

Gaston Community Healthcare Commission

Minutes

Gaston Controlled Substances Coalition

Community Room/Gaston County Police Department, August 18, 2017

Attending

- Costa Andreou, MD, CaroMont
- Yvonne Boafo, DHHS-Public Health
- Patty Brooks, Gaston Together
- Donna Elliott, GFHS
- Jeffrey Ellison, PhD, GFHS
- Jennie Escue, McLeod Center
- Andrea Gallaway, RHA Health Services
- William Gross, Gaston Together/GCHC
- Barbara Hallisey, Partners Behavioral Health Management
- Thomas Henry, CaroMont
- Capt. Steven Jentsch, Gaston Co. Police Dept.
- Becky Jones, Phoenix Counseling
- Brittain Kenney, Gaston DHHS
- Chrys Kolodny, DHHS-Public Health
- Donna Lockett, Gaston Together
- Jonathan Marr, Gaston Co. Police Dept.
- Maceo Mayo, RHA Health Services
- Jamie McConnell, GEMS
- Misty McIntosh, Community Health Partners
- Karen Melendez, , Community Health Partners
- Ruth Murphy, DHHS-Social Services
- Will Neumann, Community
- Abigail Newton, DHHS-Public Health
- Shirley Ocloo, MD, GFHS
- Ami Parker, Gaston County Schools
- Josie Polhemus, Pharmacist, CVS
- Joseph Ramey, Gaston Co. Police Dept.
- Rosanne Rzasa, McLeod Center
- Debra Safrit, Gaston Medical Associates
- John Schleitler, MD, CaroMont
- Joseph Shepherd, DHHS-Social Services
- Cheri Singleton, DHHS-Public Health
- Velma Taormina, MD, DHHS-Public Health
- Ed Turas, Gastonia Police Dept.
- Anne Wheeler, Community Health Partners
- Melissa Williams, Self Concepts Clinical Counseling

Welcome and Introductions. Chairperson Velma Taormina, MD opened the meeting at 7:32 AM; she welcomed the attendees, who introduced themselves and stated their affiliations. Ms. Polhemus and Ms. Ascue attended the Coalition meeting for the first time.

Minutes of June 16, 2017. Dr. Andreou moved to accept the minutes; Mr. Neumann seconded the motion, which the Coalition unanimously approved.

Updates: Strategic Plan Implementation

Policy Adoption Committee

Dr. Ocloo stated the Policy Adoption Committee works with community prescribers to help them focus on preventing and treating opioid dependencies.

- The committee helped organize the Speed Dating program at CaroMont Regional Medical Center on June 8, 2017.
- The updated Coalition website will include documents on alternatives to narcotics for treating pain.
- The committee is planning a Continuing Medical Education event in late January / early February 2018, in collaboration with PAINWeek, the organization that conducted a high quality CME program in Charlotte last June. Our goal is to provide the program at no charge or at low cost and to build on the Coalition's first CME program, which presented opioid basics. Potential program sponsors are CaroMont, DHHS, Gaston Family Health Services, and Partners Behavioral Health Management.

Treatment Linkages Committee

Ms. Hallisey reported the committee held a Behavioral Health Summit on Wednesday/June 21 at CaroMont Regional Medical Center, featuring Thomas McLellan, PhD, a national expert on linking

physical and behavioral health services. The committee will soon review the summit proceedings, develop implementation activities, and will add them to their Strategic Plan.

Ms. Hallisey gave the Partner Activities report for Partners Behavioral Health Management (PHBM):

