

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2023 via Zoom

Present:

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

Lorna Dawson, Barbara Connolly, John Staight, Teresa Cobleigh, Madison Zang, Christine Neeb, MD, Bernie Silvernail, Brian Watkins, NP, Valsava Madhave, MD

Consortium: Gina Olberding, Shayna Micucci, Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy, Hilary Bryant, Lindsey Simbeye, 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 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Peer Support Training Updates (D.E. Foster):

D provided an overview of the training Trello Board available to all training instructors. The next training session will be held on January 23rd and 30th. Terri Schreiber, who has lived experience, is leading one of the sessions along with Choices Training. Each course is co-taught by a trainer with lived experience and a Choices trainer with professional experience. Lisa Gemmill and Barbara Connolly are other trainers with lived experience. Dr. Christy Huff will be teaching classes in February. Shayna Micucci and Ginger Ross of Choices Training are overseeing the program. Link to training and to be added to the mailing list:

<https://corxconsortium.org/projects/benzo-peer-support/>

<https://benzopeertraining.org>

Several questions were asked about the intent of training and use of the Ashton Manual. D explained that the aim of the training is to help provide benzodiazepine education and train people how to become coaches. A section of the training focuses on the difference between physical dependence versus substance use disorder. The Ashton Manual is a recommended source of information for tapering; however, specific methods of tapering are not addressed in the training. A separate Consortium Provider Education course is available for medical practitioners.

CME Courses (Alexis Ritvo):

Alexis reviewed the CME courses now available on the Consortium website.

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

Shayna Micucci said Jet Marketing will be promoting available courses and that additional promotion will take place via the Consortium work groups.

Work group members discussed looking into the fact that CME requirements for licensing renewal are not required for other clinicians such as nurse practitioners and others who may be prescribing opioids, benzodiazepines, and other stimulants. Shayna will discuss this further with

Jose Esquibel. Additional comments pertaining to this subject are noted in the chat comments below.

Teresa Cobleigh and Lorna Dawson will collaborate on other proposed legislation and contact with Rep. Kennedy.

Research Corner:

A literature review related to benzodiazepine-induced neurological dysfunction (BIND) is ongoing. Bernie Silvernail said there are many studies available regarding withdrawal, but none that have actually concentrated on BIND. Bernie also updated work group members on the Alliance's ongoing project with Kaiser Permanente (the prescriber education portion of the joint project). Other projects include a provider survey. Gina Olberding asked if there are any opportunities to disseminate the survey in Colorado via CMS or other organizations.

Bernie is holding a monthly research forum related to benzodiazepines and invited interested work group members to attend.

Other Updates:

Alexis Ritvo will be stepping down as work group co-chair. She has accepted a position as Chair of the National Education Committee for the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry and will continue in her role as Medical Director with the Alliance for Benzodiazepine Best Practices.

D.E. Foster will also be stepping down as work group co-chair in March 2024 to concentrate on his other benzodiazepine-related work.

Any members interested in assuming the position of co-chair, including those with lived experience, should contact Shayna Micucci: Shayna.mucicci@cuanschutz.edu

John Staight expressed an interest in the co-chair position some time in the future.

Bernie Silvernail suggested the possibility of establishing a provider forum or medical conference in Colorado. D. E. Foster said he would be launching a benzodiazepine roundtable within the next several months that could be incorporated into a possible forum/conference. D and Bernie will discuss this further offline.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 6, 2024 from Noon to 1:00 p.m. The work group will not be meeting in January.

Attachments: Work group roster

Relevant links/comments posted in Chat:

<https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/classification-of-diseases>

https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021a_1276_signed.pdf

Jessica Eaddy: "promulgate rules that require each licensed health-care provider, as a condition of renewing, reactivating, or reinstating a license on or after October 1, 2019 2022, to complete up to four credit hours of training per licensing cycle in order to demonstrate competency regarding: Best practices for opioid prescribing, according to the most recent version of the division's guidelines for the safe prescribing and dispensing of opioids; THE POTENTIAL HARM OF INAPPROPRIATELY LIMITING PRESCRIPTIONS TO CHRONIC PAIN PATIENTS; BEST PRACTICES FOR PRESCRIBING BENZODIAZEPINES; recognition of substance use disorders; referral of patients with substance use disorders for treatment; and the use of the electronic prescription drug monitoring program created in part 4 of article 280 of this title 12.

I interpret that to include all mid-levels (PA/NP) along with DO/MDs, and anyone else with prescribing privileges in Colorado. When you look up the actual statute, it is defined: "(2) For the purposes of this section, "licensed health-care provider" includes any of the following providers who are licensed pursuant to this title 12:

- (a) A physician;
- (b) A physician assistant;
- (c) A podiatrist;
- (d) A dentist;
- (e) An advanced practice registered nurse or certified midwife with prescriptive authority;
- (f) An optometrist; and
- (g) A veterinarian"

The statute is C.R.S. 12-30-114

My understanding was that if you don't prescribe any controlled substances, then you could be exempt from the above. but if you are going to prescribe a benzo or opioid, then you have to attest to 4 hours of training related to that topic. I haven't found that it has to be PRA Category 1 per se, but I think that's the only option I have seen broadly offered.

Alexis Ritvo: Actually looks like the CME requirement does not get listed in the rulemaking...but I agree the wording of the law makes it sound like all prescribers are required to attest to CME so sounds like something has been overlooked.