

BROOME OPIOID ABUSE COUNCIL

December 4, 2015

Present: Jill Alford-Hammitt, John Bernardo, Sean Britton, Diane Brown, Carole Cassidy, Claudia Edwards, David Harder, Alan Hertel, Arthur Johnson, Karel Kurst-Swanger, Lee Livermore, Kate Newcomb, Debra Preston, Dr. Christopher Ryan, Raymond Serowik, Susan Wheeler, John Griffin for Lorraine Wilmot

Absent: Tina Barber, Allen Buyck, Katie Cusano, Jerry Mollen, Dennis O'Keefe, Gabe Osterhout, Dr. Peter Ronan

Guests: John Barry-Southern Tier AIDS Program, Brian Sickora-WSKG, Charles Compton-WSKG

Karel Kurst-Swanger called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

STAP: John Barry attended the meeting to share what STAP is doing and provide additional information on safe injection sites available in other communities. STAP operates a Syringe Exchange Program through funding from the NYS Department of Health. STAP is concentrating on interventions that are the most resource effective. They encourage people to get into treatment. Syringe Exchange Programs began in the 1990's; STAP opened one in Broome County in 2008 and another one in Ithaca; they will open one in Norwich soon. They offer free, anonymous services for people who inject drugs. Fifty percent of new HIV/AIDS cases were from sharing needles and injection equipment; that number is now about 3%. The NYS Department of Health has good data that Syringe Exchange Programs have decreased the transmission of Hepatitis C which is killing more people than HIV/AIDS right now. The Echo Project is provided through a NYS Department of Health grant to assist people who use substances through outreach, educational sessions, support and referrals to community services, and by to getting individuals into treatment as soon as possible. It is challenging and sometimes people have to wait a week or so to get not treatment, but they are getting individuals into treatment. A real challenge is getting approval through health insurance. They have had good success in keeping people engaged during the wait to get into treatment by contacting them daily, often several times a day. About 80% of people participating in the Syringe Exchange Program have already been through treatment at least once. They do not want people cut off from services just because they are actively using drugs. They want to keep them actively engaged until they are ready to get into treatment. They do an assessment at intake, offer Hepatitis C testing, Hepatitis A and B vaccinations, STD testing, referral to a primary care provider, Naloxone training, and discuss treatment. There are 600-700 individuals enrolled in the Syringe Exchange Program now. Data is captured in a state database. Each individual has a unique identifier and carries a card that allows them to carry syringes.

STAP has been invited to each community forum to discuss their services. Parents and loved ones receive education about the Syringe Exchange Program during Naloxone trainings. Lourdes Hospital substance abuse prevention staff were trained in Naloxone administration to prevent overdoses. Lourdes Hospital partnered with STAP a year ago and they have held six trainings and trained about 200 people. They discuss the Syringe Exchange Program, Hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS at the trainings so people are aware of services in the community. STAP trained 1,500 people last year. Approximately 40 individuals have come back to get a second kit.

WSKG: Brian Sickora and Charles Compton attended the meeting from WSKG to see how they could assist the community by providing resources and support to families and friends of someone suffering from an addiction. Their team has met to discuss what they could do to help the community and some possible options outlined were an on-line component, educational component (perhaps through an ongoing series), call-in programs, interviews, ongoing series, community events and youth voice. They could do a series following an addict as the individual goes through the process or follow a parent trying to assist an addict through the process of recovery. They have worked with the Broome County Urban League, Binghamton School District and BOCES on other issues. Having youth talk about issues in their own voice permeates the school and gets other youth talking about what is happening in the community.

They attended this meeting to learn more about what the Council is doing so they can better tailor their efforts to complement what is already being done in the community. Brian and Charles will be added to the distribution list for this Council and will attend the January meeting.

The remainder of the meeting summarized the work of each of the committees for WSKG. A final annual report detailing this work has been drafted by Karel Kurst-Swanger and will be available for public view at the end of December. A draft of the report is being emailed to BOAC members on Monday.

Additional updates:

John Barry was approached by a treatment center in California; they will present here next Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. John will send out additional information to this group. Carole Cassidy passed out information on a facility in Pennsylvania called Steps to Recovery. They would do a phone assessment and get people in quickly. People are moved to a halfway house after treatment.

An OASAS grant application was submitted for \$350,000/year for five years for a Recovery Community Outreach Center to be called Southern Tier Voices. Six grants will be approved for the State. Fairview applied as the lead agency for Broome, Tioga, Chenango and the western part of Delaware County. This grant would be for a house for individuals and families who are having trouble navigating the system to come in and get information on available resources. A project director and peer advocates would be hired. The purpose of the center would be to get people connected to services. It would not be open 24/7 but would have some evening and weekend hours. The Center could be used for twelve-step meetings, exercise/painting classes, and other supportive services for families and consumers. This would not be for clinical services. The grant application has to build in sustainability for the Center. We will know in January whether we receive this grant.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Friday, January 8th in the large conference room at the Broome County Legislature to discuss next steps.