- PHBM will conduct the one-day free summit, *Teens and Toxic Times*, on October 13 at the Hickory Metro Convention Center. The program is open to professionals who work with teenagers who are dealing with mental illness, substance abuse disorders, and other behavioral health issues. They can earn CME, CNE, CHES, NBCC, and NCSAPPB continuing education hours. Registration is on the PHBM website at: <https://partnerstraining.com/teens-toxic-times/>.
- Under the aegis of the Medicaid and Choice Reform, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services issued a white paper describing how it will expand behavioral health care in the state's Medicare program. Individuals with serious behavioral health disorders will receive treatment from Managed Care Organizations, like PHBM, for two years. Individuals with lesser disorders, such as substance abuse and developmental disabilities, will continue to receive managed care services. This program will begin in Spring 2018.
- NC funding to Managed Care Organizations, like PHBM, was cut and replaced with Medicaid savings funds. The cut to PHBM, set for \$8MM, was miscalculated at \$13MM and signed into law by Governor Cooper. A bill to correct this error was vetoed and PHBM is working to correct this mistake.
- PHBM will receive \$450,000 to sustain its activities under State's **21st Century Cures Grant** to: (1) pay for methadone treatments, (2) provide outpatient behavioral health therapy, (3) pay for Medication Assisted Treatment, (4) conduct Mobile Crisis services, (5) deliver outpatient substance abuse counseling, and (6) provide other services. This funding covers the ten-month period, July 2017 – April 2018.
- McLeod Addictive Disease Center is one of two addiction treatment organizations in the state whose providers began using the state billing system in May and June 2016.
- In response to questions, Ms. Hallisey stated:
 - A national bill to fund opioid prevention and treatment activities has not been signed.
 - Strategies for providing medications to detoxify or maintain patients with opioid addictions have been approved through the 21st Century Cures Act.

Community Education & Prevention Committee

In Dr. Donigan's absence, Mr. Gross gave the report.

- The Coalition website, which resides on the DHHS website, has been updated with new software. Ms. Kenney stated she is organizing the website and asked members to tell her when they find items that need to be changed.
- The process for distributing certificates to prescribing practices is proceeding. When the Coalition put this program in its strategic plan, it sought the voluntary adoption of safe prescribing practices. With the passage of the STOP Act these practices are now required. Practices where all prescribers sign our opioid practice agreement will receive a framed certificate for their waiting rooms, which we expect may discourage drug-seeking patients and help them share opioid-related issues with their providers. Mr. Neumann moved to approve the amended agreement; Ms. Safir seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.
- Ms. Polhemus, suggested conducting a certificate program for community pharmacists as they can help stem the tide of opioid abuse and misuse. Ms. McIntosh stated the local Pharmacy Association is being regionalized and will focus on opioids. This suggestion will be referred to the Coalition's Community Education and Prevention Committee.
- The committee established the Medication Take-back Subcommittee to encourage individuals to safely discard unneeded medications and reduce the potential for family members and visitors to steal opioids from people's homes. The group held two take-back events at Gaston Grizzlies games and, the previous evening, at the final summer concert at the Rotary Pavilion.

Officer Marr reported we collected 15 pounds of medications at the baseball games and about 8 pounds at the Rotary concert, and the group distributed cards describing the location of permanent drug disposal sites. Based on his work in helping North and South Carolina counties start drug collection programs, he believes Gaston County is a leader in this work.

Mr. Neumann stated the medicine take-back activities gave visibility to safe drug management, as they were widely promoted through Facebook, emails, and social media. He cited the need to collect unused drugs from hospice patients, which is included in the STOP Act recently signed by Governor Cooper. Another potential target is nursing homes.

Partner Activities

Data Dashboard

Ms. Newton distributed graphs on county residents treated for opioid overdoses at hospital emergency departments for January-July 2016 and 2017... and Gaston County drug arrests for 2015 and for 2011-2015. Ms. Bofo highlighted the trends in this data. The number of deaths due to heroin is increasing.

Comments on this data included: (1) the spike in ED overdose treatments in June 2017 may be due to toxic drugs; (2) the county police department administered Narcan to three people in the last 10 days and received 248 calls to administer Narcan this year; (3) municipal police in Gaston County report their administration of Narcan to GEMS; (4) in treating overdosed patients, the CaroMont ED conducts urine drug screenings that identify the presence of opioids but not specific drugs – findings vary between laboratories; and, (5) the relatively flat trend line on treatment for opioid overdoses may be due, in part, to the county police department being shorthanded.

