

## Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

### Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2023 via Zoom

#### **Present:**

Alexis Ritvo, MD and D.E. Foster, Co-chairs

Barbara Connolly, Bernie Silvernail, Lisa Gemmill, Trina Faatz, Valsa Madhave, MD, John Staight, David Conklin, Brian Watkins, Lis Collins, Christina Dalpiaz, Barry Cochran, Crystal Goodiel, Terri Schreiber, Pam Rodriguez

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Shayna Micucci, Jen Place, Hilary Bryant, Lindsey Simbeye, Kristin Carpenter, Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached roster.

Co-Chair D.E. Foster called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

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

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

#### **CME Video Update (Shayna Micucci):**

CMS is still in the process of reviewing the videos. Once approved, videos will be promoted via newsletters, the Provider Education Work Group marketing consultant, and other networks. Five CME benzodiazepine modules are posted on the Consortium website:

<https://corxconsortium.org/resources/cme/>

#### **Peer Support Training (D.E. Foster):**

The next Colorado peer support training is scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of November. A training session is also scheduled to take place in New Hampshire in February of 2024. Other states' training sessions are pending and will include virtual sessions. As demand increases, other trainers will be engaged to teach the sessions. <http://benzopeertraining.com>

#### **Research Update (Alexis Ritvo):**

Literature review efforts pertaining to protracted benzodiazepine withdrawal symptoms are ongoing. Over 10,000 abstracts were reviewed and approximately 200 were selected. The prescriber survey is currently undergoing institutional review board review. Once completed, the survey will be sent to family and internal medicine physicians working primarily in an outpatient setting. The survey addresses physician knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to benzodiazepine prescribing and deprescribing.

Bernie Silvernail reported that the FDA approved a three-year safe use initiative project the Alliance has been working on with Kaiser Permanente's research team based in Portland, Oregon. The Alliance's part of the project includes providing a two-hour evidence-based prescriber training course. The initiative aims to reduce the number of benzodiazepine prescriptions issued by providers. The Alliance has also been holding monthly research meetings. Bernie welcomed research ideas.

### **Other Updates:**

D will be submitting a poster for the Consortium annual meeting poster session. The poster will describe the work done by Christy Huff and the Alliance. Christy submitted a similar poster at the ASAM Washington D.C. conference in 2022.

Bernie recently testified before the Massachusetts legislature regarding an informed consent bill. The bill mandates informing patients about the dangers of benzodiazepines before they are prescribed.

Crystal Goodiel is now working as a consultant with Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Safety. Her organization is expanding their research to include drug misuse and diversion. She mentioned that their methodology might prove useful in the area of benzodiazepine intervention. Alexis, D, and Crystal will discuss this subject further.

Work group members discussed the Colorado legislation that limited benzodiazepines and whether the legislation had an impact on the number of prescriptions written. Some prescribing limitations have occurred because of insurance benefit rules.

Members discussed intentional versus unintentional overdoses related to benzodiazepines. Valsa Madhava said it was her understanding that the vast majority of benzodiazepine overdose increases were due to combining them with opioids. She cited a Massachusetts paper that was published. Alexis said overdoses due solely to benzodiazepines are very uncommon.

### **Consortium Annual Meeting:**

The hybrid meeting will take place on Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. Registration and link to the preliminary agenda: <https://corxconsortium.org/2023-annual-meeting/>

Poster application (October 4 deadline):  
<https://ucdenverdata.formstack.com/forms/consortiumposters2023>

The main meeting and breakout sessions will be recorded.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster