

## **Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention**

### **Recovery Friendly Workplace Work Group Meeting**

October 20, 2025 via Zoom

#### **Present:**

David Shapiro, Co-chair

Liz Herod, Serenity Recovery Connection

John Narine, Recovery Friendly Leader

Stevie Kitterman, Grant County Rural Health Network

Nick Williams, ASA Colorado

Laura Indermeuhle, Hope COS

Patti Cocoran, CU Centers for Health, Work & Environment

Brandi Drtina, North Colorado Health Alliance

Grace Kane, Community Resource Specialist

Alia Andrews, BHA

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy, Kristin Carpenter, Eric Barker,

Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached roster.

Co-Chair David Shapiro called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

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

A motion was made to approve the July 2025 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

#### **Statewide RFW Engagement Metrics (David Shapiro):**

125 companies have signed the letter of intent to participate in the Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative. The companies represent over 45,000 employees in 23 of 64 Colorado counties (15 of the 19 regional opioid abatement counties). Of the 125 companies, 22 are now certified as recovery friendly workplaces. Approximately 20 companies will likely be certified by the end of the year.

#### **2023 Colorado Overdose Death Rates by Industry (Christine Demont, CDPHE):**

Christine Demont is the lead analyst and epidemiologist in the CDPHE Vital Statistics Mortality Surveillance Unit responsible for the data analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of unintentional drug overdose deaths and violent deaths, including suicide. She designs and conducts epidemiological analyses to support the surveillance, epidemiology, and evaluation of the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) and the Colorado Violent Death Reporting System (COVDRS). Christine's presentation focused on industry-specific overdose data.

#### **Summary:**

The Colorado Violent Death Reporting System and State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System tracks and assesses events of public health importance, defines public health priorities, evaluates programs, and facilitates research. Drug overdose is currently one of the



public health priorities. 2019 saw a huge increase in drug overdose deaths, which is the year when funding began for the state unintentional drug overdose reporting system.

Christine explained how industry codes used on death certificates were created. Death certificate occupation texts are translated into standardized codes. The construction industry has the highest rates of deaths related to unintentional and undetermined drug overdoses, intentional drug overdoses, and suicide. The second highest rate in unintentional drug overdose deaths is among those employed in the accommodation and food service industry sector (followed by arts, entertainment, and recreation).

The State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System is an enhanced collection system funded by the CDC and is how the data is collected for industry occupations. Data collection includes circumstances surrounding the death (IV needles present, rx bottles, mental health issues, toxicology results, etc.) and is accessible via the dashboard.

The State Health Department also collects data from the Colorado Hospital Association on ER non-fatal overdose visits. The data include billing codes. The Syndromic Surveillance System tracks near real-time non-fatal drug overdose ER visits (as well as other disease outbreaks). Non-fatal drug overdose occupation industry data are not collected.

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes and has links to the Colorado Health Information Dataset. The drug overdose tab in the link has six different dashboards that can be searched for historical drug overdose data (does not yet include industry-level data).

For additional information: [Christine.demont@state.co.us](mailto:Christine.demont@state.co.us)

### Discussion:

David outlined how the information presented above is relevant to the initiative. When he conducts an advising session with a company about supporting people in recovery, the questions asked invariably relate to employees actively using substances and concern for resulting impairment. In addition, he said data by industry is useful when applying for grant funding to show which industries are the most impacted by the opioid crises and fatal overdoses as well as for presentations to industry partners such as the construction sector.

David mentioned the partnership with Colorado Hospitality Outreach and Wellness (CHOW) representing the restaurant, hospitality, and accommodations industry. Attempts will be made in the future to establish better partnerships with the retail trade associations and sector.

Christine was asked about the construction industry data over time and whether or not trends in overdose rates have been tracked. She said her data include 2021 and 2022, which showed a decrease from 82.9 to 78.8, but an increase to 115.5 in 2024. She suggested that a five-year look back would be appropriate.

Jessica Eaddy mentioned the lack of financial resources people have to be able to obtain therapy when they have a mental health issue that leads to substance misuse. The Agriculture Department and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union have established a program for six free mental health sessions for substance use, which is supported by grant funding. She asked if something similar could be established for people working in the trades.

David said the Associated General Contractors of Colorado, the larger group of general contractors, does have a partnership with U-Turn Health for people to access multiple mental



health sessions. In 2026, phase two of the workplace initiative will be establishing an employee resource peer support program by sector. The support program will be an in-house or a separately run organization employees can access.

Nick Williams said the construction industry did see a reduction nationally in synthetic opioid overdose rates, which reflected access to Narcan. He said there has also been a decrease in stigma related to drug misuse that is a result of increased education and training. Nick has established a partnership with John Narine (Recovery Friendly Leader).

The work group continued to discuss Narcan distribution, particularly in connection with firearm awareness and prevention.

### **Upcoming Events/New Business:**

CHOW plans to distribute naloxone vending cabinets to 20 restaurants before the holidays. The cabinets will be located near restrooms and will contain 12 boxes of naloxone for use by employees or customers. One box of naloxone costs \$40. Plans are to distribute similar cabinets to other industry sectors.

ASA Colorado will be holding a mental health and safety summit on November 14<sup>th</sup> in collaboration with Mental Health Colorado. Behavioral Health donated 408 kits of Narcan, which will be given to the summit participants.

<https://asacolorado.com/#!/event/2025/11/14/annual-health-and-safety-summit>

The Consortium will be holding its 2025 annual meeting on Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> in the Donald M. Elliman Conference Center, Anschutz Medical Campus. In person and virtual registration: <https://ucdenverdata.formstack.com/forms/registration>

Other upcoming events: <https://corecoveryfriendlyworkplace.org/events/>

### **Adjournment/Next Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held in 2026 (date TBD).

Attachments: Work group roster, Presentation