

BROOME OPIOID ABUSE COUNCIL
February 27, 2015

Present: Fred Akshar, Tina Barber, John Bernardo, Katie Cusano, Claudia Edwards, David Harder, Arthur Johnson, Karel Kurst-Swanger (via phone), Lee Livermore (via phone), Gerald Mollen, Dennis O'Keefe, Gabe Osterhout, Raymond Serowik, Lorraine Wilmot

Absent: Diane Brown, Allen Buyck, Brett Chellis, Alan Hertel, Debra Preston, Dr. Peter Ronan, Dr. Christopher Ryan

Discussions began in 2012 to address the growing heroin issue in Broome County. The County Executive brought this group together on December 31, 2014 to formalize what steps are being taken in the county to address heroin and opiate abuse. Goals for the council have been established to address community education, law enforcement, education of medical professionals, and treatment and prevention. These topics will be standing agenda items at each monthly meeting.

There was discussion about adding members to this group and bringing in speakers to discuss specific topics. Team leaders were chosen to address each goal: Claudia Edwards for Community Education; Fred Akshar for Law Enforcement; Raymond Serowik and Dr. Christopher Ryan for Education of Medical Professionals; and Katie Cusano for Treatment, Prevention and Harm Reduction. Team leaders will add members to their teams and hold meetings to establish goals and timelines and then report back to this group on a monthly basis.

Claudia will recruit members for the Community Education Team and will ask Jill Alford-Hammitt, from Lourdes Hospital, if she would like to be the Team Leader. Jill has been involved in the community forums in Windsor and Deposit. Several family members of addicted individuals who are interested in participating have contacted the Executive Office. Gabe Osterhout will ask them if they want to be interviewed for human interest stories and they can be included on the Community Education Team. Jason Garnar and Scott Baker, Broome County Legislators, are interested in participating and can also be included on the Community Education Team. Dennis O'Keefe will participate on the Community Education Team. A BOAC link with a lot of information has already been established on the county website at gobroomecounty.com with information on what opiates are, 24/7 call numbers, links to Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and treatment centers, etc. Dennis will work with Fred Ashkar to establish a link for anonymous notes to go to an email account monitored by someone in the Sheriff's Department. Lee Livermore volunteered to assist with data collection as well as the Community Education Team and Education of Medical Professionals Team.

Suggestions for membership on the Treatment, Prevention and Harm Reduction Team were John Barry, Executive Director of STAP, Carmela Pirich (who is running a small pilot study for opiate users which was funded by the Community Foundation of SCNY), Michelle Napolitano from Fairview Recovery Services, Jerry Cole from the Dual Recovery Project, and someone from Lourdes Hospital and New Horizons.

Community forums were held in Deposit and Windsor which were very well attended and received. Additional forums will be scheduled. A student event is scheduled for March in Windsor and a presentation will be given to students and staff at SUNY Broome. The Law Enforcement and Community Education Teams can partner to expand outreach. The Dual Recovery Project provides free community trainings. One hundred prescription awareness cards were passed out at the Lourdes' Shipman Road pharmacy. Thirty percent of participants in Fairview Recovery Services end up leaving treatment and

they are considering a contingency program to reward people to stay in the program. The New Horizons Methadone Program is moving toward 150 slots and is exploring an inpatient program.

Lee Livermore said that some communities have used the Drug Free Communities Grant model for structuring efforts. Katie Cusano noted that the county did have that grant for ten years. She will review the sectors but believes that we will have all of them covered in the goals already established by this group. The structure is still in place.

Lee Livermore has been on four or five county taskforces to address the heroin and opiate abuse issue and said the common thread is data collection on toxic exposures. He has conducted 100 programs/meetings throughout 30 counties in the state. They have consulting toxicology doctors and toxicologists on staff. Their professional education team engages with medical professionals on toxic exposures through Grand Rounds and webinars. They have standardized educational pieces that can be used. Jerry Mollen noted that parent education is important to try to intercede at earlier levels. Lee Livermore said there needs to be a consistent continual effort on education and awareness relative to prevention and treatment availability in the community. OASAS has a very aggressive community awareness campaign running through television commercials. This is part of the Governor's "Combat Heroin" Campaign to inform and educate about the risks of heroin and prescription opioid use, signs of addiction and available resources.

This community has taken steps to address the issue. The Addiction Center of Broome County received funding from the Community Foundation for a pilot project to use Vivitrol which should be a real step forward. It is an antagonist that blocks the effects of opiates. The individual has to be detoxed first (off all medications for 7-10 days). Vivitrol (Naltrexone) can be injected to last 30 days or it can be taken orally on a daily basis. Right now there are two people on the injectable form and twelve on the oral form. Jerry noted that one of the problems with Suboxone maintenance to treat opiate addiction is that if someone on it goes to the emergency room for another problem it is difficult to give them pain medication. Vivitrol does not interfere with the use of pain medication. Alan Wilmarth would like to begin an inpatient Vivitrol program. Vivitrol is expensive and not covered by the Medicaid formulary; although it is expected to be covered in the next couple of months. Testing can be done for a whole spectrum of opioids; however, the testing that is being done by the Probation Department is not specific to opiates. The I-STOP law does not impact emergency rooms because emergency department prescribers are not included. Community members, in general, do not know too much about actual recovery from opioid addiction. Dr. Ronan feels that people have to be on maintenance for life.

Fred Akshar provided 2010-2014 drug/narcotic related reports for the top four crimes often committed by drug/narcotic offenders in Broome County (robbery, larceny from motor vehicles, burglary, drug/narcotic related arrests and all other larcenies. Data was collected from the Broome County Sheriff's Office, local police departments and the Broome County Drug Task Force. These numbers do not include data from the NYS Police. In order to understand the scope and extent of the problem we need data and we need to assure that arrests are reported in the same manner. Art Johnson said there is a lot of available data. Karel Kurst-Swanger volunteered to collect and analyze the data. She can look at potential secondary problems and what we are doing preventively to address these other issues. Katie mentioned an article she read about the rapidly spreading HIV issue due to sharing of needles. Claudia noted that there is a direct correlation between IV drug use and Hepatitis C cases and the increase in opiate/heroin deaths. There has been a tri-fold increase in Hepatitis C cases since 2011.

Applications for funding from the Community Foundation for \$5,000 or less can be submitted at any time with applications over \$5,000 accepted in the Fall. Applications are online. The Foundation is interested in funding community projects related to this issue.

Ray Serowik reported that all local police departments except Port Dickinson are participating in the Opioid Overdose Prevention Program. The NYS Police have their own program. Deposit is the only school district participating. The Forest Rangers are interested. Binghamton University and SUNY Broome public safety are involved; there have been no cases on either campus yet. There have been 25 cases in the past year which were all reversals except one. 100% of cases are transported to the emergency room by police/EMS; that may not be the case with civilians administering Naloxone. Ray will follow up on the emergency room protocol to see if treatment is offered. Ray said there are parallel efforts by staff with the STAP Harm Reduction Program providing training to family and friends on administering Naloxone. Tina will request that data from STAP.

Dr. Ryan drafted a letter for CVS pharmacies to ask them to consider installing medication return boxes. There are currently three drop boxes in the county – at the Broome County Sheriff's Office, County Office Building and in Deposit. Dr. Harder noted that the drop boxes are expensive. Perhaps the Health Department could submit an application to the Community Foundation to fund drop boxes. The DEA has discontinued coordination of drug take back programs this year and pharmacies would need to figure out how to handle this logistically. They would have to petition to be registered as a drug take back location and arrange to take the medication to an incinerator.

A doodle poll will be sent out to schedule monthly meetings for the remainder of 2015.