tool is currently being administered to examine collaboration effectiveness and satisfaction within the Steering Committee and work groups, whereby results will be utilized to inform improvements.
- The Family Advisory Board (FAB) continues to meet quarterly, with near perfect attendance by all members. The FAB provides feedback and guidance to the Steering Committee, with the goal of raising awareness and best serving the needs of families impacted by substance use. The FAB met most recently on January 21st and April 20th.
 - At the January meeting, FAB members participated in a story-sharing training, which members see as one mechanism for supporting families and destigmatizing help-seeking behaviors.
 - In April, the FAB provided feedback on 3 Story Design's rebranding of Mother's Connection (now the "Tough as a Mother" campaign), provided feedback on the patient resources included in the Colorado Perinatal Substance Use Provider Education Toolkit, and lent guidance on future priority areas for the SEN Provider Education Work Group.
- An ad hoc group from the committee convened to revise the vision and mission statements as well as to draft an equity statement. Insights and feedback from the Family Advisory Board were integrated into the statements, and updated drafts were circulated and workshopped among committee members, committee co-chairs, and the FAB on an ongoing basis to finalize the statements. The statements are included on the next page.

Opportunity: The SEN Family Advisory Board and Steering Committee will foster mutual collaboration including through SEN Work Group co-chairs attending FAB meetings, as well as FAB members attending Steering Committee meetings. The SEN Steering Committee will continue to discuss alignment opportunities across ongoing and emerging initiatives, with consideration for the impact of COVID-19 on behavioral and mental health landscapes. With support from Illuminate, the SEN Steering Committee will implement the comprehensive evaluation strategy throughout 2020.

Updated Vision for Colorado:

The Colorado SEN Steering Committee envisions a Colorado that equitably serves all families through prevention and reduction of substance use during pregnancy and provides multigenerational support for families to thrive.

Statement on Equity:

The Colorado Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN) Steering Committee acknowledges that systemic social, economic, and environmental inequities impact experiences and outcomes around substance use, pregnancy, and/or parenting. We also recognize that substance use is strongly correlated with individual, historical, and intergenerational trauma, as well as mental health conditions, toxic stress, sexual violence, and/or intimate partner violence. Thus, substance use during pregnancy and/or parenting must be understood in this broader context. To decrease inequities, systems, services, and policies must be trauma-informed, culturally-responsive, and serve individuals and families with dignity and respect.

2018-2020 Priority Area Work Groups

In the period beginning in 2018 and concluding at the end of 2020, the SEN Steering Committee will be convening, supporting, and guiding work groups to advance the six priority areas outlined below.

The Colorado Hospital SEN (CHoSEN) Collaborative is working to increase consistency in implementation of best practice approaches in the identification of and response to newborns prenatally exposed to substances and their caregivers at the time of birth across Colorado—through education and formal quality improvement efforts. The CHoSEN Collaborative includes a continuum of ways hospitals, practices, and individual perinatal care providers can engage, including formal quality improvement work led by University of Colorado School of Medicine and the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative (CPCQC), continued perinatal provider education and assessments, and events to share practices.

Progress to Date:

- CHoSEN has grown to 31 hospitals with 24 in Colorado, one in Montana, and six in Wyoming.
- CHoSEN Quality Improvement Collaborative (QIC) has continued to demonstrate shortened length of stays with the current average being 7.5 days.
- CHoSEN QIC has launched new work focused on family and patient engagement led by the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, Section of Neonatology.
- A manuscript draft outlining the success and challenges of the CHoSEN QIC been submitted to a number of peer-reviewed publications.
- Illuminate Colorado completed facilitation of an additional offering of the Prenatal Substance Exposure ECHO Series for perinatal providers and support staff. The series had 21 participants, and evaluation data is forthcoming.

Opportunity: The CHoSEN Collaborative is continuing to engage and recruit additional perinatal providers to participate and welcomes suggestions and connections for continued outreach, particularly in rural and frontier regions.

