

Syringe Services Programs Standing Advisory Committee
March 13, 2020
10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Virtual Meeting
Conference Number: +1 (510) 365-3331
Access Code: 675-445-172
Meeting Minutes

Committee members present

Katie Carroll
Harriet Smith
Dr. Deanna Dunn
Natasha Mehu
Zach Kosinski
Samantha Kerr
Josh McCauley
Dr. G. Malik Burnett
Dr. Patrick Chaulk
Dr. Sarah Kattakuzhy

Non-members present

Tonya Green-Pyles
John Davis
Jessica Ellis
Erin Russell
Marie Stratton
Amy Higgins
Howie Newton
LuAnn Beck-Day
Samantha Ally
Miera Corey
Jeffrey Long
Emily Heinlein
Kyle Kenny
Erin Woodie
Dr. Diana Gaviria
Dr. Peter DeMartino
Dana Heilman
Elizabeth Murphy
Shante Johnson
Ben Stevenson II
Marianne Gibson
Tracy Heath
Mark Lockwood
Amy Gecan
Tasha Jamison
Tricia Christensen
Rose Burrell

I. Welcome- Erin Russell (Chief, Center for Harm Reduction Services)

Deputy Secretary and Committee Chair Fran Phillips is not able to join the meeting due to COVID-19; she is big part of mobilizing the response, keeping public engaged, and making decisions. Level II has been activated for the majority of state employees, which includes the Center for Harm Reduction Services. However we are still operating “business as usual.” All materials that will be reviewed and discussed during this meeting can be found at <http://bit.ly/MarchSACmeeting>.

There are several new committee members since the last SAC meeting:

- Heather Kirby from Maryland Hospital Association (not present today)
- Dr. Malik Burnett - keynote speaker at recent Regrounding Our Response event and connected with attendees on social determinants of health and the overdose crisis
- Zach Kosinski - Harford County Department of Health
- Lt. Josh McCauley – representative of local law enforcement in Washington County

II. Special Topic - Infectious Disease Outbreaks among PWUD in Maryland

- **Syphilis in Washington County**
Dr. Diana Gaviria, Deputy Health Officer, Washington County Health Department
David Washington, LCSW-C, AD-PC, Behavioral Health Services, Washington County Health Department

Presentation of data collected from the recent cases of Syphilis in Washington County. The data collection has taken place for about year now. They review primary and secondary cases in Western MD. Washington County has seen most of the cases in Maryland and Hagerstown is the area in the county that those cases are coming from. They reviewed national trends and compared them to Washington County trends. In response to this outbreak, the Washington County Health Department is working closely with the Center for STI Prevention at MDH and the CDC to increase public awareness around the outbreak and symptoms. Washington County is also increasing testing and treatment; expanding the DIS workforce, STI clinic hours, rapid testing and mobile outreach; engaging community partners, providing education for nonclinical partners; planning to distribute condoms in schools (this is aspirational); conducting rapid testing at detention centers; providing education through provider alerts, grand rounds, regional summits and nurse education. The syphilis summit will have clinician and harm reduction tracks.

- **Hepatitis A in Cecil County**
Erin Woodie, Voices of Hope
John Davis, Cecil County Health Department

Hepatitis A vaccines are offered during outreach and 20 people have been vaccinated (along with HIV and HepC testing) since December 27, 2019. Cecil County's SSP program (HARMONY) uses a Dodge Caravan and parks it in the community. While Voices of Hope does outreach, they let people know where the caravan is parked; participants receive \$10 Wawa gift cards for testing, and receive information and education about the Hepatitis A outbreak, and are offered the vaccine. This approach is going well because of strong and trusted relationship that Voices of Hope has in the community. They are preparing for limited operations and will have hotline and van available.

Zach Kosinski- Harford County Health Department harm reduction team meets monthly with PrEP team and is really excited about this partnership. They encourage everyone to form these types of partnerships.

Erin Russell - MDH is supporting LHD SSPs to do similar Hepatitis vaccination and outreach activities, and to made budget modifications to accommodate this as needed (sent communication about this last week)

Erin Woodie - Because of the Voices of Hope partnership with the Cecil County Health Department, they are able to reach a whole community that would not access services at health department otherwise; they have noticed a lot of misinformation among the community of PWUD regarding Hepatitis A.

