

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Public Awareness Work Group Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2024 via Zoom

Present:

Kent MacLennan and Heather Link-Bergman, Co-chairs

Peter Manetta, CALPHO

Evelyn Hawkins, Muscle Matters

Lindsey Simbeye, Velocity BioGroup/Hikma

Grace Kane, Southern Colorado Health Network

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Jessica Eaddy, Jen Place, Michael Davidson, Eric Barker, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached list.

Gina Olberding, Consortium Assistant Director, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

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

CDPHE Campaign Discussion (Health Link-Bergman):

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes. Presentation summary:

The presentation focused on the campaign's strategic communications framework and the community outreach strategy based upon recommendations from the campaign partners. Campaign evaluation methods will be discussed during a future meeting. The goal is to reach Coloradoans via an awareness and education campaign to reduce the number of preventable fentanyl-related overdoses and overdose deaths across the state. Paid media is included in the community outreach campaign. The campaign seeks to specifically influence desired behavior. Heather addressed the nuances involved in the campaign messaging for the Spanish speaking population.

Community outreach will focus on boosting rural and Spanish-speaking populations through paid and social media and work with local public health agencies serving the Spanish-speaking population. The campaign will launch an official "roadshow" to travel to communities across the state. The campaign will also be developing a toolkit. The CDPHE campaign could potentially serve as a platform for other statewide efforts. Heather reviewed other campaign assets and eventual evaluation plans.

Questions/comments:

Peter Manetta asked about supporting local community organizations and public health agencies with workshops and print materials. Utilizing local coalitions and media to reach community members was also discussed. Lindsey Simbeye mentioned Regional Opioid Abatement Councils (ROACs) that are already working on campaigns. Grace Kane spoke about Narcan and providing communities with no cost supplies.

Jose Esquibel suggested contacting Jamie Feld, with the AG's office, to organize a meeting with the ROAC coordinators for an education webinar and possible funding support. This subject could be included in the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force meeting agenda in February of 2025. Jose will follow up with Jamie.

Work group members discussed the work being done by ROACs and the importance of avoiding a duplication of efforts. Lindsey Simbeye mentioned campaigns that may not resonate with smaller communities, particularly campaigns like Keep the Party Safe and Connect Effect. Educating local communities about the campaigns might be helpful. She said that the Region 1 ROAC and Summit County Public Health Department might be open to testing campaign messaging. Kent MacLennan pointed out Larimer County ROAC as an example of how Connect Effect resources were customized for local use.

Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey (Kent MacLennan):

Kent presented findings from the Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey commissioned in the spring of 2024. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes. Presentation summary:

The survey is a complement to the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey. Trends in both surveys are not exact, but generally align. Based on data obtained, mental health among youth is improving. Personal safety has also improved and is back to pre-pandemic levels. Feelings of connectedness/belonging specifically in friend groups and in school environments have continued to decline compared to pre-pandemic data. Data also indicated a correlation between the length of time spent on social media and the increase in number of poor mental health days reported. Lax attitudes towards substances are concerning for potential future use.

Other indicators:

- Increased perceptions that prescription drugs are actually safer than illegal drugs, which is counter to messaging (particularly fentanyl).
- Perception that prescription pain relievers are not addictive. Some re-education is required, as this is going in the wrong direction.
- More acceptance of drug use as a stress management tool.
- Continuing decline in perceived risk related to most substances, not only for the more prevalently used substances like marijuana and alcohol, but also some prescription drugs.
- Increased risk perception related to obtaining pills from an unknown source and the potential prevalence of those pills to contain fentanyl.
- The question about discouraging a friend's use of pills has remained relatively steady, but with an increase related to marijuana.
- There has been an increase in awareness of education resources in schools and community organizations, particularly related to prescription drugs and counterfeit pills. It appears that various campaign messaging is having an effect.

Comments/questions:

Peter Manetta asked if there were differences in responses about mental health along racial lines. Kent said he noticed differences related to gender, but would have to look into the other demographics. Follow-up research revealed that the declines in poor mental health days also extended to Hispanic and LGBTQ youth compared to the previous survey in 2022.

For more information about the surveys: kent@riseaboveco.org

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held in January 2025. The 2025 meeting schedule will be distributed in mid December.

Attachments: Work group roster, Presentations