Upcoming Forum: Tuesday, May 12th 9:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. (virtual only)

The SEN Data and Research Work Group is working to increase statewide data and research capacity in order to inform our work and to share successes and challenges.

Progress to Date:

- Launched the Colorado Perinatal Substance Use Data Linkage Project through the leadership of the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (CO Lab) and collaboration of work group members from healthcare, public health, child welfare, and other state agencies to examine trends, predictors, and outcomes associated with prenatal substance use among birthing individuals and infants in Colorado.
- Activated data sharing agreements utilizing the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC) to securely integrate information from different administrative datasets and link maternal and infant data across systems throughout the perinatal period.
- Began the development of a Qualitative Research Project to elucidate and strengthen the findings of the Data Linkage Project, and to examine barriers and facilitators to prevention and treatment strategies for prenatal substance use through the perspective of Colorado birthing individuals and caregivers, providers, and child welfare professionals.

Opportunity: The Data and Research Work Group will support CO Lab in conducting trend analyses to provide preliminary findings for the Data Linkage Project. The work group will also finalize the qualitative research protocol and establish partners for study recruitment and data collection.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 14th from 10-11:30 A.M.

The SEN FASD Identification Work Group is working to assess the needs related to FASD identification capacity in the state and develop an expansion plan. The group began by conducting a scan of current places and professionals thought to be resources—including an evaluation of their training needs and referral patterns.

Progress to Date:

- Contributed to the planning of three FASD Roadshow events, as a way to raise awareness of FASDs and resources regionally available for families, and to receive feedback on priority areas. The first event was held in February in Pueblo, and the second was a virtual event in partnership with Weld County.
- Collaborated with the Office of Early Childhood to discuss opportunities for raising awareness of FASDs among Community Centered Board (CCB) staff.

Opportunity: The FASD Identification Work Group will continue to finalize recommendations based on Gap Analysis findings, incorporating feedback on statewide stakeholder input with additional funding from the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. This Work Group will also continue to explore training opportunities and collaboration with Community Centered Boards.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 29th from 12-1:30 P.M.

The SEN Plans of Safe Care Work Group is working to promote community-based strategies to meeting the CAPTA/CARA requirement regarding plans of safe care for infants and caregivers.

- Hosted a kickoff event for over 140 professionals from across the state to raise awareness surrounding the Plans of Safe Care Guidelines and Checklist; attendees included: hospital staff, behavioral health providers, county human service and public health staff, and state agency partners.
- Recruited and onboarded 10 new work group members.
- Provided insight to what content to include in a Plans of Safe Care Web-Based Training track for intake workers through the Child Welfare Training System.

Opportunity: The Plans of Safe Care Work Group will continue to strategize around best practice approaches for successful implementation by hospitals and child welfare staff across the state.

Next Meeting: Tuesday May 5th from 12-1 P.M.

The SEN Policy Work Group is monitoring state policy priorities to increase access to substance use disorder treatment and other services, decrease bias and discrimination in screening and testing, and other issues.

Progress to Date:

- Shared updates on a bi-monthly basis throughout the first half of the 2020 legislative session.
- Created a SEN Policy Work Group bill tracker to monitor and facilitate information-sharing regarding 14 different state initiatives related to substance use and families within categories of behavioral and mental health, early childhood, economic security, and family planning.
- Began a discussion of emerging needs and opportunities in light of COVID-19 surrounding substance use disorder treatment, recovery supports, prenatal care, birth settings, postnatal care, as well as intersecting issues.

Opportunity: The Policy Work Group will continue to consider implications for substance use and families while monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the state budget, legislative processes, and behavioral and mental health landscapes.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 19th from 8:30-9:30 A.M.

The SEN Provider Education Work Group is working to expand provider education on related issues such as screening every pregnant woman with a validated screening tool in prenatal, hospital and postpartum settings.