III. Program Spotlight: Frederick County Health Department Syringe Services Program **Jessica Ellis, Frederick County Health Department**

Frederick County SSP launched a voucher program in 2017 with a local pharmacy in the community. They currently have 350 unique identifiers, and distributed 5,000 syringes with this partnership. The SSP launched in August 2018 and mobile services launched in May 2019. For FY20, they have distributed 11, 835 syringes and collected 5,387 syringes. The return rate is low due to participants' fear of law enforcement. They distributed 675 FTS and 290 of them were provided to EMS Leave Behind, trained 6, 100 people in naloxone and overdose education, and hired a part-time nurse in November to assist with wound care. They have provided 15 participant referrals to wound care, registered 115 participants, distributed 363 Narcan kits (200 through EMS Leave behind), connected 91 individuals HCV case management (59 followed through and 68% tested positive and of those, 75% were connected to treatment), conducted rapid HCV testing during events with the community and provider partners and by appointment, and conducted community clean-ups.

Tricia Christensen – A pharmacist from Garrett County has noted in conversation that many people are purchasing syringes and citing reasons other than drug use, such as diabetes, and he would like to be able to have more honest conversations to offer other services and also distribute Narcan. This demonstrates the value of pharmacy exchange programs.

Jessica Ellis - Some pharmacies won't participate in voucher programs, but some pharmacists want to do more, so they can at least provide people with resources and cards with information about SSPs.

IV. Maryland Department of Health updates

Erin Russell, Chief, Center for Harm Reduction Services

COVID19: CHRS has reviewed and sent out some COVID resources and handouts created by Higher Ground, HRC and Vital Strategies. We are encouraging our programs to stock up on supplies including naloxone and sterile injection equipment. We are anticipating delays in processing invoices, orders etc. and are trying to get ahead of that possible delay. MDH/CHRS is still operating as normal, and is remaining connected and engaged with programs and grantees. We want to remain in communication to learn about your challenges and any changes in service availability so we can help to coordinate in response. Our #1 priority is that there are not gaps in services for people at highest risk of overdose and that people can still access sterile injection equipment. We are here and ready to help.

Program updates: Erin presented an overview of program developments and quarterly SSP & ORP data; noted that CHRS is updating the core training for SSP staff; CHRS plans to expand the EMS Leave behind program. Noted that NEXT distro mailing of naloxone to people at risk for overdose is available via Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition. This opportunity is intended for people who are at highest risk. This is important to note in light of potential closures or limitations to people's access to naloxone due to coronavirus.

SSP Applications: Anne Arundel County Health Department and Wicomico County Health Department submitted their applications for approval to operate Syringe Services Programs. The application was missing protocol documents from Wicomico, so the 60-day approval period will not begin until those documents are submitted. Committee members will receive and

review Anne Arundel’s application over the next 2 weeks. The Department has 60 days to review and respond to Anne Arundel County Health Department from the date of receipt. Wicomico County Health Department has not begun their 60-day review. Howard County Health has been approved since the last SAC meeting.

V. Committee Discussion

- Approve meeting minutes from September 13th & December 6th, 2019 (*Dr. Dunn and Dr. Burnett voted to approve*)

- Bylaws

Harriet Smith- under membership section, “someone with substance use experience, or someone who is a family member of someone who injects drugs,” why does it specify in #7 regarding injection but not #6?

Erin Russell- This list of membership categories is directly taken from the statute.

Erin Russell- CHRS will share a polished and finalized version of the bylaws at the next SAC meeting to be voted on.

- Application review

Several members of the committee have volunteered to serve on an application review committee in order to provide feedback and formal recommendations to programs on their policies and procedures. This will be an official subcommittee moving forward.

- Comments and questions from committee members

Dr. Deanna Dunn- in future meetings, Dr. Dunn would like to share updates on rural opioid response technical assistance. They are currently working on website and it should be launched within a couple of weeks. For more information, you can reach out Dr. Dunn via email.

Dr. Sarah Kattakuzhy- In future meetings, Dr. Kattakuzhy would like to review policy updates from legislative session that relate to harm reduction.

Zach Kosinski- Zach would like for SAC meeting dates to be shared more broadly. Erin Russell responded that MDH we will create calendar invites for the next SAC meeting dates, which are June 5, Sept 5, and Dec 4th. These meetings do not yet have a set location; county health departments can let Erin know if they are interested in hosting or make recommendations on where to host the next meeting.

Lt. Josh McCauley- Lt. McCauley share that he is new to harm reduction, he learned about this through a LEAD training about a year ago, and is excited to be a part of this effort and team.

VI. Public Comment:

No public comments.

VII. Closing