

Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force

Meeting Minutes

November 4th, 2022, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Attorney General Weiser, Matt Baca, Leslie Shaefer, Matt Holtman, Jose Esquibel, Juan De La Vera, Tracey Ritter, Sara Werner, Julia Roguski, Lesley Brooks, Andres Guerrero, Jade Woodard, Hilary Bryant, Kathi Wells, Ron Mitchell, Elise Contreras, Shaina Swain, Brandon Davis, Rick Brandt, Bailey McGuinness, Allison Rosenthal, Avani, Melissa Divido, Tonya Wheeler, Diane Carlson

Department of Law Staff: Heidi Williams, Jamie Feld, Jack Patterson, Andrea Mocevic

Welcome and Introductions

Attorney General Weiser provided welcome and thanked everyone for being present at the meeting.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Attorney General Phil Weiser requested a motion to approve the minutes.

Jose Esquibel Moved

Matt Holtman Seconded

Unanimously Approved

Opioid Settlement Distribution Update and Next Steps

Director of Opioid Response, Heidi Williams provided an overview of the funds coming to Colorado through the opioid settlements.

Heidi Williams shared that 12 regional funding requests were submitted 9/15/22 and all were determined to be in compliance with the MOU and the National Administrator was directed to release funds. An additional 4 requests were submitted by 11/1/22.

For local governments that opted-in to receive their local government share (20%), those funds have begun to be distributed.

Additional Regional Funding Request Deadlines: December 15, 2022, March 15, 2023.

Framing of Data Discussion

Dr. Lesley Brooks emphasized the role of the SATF in utilizing the data presented here and applying it to the work being done by the members of this committee. Dr. Brooks noted the importance of using the data to identify both successes and areas for improvement and populations at greatest risk.

Substance Exposed Newborns Data Linkage Project

Dr. Courtney Everson and Dr. Elysia Clemens highlighted key findings from the Substance Exposed Newborns Data Linkage project. The goals of the Substance Exposed Newborn Data Linkage project are to connect data from multiple state-administered data sources to comprehensively understand perinatal substance use disorder and its effects on family health and well-being. The aims are to generate population estimates of prenatal substance use that can be used to guide investments and track progress. Dr. Everson and Dr. Clemens highlighted key trends and policy recommendations.

Substance Use Trends & Health Outcomes from the CDPHE

Kylie Yocum shared key data points on opioid related deaths and alcohol use. Age adjusted drug overdose death rates increased for cocaine, methamphetamines, and synthetic opioids, with the greatest increase for synthetic opioids. There were 1,881 deaths of Colorado residents from drug overdose in 2021; of these 912 were related to fentanyl. Compared to 2020, the fentanyl death rate in 2021 nearly doubled in one year. Alcohol is still the most prevalently used substance in Colorado. Binge drinking is not just a youth or young adult issue, but younger people tend to consume more alcohol when they binge drink.

DeLayna Goulding shared data on marijuana use in both adults and youth. From 2019 to 2021, there were decreases in marijuana use and marijuana-related vehicle safety for youth, but no changes in adults. There were no changes in methods of marijuana use. There were decreases in emergency department/hospital discharges with marijuana related codes and unfortunate increases in marijuana-related outcomes among children 5 years old or younger.

Rise Above Youth Survey

Rise Above Colorado Executive Director Kent MacLennan shared findings from the 2022 Rise Above Colorado Youth survey. Most Colorado teens are still not using substances. However, household use is up significantly. Life is likely more challenging for Colorado teens today than before. Attitudes toward drug use have relaxed, particularly among female teens. Fortunately, most teens understand there are some risks associated with taking unknown pills and about half have talked with their parents about fentanyl.

Closing and Adjournment

Heidi Williams thanked all attendees and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.