Progress to Date:

- Promoted the Colorado Perinatal Substance Use Provider Toolkit: 8 professional organizations promoted the toolkit through online newsletters and social media channels.
- Updated the toolkit dissemination plan in consideration of COVID-19 to ensure appropriate timing of widespread circulation of the toolkit to perinatal providers across the state.
- Reviewed an additional 50 resources with expanded topic areas for the toolkit, including trauma informed care, intimate partner violence, policy implications, engaging fathers and other caregivers, and more.
- Began a brainstorming session around the Work Group's objective post-toolkit, in recognition that the toolkit will require ongoing work.

Opportunity: The Provider Education Work Group will continue to work with a technology consultant to improve the functionality of the toolkit, and will collaborate with the SEN Family Advisory Board to inform current and future work.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 20th from 2:30-4 P.M.

To join a work group, nominate someone to a work group, or receive more information, contact Jordan Smith at jsmith@illuminatecolorado.org.

Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force Committee Update

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based, early intervention practice designed to identify, reduce, and prevent misuse of alcohol and other substances. When combined with community-level prevention strategies, SBIRT contributes to the prevention of physical and behavioral health issues that may result from substance use.

The COVID-19 public health crisis has caused collective trauma worldwide and in such difficult times, many turn to substances to cope with resulting anxiety and fear. Substance use and substance use disorders have the potential to cause additional vulnerability to the effects of COVID-19. Because of this, it continues to be tremendously important to provide physical and behavioral health providers with the tools to have meaningful conversations with their patients about substance use and health.

SBIRT Advisory Council Co-Chairs: Bethany Pace-Danley, Peer Assistance Services, Inc. & Kacy Crawford, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

SBIRT Adolescent Work Group Co-Chairs: Kelsey Robinson, Peer Assistance Services, Inc & Christy Boland, Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care

SBIRT Training and Education Work Group Co-Chairs: Sam Bourdon, Peer Assistance Services, Inc. & Darlyn Baker, Contractor with ViewPoints Psychotherapy

The SBIRT Advisory Council has met quarterly since October 2019. The Advisory Council currently consists of 48 members. We continue to recruit new members to join the Council and its two work groups, focused on 1) adolescent SBIRT, and 2) training and education.

Adolescent SBIRT Work Group

The Adolescent SBIRT Work Group has connected with the Colorado chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Work Group has narrowed their focus to a white paper series. The first white paper will be on best practices in Adolescent SBIRT, based on a literature review by the group. The next step will be to survey providers in Colorado with the help of the Colorado AAP and craft a subsequent white paper on current adolescent SBIRT implementation across the state.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 18th 3-4PM via Zoom

SBIRT Training and Education Work Group

The SBIRT Training and Education Work Group members created a proposal outlining SBIRT capacity building for the Colorado Community College System. The proposal outlines the need for Screening and Brief Intervention training and capacity building for healthcare providers in collegiate communities. Workgroup members are coordinating with José Esquibel of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention to introduce the proposal to Chancellor Joe Garcia of the Colorado Community College System.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 25th 2-3PM via Zoom

SBIRT *in* Colorado Updates

Statewide Training and Technical Assistance:

- In response to COVID-19, all sites with training scheduled through June 2020 have been offered the option of either a web-based training or rescheduling.
- SBIRT *in* Colorado hosted their first live, virtual TA session on Friday, April 17th.
 - Six individuals attended the first session
 - SBIRT *in* Colorado plans to offer additional live TA sessions covering topics including online Kognito simulations, screening guidance, and SBIRT implementation for polysubstance use.

SBIRT Advisory Council Member Updates & Related Projects

- The SBIRT Advisory Council met on Tuesday, April 28th, 2020
 - Heather Tolle, Substance Use Disorder Evaluator and Stephanie Russell, Evaluation Manager, Colorado Office of Behavioral Health, presented on Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health Disorders
 - José Esquibel, Director of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, provided legislative updates
 - Many members are currently finding ways to transition into telehealth services. SBIRT *in* Colorado provided updates on virtual training and technical assistance.
 - A topic of interest among Advisory Council members is how to ensure that screenings and brief interventions are still taking place while many practices shift to telehealth services
 - The next SBIRT Advisory Council meeting will be held in July