

## Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

### Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2023 via Zoom

#### **Present:**

D.E. Foster, Co-chair

Valsa Madhava, MD, John Staight, Christy Huff, MD, Terri Schreiber, Michael Bohan, MD, Trina Faatz, Nicole Lamberson, Abby Anderson, MD, Barbara Connolly, Jamey Garmon, Lorraine Hoover, Sonja Bjurstrom, Arlene Coglietti, Klarissa Rain

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Shayna Micucci, Hilary Bryant, Lindsey Simbeye, Teresa Cantwell, Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached roster.

Co-Chair D.E. Foster called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made to approve the November 2022 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

#### **2022 Review:**

The following 2022 work group accomplishments were discussed:

- CME training. A video of the four-part series is in development and should be available soon. Additional training is planned for the future.
- Peer support training, including a presentation during the Consortium annual meeting in October.
- John Staight appeared in the new Netflix documentary “Take Your Pills, Xanax”  
<https://www.netflix.com/title/81251342>  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StVTTgnxgEw>
- The work group was able to include other working groups that are focused on benzodiazepine-related issues.

Jose Esquibel assured ongoing Consortium support for the work group’s efforts.

Shayna Micucci provided additional information regarding the CME recordings. Four of the benzodiazepine-specific sessions are currently being processed by the Instructional Design Team. Other recordings are also in process. Once the recordings are completed, the sessions will be approved for CMEs by the Colorado Medical Society and will then be promoted via Consortium networks.

Sonja Bjurstrom and Klarissa Rain spoke briefly about a benzodiazepine clinic they are establishing called The Phoenix Program. The 15-week program will focus on helping clients taper benzodiazepine use. The clinic will be operational in February and will include peer support and case management. Dr. Conklin will be the chief medical officer. D mentioned the work being done by the Benzodiazepine Information Coalition. Sonja and D will discuss this further offline.

### **Peer Support Training Update:**

December 2022 Pilot Training: Christy Huff provided an update of the two-day 12-hour training for peer support professionals. Ginger Ross from Choices Training also assisted with training. Training focused on issues specific to benzodiazepines. Participant and work group member feedback was positive. Training might be conducted over a three-day period in the future, rather than two days. Participants mentioned they would have liked more breakout sessions.

Phase II/Current Status: D summarized the work involved in Phase II, which includes evaluation, certification, and a manual.

Phase III and IV Planning: Phase III will include deployment of the program in Colorado and continued collaboration with Choices Training. Rod Rushing, with Embark, will also be helping launch the statewide program. Future plans include national program deployment.

Work group members discussed the manual development and the value of having those with lived experience involved in the training. D suggested meeting with Rod Rushing and Ginger Ross to determine who will be teaching classes in the future. He said the core team would initially teach classes and others could be brought in if the demand outweighs current teacher availability.

### **2023 Priorities:**

Steering committee and sub-groups. Barbara Connolly and others from Benzo Warriors offered to organize a subgroup focused on monitoring and promoting research. D asked work group members for other suggestions.

### **Comments/suggestions:**

Nicole Lamberson: a provider education course focusing on deprescribing and different methods of tapering.

Barbara Connolly: coordinate legislative efforts (including nationally) to move them in the right direction. Legislative efforts in Colorado, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, are all a little different.

Jose Esquibel suggested convening a group to start working on ideas in Colorado and with other states. The Interim Study Committee on Opioids and Other Substance Use Disorders will be meeting again this summer. The Consortium can support Colorado efforts and present recommendations to the committee.

Abby Anderson: review SAMHSA mentor networks and the ECHO program case-based learning to further awareness of the provider education training available.

Christy Huff: Generate a benzo-wise list of doctors for Colorado. D said there is a huge need in the community and agreed this would be beneficial.

D Foster: publishing papers, including the paper that introduces BIND, as well as surveys.

### **Partner Organization Updates:**

Christy Huff will be presenting a poster at the American Society of Addiction Medicine Conference in April 2023 in Washington, D.C.

Terri Schreiber is in the process of writing a grant with the assistance of the Consortium Grant-writing Program. The grant includes developing a peer support specialist network for Otero, Crowley, and Bent counties. Ginger Ross is assisting with the training aspect of the grant.

Michael Bohan is working with the Benzo Alliance to develop marketing resources.

**Adjournment/Next Meeting:**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on February 7, 2023 from 12 to 1:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster