

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Public Awareness Work Group Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2021 via Zoom

Present:

Kent MacLennan, Co-chair, Rise Above Colorado

Liz Owens, Co-chair, OBH

Aminta Bhutani, DEA

Charlotte Whitney, OBH

Haley Foster, Tri-County Health Department

Kelsey Robinson, Peer Assistance Services

AmeriCorps: Marie Hafner, Zak Hyde, Payton Landes

RTI Staff: Eric Crankshaw, Claudia Squire, Haley Hedrick

Consortium Staff: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Susanna Cooper, Jessica Eaddy, Jen Place, Tyler Payne, Jamie Feld, Judy Solano, Michael Davidson, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached list.

Liz Owens, Work Group Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the November 2020 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Research & Evaluation Project Update (Research Triangle Institute):

Michael Davidson provided a brief history of the role of RTI in researching and evaluating the Consortium public outreach campaigns. RTI was hired in March of 2019 to perform this work.

RTI Presentation (Claudia Squire):

Phase 1 Focus Groups: Eight focus groups were conducted on Zoom during the months of November and December 2020. 24 people participated in four focus groups on chronic pain. 17 people participated in 4 focus groups on opioid misuse. Participants were recruited via Facebook and Instagram online ads. Social media recruitment with a screener was used for each priority population and samples were recruited via Facebook and Instagram. An eligibility screener identified respondents who met the study criteria.

The group meetings focused on issues related to opioids in Colorado, feedback on both the TakeMedsSeriously and Bring Naloxone Home campaigns, and future campaigns. In order to identify trends, data review included thematic analysis and reporting categories. Preliminary results:

Bring Naloxone Home: Participants in the chronic pain groups reported seeing information about opioids online and on TV most often, i.e., general information about the epidemic, ads for rehab, lawsuits, and fines against pharmaceutical companies. Participants reported noting the major issues involved in overprescribing by physicians vs. reluctance to prescribe. Most participants were somewhat familiar with naloxone and reported obtaining Narcan when prescribed an opioid. Most agreed there should be widespread naloxone access; however, they also

expressed concerns related to overuse. Most were familiar with overdose issues related to opioids, but were not familiar with the term “harm reduction.” Other findings:

- Some were aware of MAT and syringe exchange programs
- Most had not heard of illicit fentanyl being used on the street
- Many were familiar with drug disposal sites
- None were aware of information regarding safe storage of medication

TakeMedsSeriously: Participants assumed the campaign concerned the dangers of opioids; therefore, they suggested making graphics more congruent with this message. “Meds Can Become a Problem” was preferred by most participants because it was direct, simple, and encouraged looking for additional information. Some participants preferred “You’re the Solution,” which they felt was empowering, catchy, and encouraged personal responsibility.

Future campaigns related to chronic pain could include resources in the community for those seeking help, the risks of opioids and alternative pain treatments, and stigma reduction.

Among the opioid misuse groups, some participants alternated between using opioids for chronic pain and illicit use. Most participants reported familiarity with naloxone, although levels of knowledge varied. They felt it was important to address stigma. “Naloxone reverses opioid overdose” was the preferred message across all groups. Many participants like the inclusion of naloxone in the “Bring Naloxone Home” banner ad, but others thought it confusing. Friend networks and information posted in public places were the most common sources of information.

Claudia reviewed the specific ads that were shown to all focus group participants and the methods used measure participant responses.

The next step includes a survey of approximately 3,000 Colorado adults regarding message identification in order to ascertain attitudes and gaps in awareness. The sampling will include approximately 1,000 individuals who report opioid use within the past year, as they are particularly relevant to the messaging. Post-survey focus groups are also planned.

Comments:

It was noted that the “You’re the Solution” messages were directed specifically to senior citizens, not current chronic pain patients.

Michael said that a contract modification would be required to reduce the number of focus groups and expand the sample in certain areas. Work group members agreed to proceed with this modification. The survey is being finalized and will be shared with work group members for their review.

The limited awareness of naloxone, safe storage of medication, and illicit fentanyl use indicates a need for more public education.

Public Awareness Project Updates (Michael Davidson):

Work continues with the OpiRescue platform to produce promotional material. An ad is planned on 9News. Public outreach will include first person testimony related to naloxone administration, why naloxone is valuable, and how some people have turned their lives around.

Public Awareness Budget Update:

Funding support for the Affected Families & Friends Work Group “Beyond the Numbers 2.0” project is under discussion. Funding support is also being considered for an Illuminate Colorado project. Updates will be provided at the March work group meeting. Funds will also be allocated to support both the “TakeMedsSeriously” and “Bring Naloxone Campaigns” through the end of the fiscal year June 30, 2021.

Other Business:

The Tri-County Overdose Prevention Partnership public awareness work group would like to hold a coordinated statewide International Overdose Awareness event involving other coalitions and organizations. Judy Solano suggested the effort could also be multi-cultural in scope and described past multi-cultural events that were very successful in the Pueblo area. Both Judy Solano and Jessica Eaddy said they could assist Haley Foster with event organization. Jessica also mentioned that there could be free Narcan distribution statewide during the events. She has discussed this option with Theresa Baillie, Emergent Biosolutions.

2020 Overdose Awareness Day events in Colorado:

https://www.canva.com/design/DAEDYLzYuOI/UQxXkTVFZ1eXydrJHO_Ysw/view

Aminta Bhutani announced the DEA Take-back event will be held on April 24th.

Tyler reported that the state medication take-back program collected 2,756 pounds of medications in December, down 1,000 pounds from November. COVID-19 has impacted collection programs.

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 from 1–2:30 p.m.

Attachment: List of absent work group members

