

## Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

### Harm Reduction Work Group Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2023 via Zoom

#### **Participants:**

Sam Bourdon, Co-chair  
Laura Goldberg, Emergent BioSolutions  
Ellen Velez, Adams County Health Department  
Nikki Wagner, University of Colorado School of Medicine  
Sierra Roe, San Juan Basin Public Health  
Karen Chappelow, Behavioral Health Administration  
Jane McCulloch, Colorado Health Network  
Michael Miller, Jefferson County Public Health  
Brooke Bender, Denver Health  
Alina Naismith, Vivent Health  
Sarah Money, Southern Colorado Health Network  
Becky Milanski, Boulder County Public Health  
Melissa Chizmar, Colorado Health Network  
Coreen Braden Johnson, Young People in Recovery  
Kyle Rogers, Yarrow Collective  
Sierra Roe, San Juan Basic Public Health  
Madison Zang, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners  
Lucrecia Medrano, Yarrow Collective  
Kiry Lake, Serenity Recovery Connection  
Laurie Konsella, OASH Region  
Arapahoe County Public Health: Ally Arnaiz, Elicia Chacon  
CDPHE: Sophie Feffer, Kaleigh Kessel, Teresa Will, Jericho Dorsey, Cody Brown, Haley Klein  
Consortium Staff: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Jessica Eaddy, Jen Place, Shayna Micucci, Hilary Bryant, Kristin Carpenter, Jennifer Mackender, Michael Davidson, Eric Barker, Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached work group roster.

Co-chair Sam Bourdon called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

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

A motion was made to approve the September 2023 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

#### **Legislative/Interim Study Committee Update (Jose Esquibel):**

Jose summarized legislation under review by the Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Study Committee as well as studies mandated by House Bill 22-1326 <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1326> Study findings will be available in early 2024.

Other bills reviewed by the study committee included 23-0313 Prevention of Substance Use Disorders; 24-0314 Treatment for Substance Use Disorders; 24-0315 Harm Reduction; 24-0316 Recovery; and 24-0317 Harm Reduction Centers. The Harm Reduction Centers bill did not

pass, even though it had support from Rep. DeGruy Kennedy and the American Medical Association.

A summary of the harm reduction legislation is attached to the minutes.

The study committee will be meeting again in the summer of 2024.

<https://leg.colorado.gov/content/iopioidsubstance2023alegislation>  
<https://leg.colorado.gov/committees/opioid-and-other-substance-use-disorders-study-committee/2023-regular-session>

Meeting participants commented on the helpful changes noted in the harm reduction legislation. A question was raised about a local community potentially enacting an ordinance that would prevent some of the bill items. An ordinance of this type would not be able to supersede the state law.

Jose suggested that meeting participants contact Jessica to let her know if they would like to provide testimony in support of the bill: [Jessica.eaddy@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:Jessica.eaddy@cuanschutz.edu)

Work group members will be sent information and updates regarding the Good Samaritan Law clarifications.

Jessica Eaddy said the policies of some Colorado counties do not allow acceptance and use of expired naloxone. There are organizations that can accept expired naloxone and it should not be discarded. Jose referred to a recent AMA report that showed a 200% increase in naloxone distribution since 2018.

<https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/new-ama-report-details-grim-realities-worsening-overdose-epidemic#:~:text=Naloxone%20dispensing%20has%20increased%20more,patients%20at%20risk%20of%20overdose>

Work group members discussed over-the-counter naloxone now also available in pharmacies, the various formulations, and insurance coverage. Private insurance carriers are required to cover the cost of some formulations with an order. The OTC version does not require a physician's order.

Laura Goldberg volunteered to check into insurance coverage and provide information at the next work group meeting in January.

### **Xylazine Discussion/Update:**

Sam said a CDPHE internal work group is monitoring emerging evidence of xylazine to be able to respond appropriately. Most current data is from death certificates, which is not an effective way to monitor and respond to emerging trends in the illicit drug supply. Sam asked work group members to provide any information they might come across that would indicate an emerging trend (i.e., information about an increase in wound treatment, data from test strips, etc.).

Grand Junction has reported seeing possible xylazine wounds. Xylazine has been found in pills that were tested. Eric Barker said it appeared that xylazine was found in "blues" and fentanyl powder. Information is being compiled in a Google Doc by CDPHE and the Consortium.

### Comments:

Sophie Feffer said access to fentanyl test strips has been expanded because of legislation, but the legislation does not cover xylazine. Funds to support the purchase of xylazine test strips are limited to syringe access program partners (SOR funds) and are available through syringe access centers.

Sophie posted the following information: "Drug samples suspected or determined to contain high concentrations of diphenhydramine, lidocaine, levamisole, MDMA, or methamphetamine may produce a false positive for the presence of xylazine."

[https://www.cfsre.org/images/content/reports/drug\\_checking/CFSRE\\_Xylazine\\_Report-Rev-1-18-23.pdf](https://www.cfsre.org/images/content/reports/drug_checking/CFSRE_Xylazine_Report-Rev-1-18-23.pdf)

Becky Milanski said her organization has plenty of xylazine test strips and they also provide training in their use and wound care kits. They are receiving more requests for the strips.

The next Fentanyl Response Stakeholder's Session will include a harm reduction perspective. Jose suggested that CDPHE staff could provide a presentation on fentanyl test strips. The Harm Reduction Work Group members will be notified once the next fentanyl session date is determined.

### **Member Updates:**

High Rockies Harm Reduction has obtained funding from the Regional Opioid Abatement Council for the purchase of a mobile services van for rural counties in their area. Services are expanding to other rural counties. Lake County Public Health is distributing free Narcan and fentanyl test strips.

Representatives Brittany Pettersen recently introduced legislation entitled "Hospitals as Naloxone Distribution Sites (HANDS) Act" which would require Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE to cover the cost of naloxone when medical providers physically provide it to patients at risk of an overdose before they are discharged.

Jennifer Mackender suggested it would be helpful if the update section of the work group meeting included information on grant opportunities.

Brooke Bender provided an update of Denver Health's Center for Addiction Medicine services. The center trains and educates organizations across the region in addiction medicine, trauma, and peer support. They will soon have a hotline with information about treatment locations. The Center Academy has a Trauma Responsive Care Workshop available for the entire region. [https://courses.denverptc.org/upcoming\\_classes.html?](https://courses.denverptc.org/upcoming_classes.html?)

### **Meeting Registration/Privacy:**

Future meetings may include participant registration and other privacy considerations. More information will be available during the January meeting. Work group members were encouraged to provide suggestions/ideas for possible meeting format changes.

**Adjournment/Next Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

Attachments: Work group roster, Legislative summary