CaroMont Medical Group

Dr. Andreou reported:

- CaroMont designated Dr. Kirsten D'Amore as their lead opioid staff person, following Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations guidelines.
- Thomas Henry recently published an article on a template he developed to help CaroMont prescribers reduce the doses of opioids they prescribe.
- Fifty-eight percent of prescribers in the CaroMont Medical Group use the Controlled Substance Reporting System.
- A growing concern is prescribers not providing pain medications to individuals in need.
- After the City of Vancouver began giving heroin tablets to addicted individuals, their drug-related crime rate dropped to zero.

Gaston DHHS

Dr. Taormina reported:

- STAR program data for the first six months of 2016 and 2017, found 36 fewer women in the Public Health Maternity Clinic qualified for drug treatment in 2017. The majority of patients with positive drug screens (27) in 2017 were using legal drugs and 19 women referred to GFHS for behavioral health services have transitioned from street to safe drugs.
- The two-year \$500,000 *Child Health Insurance Program* grant request from NC DHHS to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration is still under consideration. If funded, it would enable STAR to pay for childcare, purchase a van, and upgrade a residential facility for its clients.
- Gaston DHHS did not receive the CDC *Opioids and Women* grant; this funding would have hired a Coordinator for our Coalition to deliver prevention services to women and their male partners.

Drug Diversion and Treatment Program

Chief Ramey reported DDAT is at full capacity and has a waiting list. They are working to add beds to meet demands for service. Program funding, from PBHM, will expire in October or November 2017. In

addition to operating funds, they need \$340,000 to refurbish a dedicated space. The program is changing its criteria to increase the number of referrals they accept from other organizations.

Clean Needle Exchange

No report.

Agency Spotlight: RHA Health Services

RHA Health Services provides support services for people with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities, behavioral health needs, and substance use challenges. Ms. Garraway and Maceo Mayo work in the Gastonia office with a focus on preventing opioid addiction. They are in year three of a three-year Partnership for Success grant, with a goal of impacting 6,000 lives; to-date they have served 4,000 individuals. Among their services are presentations, distributing drug lock boxes, disseminating information on safely disposing of medications, providing materials, and making presentations in schools. Ms. Garraway reported they are making headway with the Gaston County Schools, with a goal of delivering an evidence-based curriculum. They are also partnering with Gaston DHHS-Public Health, which is using the Guiding Choices curriculum.

Ms. Garraway cited Nicole Augustine, the Cultural Liaison for the North Carolina DHHS, who conducts cultural competency skills trainings for helping professionals who work with populations that abuse and misuse opioids, or are at risk for these behaviors. Ms. Augustine will provide these programs at no charge through June 30, 2018. In audio comments she said: cultural sensitivity helps providers give respectful responses to people from groups other than their own; religion, language, national origin, and socio-economic status affect culture; culture influences the language we use to discuss substance use; and, culture also influences the use of controlled substances. Ms. Garraway invited Coalition members to listen to the audio presentation and to contact her to schedule trainings with Ms. Augustine (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJlgwL26qTM&feature=youtu.be>).

Other

- The group reviewed proposed changes to its Guidelines, which reflect the Coalition's growth and development. The changes eliminated the Controlled Substances Policy Committee, which has been folded into the Policy Adoption Committee; added text on standing and ad-hoc subcommittees; clarified text, and updated the organizational chart. Mr. Neumann moved to approve the changes, Ms. Wheeler seconded the motion, and the Coalition unanimously approved the motion.
- Dr. Taormina described the handout *Strengthen Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOP) Act* and encouraged the members to use the link to see the full bill. Governor Cooper signed the act into law on June 28.
- Ms. Lockett reported the Opioid Forum, featuring Governor Roy Cooper and scheduled for August 31 in Gastonia, has been cancelled.
- Mr. Gross noted the Coalition Directory in the meeting packet. If they would like to be included in the directory, he directed them to use the link at the top of each page.
- Ms. McIntosh stated Community Health Partners is working on opioids with local pharmacies. They have administered a survey, are conducting education, and Lincoln County Public Works provides them with free sharps containers. Ms. McIntosh will present her work for the next Agency Spotlight.
- September is Recovery Month.

Next Meetings: October 20 and December 15, 2017.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:01 following a motion by Chief Ramey, a second by Mr. Neumann, and a unanimous vote of approval.